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INDONESIA

@Conditional Release of Political Prisoners Hundreds Remain in Jail

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At least four Indonesian political prisoners were conditionally released in August, some after serving long prison terms for subversion. Several others had their sentences reduced. Amnesty International welcomes the releases and the sentence reductions, but notes that at least one of the four released, and possibly others, were prisoners of conscience who should never have been in custody, and that all had been sentenced at unfair trials. The organization is also concerned about the political conditions imposed on those released. Finally, it notes with concern that hundreds of other political prisoners, at least 180 of whom are prisoners of conscience, remain in jail serving lengthy sentences imposed after unfair political trials, some of them under sentence of death.

Amnesty International calls upon the Government of Indonesia to release immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience, to review the convictions of all political prisoners, to commute all death sentences and to take immediate steps to repeal the death penalty.

Prisoner of conscience, **Andi Mappetahang Fatwa**, a 54-year-old Muslim preacher sentenced to eighteen years' imprisonment for subversion in 1985, was conditionally released on 23 August 1993.¹ A.M. Fatwa had been a member of the "Petition of 50", a group formed in 1980 by 50 influential retired military personnel, elder statesmen and religious leaders. The group had expressed criticism of the government of President Suharto. Before being

¹ For a full account of A.M. Fatwa's arrest and trial see the Amnesty International report *Indonesia: Muslim Prisoners of Conscience*, June 1986 (ASA 21/10/86).

released, A.M. Fatwa was obliged to write a paper expressing his views of the state ideology, *Pancasila*. Only when this was approved by military - not civilian - authorities was A. M. Fatwa's release permitted to go ahead. Major General Hendro Priyono, Jakarta's military commander, confirmed that the military had previously decided that all prisoners convicted of subversion would be required to submit their views on *Pancasila* and the Constitution as a condition of their release. Amnesty International regards this requirement as a violation of international human rights standards upholding the rights to freedom of expression and opinion.

Three other political prisoners were conditionally released on 24 August. They included possible prisoner of conscience, **Abdul Qadir Djaelani**, aged 55. A former Muslim preacher, he was arrested in September 1984 after a violent confrontation between Indonesian troops and demonstrators at Tanjung Priok in North Jakarta. He was convicted of subversion at an unfair trial and sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment in 1985 after being accused of participating in the Tanjung Priok demonstration and of planning a series of bombings in October 1984. Abdul Qadir Djaelani has denied the allegations against him. The others known to have been released were **Muhammad Tasrif Tuasikal**, a former Islamic teacher, and **Eddy Ramli**. Both were accused of involvement in the 1984 bombings. All three were required to present an oral assessment of the current political situation in Indonesia as a condition of their release.

At least three other political prisoners received reductions of their sentences in August. Prisoner of conscience, **Dr. Thomas Wainggai**, received three months remission on his 20-year sentence. An advocate of independence for Irian Jaya, he was convicted of subversion after leading a peaceful flag-raising ceremony in 1988.² **Arswendo Atmowiloto**, the editor of a weekly magazine, had his five-year sentence reduced by eight months. A prisoner of conscience, he had been convicted of blasphemy in 1991 after publishing the results of a popularity poll which ranked the Prophet Muhammad alongside pop singers and President Suharto. Finally, possible prisoner of conscience, **Mohammad Sanusi**, received eight months remission on his 19-year sentence. He was also a member of the "Petition of 50" convicted of subversion in 1985. Mohammad Sanusi is understood to be due to join an "assimilation program" during which prisoners are allowed increased amounts of freedom in preparation for their release.

While welcoming the release of A.M. Fatwa and others, as well as the sentence reductions, Amnesty International remains seriously concerned for the fate of more than 180 prisoners of conscience and hundreds of other government opponents, who remain in Indonesia's jails serving long sentences imposed after unfair political trials. They include at least 50 prisoners in Aceh, among them prisoners of conscience, sentenced to prison terms of between three years and death since 1990 for their alleged links to the armed independence group *Aceh Merdeka* (Free Aceh). Some three hundred Islamic activists, dozens of whom are believed to be prisoners of conscience, are in prison after being convicted of subversion and sentenced to long prison terms or life imprisonment. Other

² For further information about the arrest and detention of Thomas Wainggai, see the Amnesty International report *Indonesia: Continuing Human Rights Violations in Irian Jaya*, April 1991 (ASA 21/06/91).

political prisoners include more than 100 advocates of independence in Irian Jaya. Some of them are prisoners of conscience convicted of subversion and sentenced to lengthy prison terms for their involvement in peaceful flag-raising ceremonies in 1988 and 1989.

At least 30 people, among them prisoners of conscience, remain in prison after conviction for their alleged involvement in the 1965 coup attempt, or for membership of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). Their trials, which failed to meet basic international standards of fairness, took place during the 1960s. Seven of these prisoners were sentenced to death. One of them, **Iskandar Subekti**, died in August 1993 at the age of 73 after a long illness. At the time of his death he had been in detention for 25 years, almost 21 of which were spent on death row. Another PKI prisoner, **Johannes Sucipto**, died in custody in 1992 after 26 years in prison.

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