



# amnesty international

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT  
1 Easton Street London WC1X 8DJ  
United Kingdom

AI Index: ASA 21/21/87  
Distr: SC/PO

## REGIONAL NEWS ITEM

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN URGENT CALL FOR RELEASE OF INDONESIAN PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE.

Amnesty International today (Thursday 13 August 1987) urgently called on the Indonesian government to free a jailed 73-year-old disabled Muslim religious teacher and other elderly detainees who have been unjustly imprisoned for more than 20 years.

The worldwide human rights organization said they were among 18 prisoners of conscience it was asking President Suharto to free to mark Indonesia's Independence Day on 17 August. It is also appealing for the commutation of all death sentences there - some prisoners in death cells have been under constant threat of secret execution at short notice for more than a decade, it says.

In a message sent today to President Suharto, Amnesty International highlights the cases of Muslim prisoners of conscience, mostly preachers or students arrested in the past three years for criticizing the government.

Two students tried in 1985 received 10 and 15-year sentences for reading aloud a pamphlet critical of the government's handling of a Muslim demonstration in Jakarta the previous year.

A 73-year-old religious teacher, Professor Usmany al Hamidy, arrested after this demonstration, was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment because he was critical of the government in lectures he gave to religious gatherings - he is disabled and has been confined to a wheelchair for most of the past year.

☎ 01-833 1771 Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502

Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working impartially for the release of all prisoners of conscience, fair and prompt trials for political prisoners and an end to torture and executions. It is funded by donations from its members and supporters throughout the world. It has formal relations with the United Nations, Unesco, the Council of Europe, the Organization of African Unity and the Organization of American States.



Other prisoners of conscience have been held for over 20 years accused of involvement in an attempted coup in 1965. Amnesty International says it believes these prisoners played no part in the 1965 violence but were seized solely because of their position in the then-legal Indonesian Communist Party. Some are old or sick and some are detained far from their families.

Amnesty International is also calling for commutation of the sentences of the 24 prisoners it knows to be under sentence of death. Sixteen of them were sentenced for involvement in the 1965 coup and the organization says it fears they may have received unfair trials.

Three filed notices of appeal immediately after conviction but were told only 18 years later that the appeals had been rejected, it says.

All 16 have already been held for nearly 20 years and have been under sentence of death for more than a decade.

Executions of such long-term condemned prisoners have continued over the years - nine were put to death in 1986.

"These people live with the daily anguish of never knowing who is going to be executed next and when - executions take place in secret, often without much warning, and there are continual rumours of their imminence," Amnesty International said today.

Three of those under sentence of death are Muslim activists.

EMBARGOED FOR 0001 HRS GMT THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 1987