

**URGENT
ACTION**

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International Secretariat, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England
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Amnesty International opposes by all appropriate means the imposition and infliction of death penalties and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners or other detained or restricted persons whether or not they have used or advocated violence

- UA 101/79

Legal concern
(Amnesty International Statute, Article 1(c)) 24 May 1979

INDONESIA: 207 "released" prisoners and their families on Buru Island
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In November 1978, 207 prisoners held on the prison island of Buru were officially declared released. These 207 prisoners had been joined by their families in earlier years. However, the 207 were not returned to their homes on Java on the grounds that, when they were joined by their families, they had pledged to remain on Buru in the event of their release. During the visit of Attorney General General Ali Said to Buru in December 1978, the released prisoners' wives protested against the prohibition on their leaving the island and it was later announced that the detainees and their families would be given ten days to decide to leave or to stay. AI understands that at least two-thirds of the families expressed a desire to leave and sold their personal belongings in preparation for their departure. On 27 April, an Indonesian government official said that all of the 207 had settled voluntarily on the island. This assertion is contradicted both by reports in the Indonesian press and by information independently available to AI.

AI is concerned that the 207 (and possibly the 570 other "released" prisoners whom the government claims to have settled "voluntarily" in other remote areas) are still effectively being held in detention.

Background

In July 1969, the Indonesian government announced the establishment of a permanent resettlement camp for untried political prisoners on the densely-jungled island of Buru. By the end of 1977, when the government began to release prisoners from the island, there were more than 11,000 detainees held there. In the meantime, Buru had been transformed by the exertions of its prisoners into the rice granary of the surrounding islands. Since December 1977 more than 4,500 prisoners have been released from Buru. There are still 5,920 persons classified as prisoners on the island, who have never been tried. The government has been encouraging as many as possible to stay partly, it is thought, in order to maintain rice production.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/express letters/letters:

- Express concern at reports that a large number of prisoners who have been officially declared released continue to be detained against their will, with their families, on the island of Buru;
- Urge unconditional release and guaranteed freedom of movement for all prisoners on Buru island.

Appeals to:

His Excellency President Suharto,
Istana Negara,
Jalan Veteran, Jakarta, Indonesia.

General Yoga Sugomo,
Chief of Staff KOPKAMTIB,
Jalan Merdeka Barat, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Admiral Sudomo,
Commander of KOPKAMTIB,*
Jalan Merdeka Barat, Jakarta, Indonesia.

General Ali Said, (Attorney General)
Jaksa Agung,
Kejaksaan, Jalan Hasenuddin 1,
Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Please send copies of appeals to the Indonesian diplomatic representative to your country.

* KOPKAMTIB - Command for the Restoration of Security and Order