

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Indonesia: Fifty Years on, Victims of '65 Still Waiting for Truth, Justice and Reparation

On 30 September 2015, Indonesia will mark the 50th anniversary of the 1965 mass human rights violations, a dark stain in the country's history. Amnesty International and TAPOL believe it is time for the Indonesian government to face the past and take the long overdue measures required to provide victims of '65 with access to truth, justice and reparation.

Following a failed coup in September 1965, the Indonesian military launched a systematic attack against members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and suspected sympathizers. Human rights organizations have documented a range of human rights violations in the context of the abortive 1965 coup, including unlawful killings, torture, enforced disappearances, rape, sexual slavery and other crimes of sexual violence, slavery, arbitrary arrest and detention, forced displacement and forced labour. An estimated 500,000 to one million people were killed and hundreds of thousands were held without charge or trial for periods ranging from a few days to more than 14 years.

Many victims and their families also faced violations of their social, economic and cultural rights, and continue to this day to experience discrimination in both the law and in practice. Successive Indonesian governments have essentially abandoned a whole generation of victims, leaving them without the truth, justice and reparations they are entitled to under international law. In all but a handful of cases, the perpetrators of human rights violations have walked free.

On many occasions internal meetings or public events about the 1965 violations held by the victims are disbanded and harassed by vigilante groups while police frequently have failed to intervene.

A three-year investigation into the violations was carried out by the Indonesia National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) and completed in July 2012. The Commission found evidence of widespread human rights violations committed across the country between 1965 and 1966, and that violations continued at a lower level well into the late 1970s. According to the Commission, these findings meet the criteria of gross human rights violations, and include crimes against humanity, as defined by the Indonesian Law No. 26/2000 on Human Rights Courts. In July 2012 Komnas HAM called on the Attorney

General to launch an official investigation based on its findings and to bring the perpetrators to justice. Komnas HAM also called on the authorities to establish a truth and reconciliation commission and to issue a formal apology to the victims and their families. To date, however, there has been no indication that the Attorney General will even launch an investigation. Meanwhile attempts to establish a truth commission on the national level have stalled due to a lack of political will.

In October 2014, President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo entered office and committed to respecting and protecting human rights in Indonesia, including addressing past human rights abuses in the country. In August 2015 President Widodo, in his Independence Day speech, announced that he would establish a non-judicial mechanism to resolve all past human rights violations through a 'reconciliation committee'. This is believed to include the 1965-66 violations. In his speech President Widodo also said that 'national reconciliation' was needed, so that future generations in Indonesia would not continue to bear the burden of history. Victims and NGOs are concerned that this process may prioritize reconciliation and undermine truth and justice.

The failure to address the 1965-66 violations points to a wider culture of impunity in Indonesia. The Indonesian government has also consistently failed to provide justice, truth and reparation for past grave human rights abuses, including those committed in Aceh, Timor-Leste (then East Timor), Papua and also during the 1998 May riots.

On 23 September 2015 Amnesty International and TAPOL organized a public event "Remembering the Forgotten" in the United Kingdom to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1965 violations.

Amnesty International are also organizing other initiatives during the next few weeks in other countries so as to call on the Indonesian authorities to fulfill their obligations to provide the victims of '65 rights with access to truth, justice and reparations.

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