

# amnesty international

## INDONESIA

### TWO STUDENT PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

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Bambang SUBONO, aged 25 and Bambang "Isti" NUGROHO, aged 26, both university students, have been in military detention since June 1988 in Yogyakarta, Central Java, accused of possessing and selling copies of a novel banned by the Indonesian authorities. Amnesty International believes both men are prisoners of conscience and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release. It has received reports that the two may have been tortured after their arrest and is concerned that they may face further ill-treatment.

On 8 June 1988 Indonesia's Attorney General issued decree No. Kep-061/JA/6/1988 banning "The Glass House", a new novel by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Indonesia's most famous writer. The decree said the book contained Marxist-Leninist ideas and other material damaging to national values. The ban was announced at a press conference the following day, 9 June.

That evening, Bambang Supono, aged 25, a sociology student at Gajah Mada University, was arrested while trying to sell copies of the book at a theatrical performance at the Kridosono Sports Hall in Yogyakarta. Military officers who arrested him confiscated 20 copies of "The Glass House" and copies of other novels by Pramoedya which have also been banned.

On 20 June, Isti Nugroho, aged 26, was arrested at the Gajah Mada physics laboratory where he worked by a group of military men in civilian clothes. He was accused of possessing banned books on Marxism-Leninism and of holding discussions without a permit from authorities. According to AI's information, he had also been named by Bambang Supono during the latter's interrogation. Among Bambang Supono's books and papers, intelligence agents had reportedly found a letter from Sleman Library, Yogyakarta, requesting the return of a copy of the Indonesian translation of Maxim Gorky's "Mother" (Pramoedya Ananta Toer was the translator). When questioned about the book, Bambang Supono told his interrogators that he had lent it to Isti Nugroho.

Both students are believed to be detained at the district military command headquarters, KODIM, in Yogyakarta. Both may have been tortured after their arrest. After being denied permission to visit Isti Nugroho for two days in succession, his family was permitted to see him for about 10 minutes on 22 June. His face was said to be swollen to the extent that he could barely talk.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The author of the banned book, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, was detained without trial from 1966 to 1980 because of his links to the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI), Indonesian Communist Party. All of the books he has written since his release have been banned. On 27 April 1988 he received the Freedom to Write Award from the American branch of PEN, the international writers' organization, in recognition of his work.

The banning of "The Glass House" comes at a time of intense discussion within Indonesia about the possibility of PKI "infiltration" of the government and the dangers of a "latent" PKI becoming active once again. At the time of an attempted coup in 1965, the PKI was the largest communist party in the world outside the Soviet Union and China. It was banned and an estimated 500,000 suspected supporters were killed in the aftermath of the failed coup. The present government has held the PKI responsible for the coup attempt.

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