

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

MEMORANDUM

From : The Secretary General *MLH*
To : All Australian National Sections
Date : 30th June 1973
Subject : Indonesia

Since the coming to power of the new Government in Australia, the International Secretariat has made several approaches to the Australian Prime Minister, briefing him on the political prisoner situation in Indonesia and requesting his informal intervention with the Indonesian authorities. These endeavours have not borne fruit, no doubt because the Australian Government considers that this would jeopardise efforts now being made to strengthen economic and defence ties with Indonesia.

The situation clearly calls for action by interested groups in Australia to draw the attention of the Government to the situation and to impress upon it the concern felt by Australians. This is a matter which Amnesty can work on effectively and I therefore submit for your consideration the following proposals.

1. The Australian Amnesty Sections should, acting alone or together with other organisations interested in civil liberties and human rights, lobby Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers, informing them of the current situation (based upon material contained in the Indonesia Special) and stressing that, as aid, trade and defence ties with Indonesia expand it is appropriate for Australian Government authorities to utilise every possible occasion to inform the Indonesian authorities of the concern being felt in Australia about the political prisoner situation.

2. Trade unions, and organisations of writers, journalists, women and doctors should be approached with basic information about the situation and with lists of prisoners of special interest to them (enclosed). Effective use of these lists can prove invaluable in mobilising other organisations for a campaign about political prisoners.

3. Special efforts should be made to distribute the Indonesia Special to interested individuals and organisations. The Special should be put on sale and publicised in well-read journals. Articles based on the Special should be offered to the press.

4. Plans should be made for the organisation of an Indonesian Political Prisoners Day. Suggested activities are: the organisation of petitions to the Indonesian Government about individual prisoners, specific groups of prisoners or the situation as a whole, the organisation of meetings addressed by speakers well-informed about the Indonesian situation, the sending of deputations to the Indonesian Embassy or consular offices, publicity in press and TV.

5. The availability of the Indonesia Special greatly facilitates the campaign we are suggesting. You will therefore certainly wish to place special orders with Dutch Amnesty. We suggest that, when submitting your orders, you inform the International Secretariat so that we may try to ensure that your orders are promptly dealt with.

The International Secretariat also has in mind a special approach to the Australian Government, requesting them to consider making an offer of asylum to political prisoners whose skills could in some way be used with good effect in the country. As you are well aware, a number of the prisoners are well qualified in many fields and could, after the necessary recuperative process, be employed and given the chance to return to a normal life.

We would be grateful to you for any suggestions you have to make about the way in which such an approach should be made. It would be most helpful if you could make informal approaches to possibly sympathetic persons for their advice in this connection and inform the Secretariat of the results. Since this is a matter which we intend to raise fairly soon, I would like to suggest that you should, in your publicity in connection with the campaign outlined above, draw attention among other things to the tremendous wastage of human skills involved in the prolonged detention of so many people in Indonesia.

W. S. S.