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# INDONESIA

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AN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT

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## An Amnesty International Report

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# INDONESIA

## An Amnesty International Report



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## SONG OF THE PRISON

*Prison-life's a bird alike  
Queue-up for maize-rice  
Sleepless, your mind troubled  
Powerless, your acts bridled*

*Prison-life's like self-torment  
Entering thick, leaving slim  
Forced labour and underfed  
Still alive but nearly dead.*

This song was composed by a prisoner in Tangerang Prison, near Jakarta. It is now known to political prisoners in many Javanese prisons, and the prisoners continue to sing it despite attempts by the authorities to suppress it.

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## INTRODUCTION

The situation of political prisoners in Indonesia is profoundly disturbing. With regard to numbers, time-scale, methods used by the government and the history of mass killings and massive arrests, political imprisonment in Indonesia is without parallel today. More than 55,000 political prisoners are distributed throughout the many islands of the Republic of Indonesia; and the correct figure is probably as many as 100,000.

Who are these prisoners? Why are there so many? Why are they transported to permanent penal settlements? Why have so few been tried? Why have vast numbers been held without trial for more than 11 years?

These are the questions with which this report is concerned. Amnesty International has consistently pointed out that the Indonesian Government's policy of political imprisonment amounts to persistent and gross violation of human rights. The facts are simple and terrible.

Tens of thousands of political prisoners in Indonesia are held captive without trial, or used as servants by local military commanders, or exploited as forced labour, or subjected to an archaic policy of transportation to penal colonies. They are ill-treated by the authorities. The majority have now been held prisoner for more than 11 years without trial. Men, women and children are held prisoner, arbitrarily and at the discretion of local military commanders.

The unconstitutional and illegal treatment of the prisoners is illustrated by the political trials of a relatively small number of prisoners. The courts have never been known to acquit a single defendant, and convictions have been based on the merest shreds of evidence. The judges have sentenced prisoners to death or to gross periods of imprisonment. This cynical use of the courts to try prisoners is merely an attempt by the Indonesian Government to present the world with the illusion that they are trying to solve the problem according to established standards of justice.

All Indonesian political prisoners are tightly controlled by the military authorities. The prisoners are at the mercy of local military commanders, who have the power to arrest, interrogate, permit the use of extreme and brutal torture, imprison, use prisoners as



servants or forced labour, release and re-arrest them; to act in a completely arbitrary way with regard to people taken captive without charge or trial.

For the prisoners and their families, what happened after an abortive "coup" mounted by a small number of middle-ranking Army officers in 1965 has been a continuing nightmare. First there was the period of fear and uncertainty when the Indonesian Army conducted a nation-wide "inquisition" to destroy what they regarded as left-wing elements in Indonesian society. There were sudden arrests, interrogation and torture, followed by the likelihood of a summons to face summary execution, or the possibility of harsh and interminable imprisonment without charge or trial. All this without any reference to constitutional and legal rights, and carried out completely and arbitrarily at the discretion of local military commanders.

Although there has been growing international concern over the last few years about the plight of political prisoners in Indonesia, governments and ordinary people have been reluctant to express their views because of the complexity of the problem, and because its dimensions often seem incredible. This Amnesty International report describes the situation of Indonesian political prisoners; although the problem is complex, the fundamental issue of Indonesian political imprisonment is simple.

No government has the authority arbitrarily to imprison large numbers of people, unconstitutionally, illegally and contrary to the rule of law. No government should allow political prisoners to be held entirely within a military system of administration which controls all matters concerning political prisoners, and permits local military commanders to exercise complete arbitrary power over political prisoners. No government should transport political prisoners held without trial to permanent penal settlements, or exploit them as forced labour in a daily struggle for survival to produce all their own food and to provision the military garrison guarding them. Military commanders should not be empowered to decide which prisoners are to be released and which held indefinitely; nor empowered to seize the goods and property of prisoners and their families, and to demand large bribes from the latter as the price for releasing their relatives.

A number of political commentators have noted with concern that the "inquisition" in Indonesia has prompted careless speculation elsewhere. When the September 1973 coup in Chile occurred, the words "Jakarta, Jakarta" were chalked on to walls, apparently to indicate that some of the participants in the coup were hoping for a repeti-

tion of what had taken place in Indonesia. And in Turkey, some right-wing groups have debated whether to follow the "Indonesian example" in order to eradicate the left-wing influence in Turkish politics. In Thailand, following the military coup of October 1976, there has been open speculation among some leading military officers as to whether, if the "Indonesian example" were followed, the country would be able to eradicate left-wing elements for at least a decade. It is in this context that the facts about political imprisonment and its history in Indonesia must be understood. The terrible "inquisition" that was conducted in Indonesia, the mass killings and massive scale of political imprisonment, are a warning of the dangers of such speculation.

Amnesty International considered it its duty over the years to report the facts of Indonesian political imprisonment. This has incurred the displeasure of the Indonesian Government. In a recent speech, General Ali Said, the Indonesian Prosecutor General, was reported to have said that "there cannot be any meeting point between the outlook of the Indonesian Government and Amnesty International. 'For this reason', he said, 'we shall not deal with them'." (*Sinar Harapan*, 6 January 1977).

Amnesty International believes that Indonesian Government policy towards political prisoners is an appropriate and proper subject for international concern and for all who care about human rights. Furthermore, that the international community should make clear representations to President Suharto and his Government in order that they realize that only the immediate and unconditional release of all the prisoners held for so long without trial will provide a just solution.

Amnesty International  
June 1977



## 1

## POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT: THE BEGINNING

Indonesia achieved independence from Dutch colonial rule in 1949. The struggle of Indonesian nationalists against colonial rule had been met by severe political repression by the Dutch authorities. From the 1920s, the Dutch colonial government maintained a penal colony at Boven-digoel, in the interior of West Irian, to which political prisoners were transported. At the time of the Japanese invasion during World War II, the Boven-digoel prisoners were moved to Australia, where they were passed off as a dangerous "fifth column". Only a chance meeting between an Australian journalist and one of the prisoners led to the eventual release of the prisoners, many of whom later took part in the war against Japan.

In the years immediately after Independence, there was virtually no political imprisonment in Indonesia. Not until the late 1950s, when there were local rebellions in several regions, were people arrested on a large scale for political reasons. In the early 1960s, most of the several thousand people detained were released under a general amnesty. The Sukarno Government kept a number of political opposition leaders in prison; and journalists and many others who criticized the government policies were arrested and imprisoned.

In the early 1960s, there was an increased polarization in Indonesian politics. The left-wing groupings led by the Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*) were opposed by political and military groupings to the right. In October 1965, a small group of left-wing Army officers attempted to destroy the Army leadership by assassinating a number of senior generals. The attempted coup was quickly suppressed by the Army, and President Sukarno's administration was eventually replaced by a military administration. In the aftermath of the attempted coup, the Army carried out a massive and violent purge of people identified as or suspected of being members of the Communist Party, or affiliated to left-wing organizations. In various localities of the Republic, some social and religious groups took advantage of the changed circumstances to take revenge on those they considered responsible for spreading communist doctrine and for having advocated partisan views on issues such as land reform. At that time, as the military took over the national administration, vast numbers of people were taken prisoner.

Of those, more than half a million were killed. This figure was quoted in October 1976 by the head of the Indonesian state security agency in a Dutch television interview. Many independent observers estimate that probably many more than one million people were summarily killed during that period.

Of those who were arrested, but not killed, at least more than half a million were kept in prison. According to Indonesian Government statistics, the authorities had released more than 540 thousand people arrested on suspicion of being communists. Today, there are, throughout Indonesia, tens of thousands of political prisoners held without charge or trial, in connection with the events of 1965. For more than 11 years, the Indonesian Government has maintained its policy of detaining vast numbers of political prisoners without trial.

## BACKGROUND TO 1965

In 1957, parliamentary democracy in the Republic of Indonesia was eroded by the promulgation of martial law; later, in 1959, President Sukarno introduced a type of authoritarian rule which was described as "guided democracy". The elected parliament was replaced by an appointed legislature, and the government's executive power was greatly increased. The period of "guided democracy" was associated with Sukarno's distinctive political style and his extrovert foreign policy.

Following the promulgation of martial law in 1957, the Army expanded its influence and became closely involved in political and economic affairs. Many Army officers became government administrators and, in some areas, they wielded unchallenged power. A wide range of Dutch enterprises, nationalized in 1958, were placed under Army control.

The only serious challenge to the growing political power of the Army leadership during this period came from the Communist Party (PKI). The period of "guided democracy", removed the opportunity for the PKI (which in the 1955 elections had polled 16.4% of the votes), to demonstrate its growing strength in national elections. In the 1960s, the party's membership rapidly expanded. By 1965 it exceeded three million. In addition, mass organizations under communist leadership had a combined membership of well over 10 million. The PKI had the largest membership of any communist party outside the Soviet block and the People's Republic of China.

The leadership of the Army and of the PKI worked in a tense and uneasy alliance with President Sukarno, while in some regions there were outbreaks of sharp conflict. In some areas, Communist Party committees were outlawed and their leaders detained by the



military. President Sukarno continued to use the Army and the PKI as counterweights against one another.

The PKI criticized the military's management of the economy. In the early 1960s, the PKI aligned itself with China in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Tension increased in 1964 and 1965 when the PKI actively supported unilateral efforts by peasants to expropriate land, in attempts to enforce implementation the 1960 Land Reform Law. Relations between the Army and the PKI became particularly abrasive when the party advocated the creation of a "Fifth Force" of armed peasants and workers to fight against Malaysia alongside regular Indonesian military units. It was then, when there was extreme tension and mutual suspicion, that the attempted coup of 30 September 1965 occurred, and shattered the uneasy alliance between Sukarno, the Army and the PKI.

### THE 30 SEPTEMBER AFFAIR

The attempted coup of September 1965 involved mainly middle-ranking military officers led by Lieutenant-Colonel Untung, a battalion commander in the President's Palace Guards. The conspirators intended to destroy the leadership of the Indonesian Army. Six senior generals were kidnapped and assassinated at Halim Airfield, near Jakarta. The coup leaders occupied several important buildings in the capital, where they had the support of Army battalions stationed temporarily in the city.

At that time, members of the pro-PKI mass organizations, among others, were being trained for confrontation with Malaysia at Lubang Buaya, the Halim Airfield training ground. The coup leaders had taken a number of political leaders, including the Chairman of the PKI, Aidit, to the Halim base, stating that this was for their personal safety. Just before it was banned, the PKI daily newspaper, *Harian Rakjat*, in its editorial, 2 October, expressed the official view of the Communist Party that the Untung coup was "an internal Army affair".

Those events were interpreted very differently by the Army leadership: in their view, Untung was the chosen instrument of the PKI, and the "coup" was the first step towards setting up a communist government. Under General Suharto (as he then was), the Army moved rapidly to crush the attempted coup. Claiming that the entire communist and left-wing movement had been implicated in the coup, the Army raided the Communist Party and left-wing organizations, and there were mass arrests of their leaders and members.

Some of those arrested then were later released in 1966, or shortly after; but to this day many are still in detention. In March 1966,

President Sukarno, who had tried in earlier speeches to stem the tide of persecution and who had initiated investigation into massacres of prisoners, was forced to sign over his executive powers—although not yet his official position—to General Suharto. The day after the order was signed, thirteen of Sukarno's cabinet ministers were arrested and a new cabinet was formed. There followed further mass arrests and this time the net was extended to cover "pro-Sukarno elements" both in the civilian administration and in the armed forces.

In early 1966, a party leader Njono was brought to trial, charged with having enlisted the support of members of pro-PKI mass organizations for the attempted coup. He denied this and other charges, but was found guilty and sentenced to death. Later that year, other trials took place, notably that of Dr Subandrio, who had been President Sukarno's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He too was sentenced to death, although in his case the sentence was not carried out. He is still in prison (see Chapter VI).

The PKI and all its supporting mass organizations were proscribed. The leaders who had avoided capture went underground. At the end of 1966 and the beginning of 1967, there was a further wave of arrests of PKI members who were attempting to revive the party. When the underground movement in Jakarta was effectively crushed, the PKI attempted to create a base in Blitar, in East Java. This was destroyed by the Army.

Some of those detained during the succeeding waves of arrests were alleged to have been involved in illegal activities, but a large number were detained simply because of their past membership of, or former association with the PKI or its mass organizations at a time when these organizations were still legal and when they were prominent in the politics of the Sukarno era.

After the attempted coup, more than half a million people were killed in the ensuing massacres, and more than three-quarters of a million people were arrested and detained. In many cases they were brutally treated. To this day there are numerous untried detainees in prisons throughout the Republic of Indonesia.

For several years after the 1965 events, the Indonesian Government felt justified in holding these prisoners without trial. Till 1972, a number of foreign journalists were allowed to visit political prisons and to report on what they observed. Their reports, without exception, were highly critical of the treatment of the prisoners. Since 1972, the Indonesian authorities have not allowed journalists to visit political prisons, the only exceptions being the conducted visits of Buru by Indonesian journalists accompanied by high ranking

*Kopkamtib*\* officers, and a Dutch television journalist's brief visit in September 1976.

As international concern about Indonesian political prisoners increased, the government took steps to prevent access to political prisons. Consequently, the information available to Amnesty International at present comes from individual confidential sources—people who have managed to evade the government's restriction on access.

The demonstrations and riots centering on the *Malari* Affair in January 1974 were followed by repressive government measures involving imprisonment without trial of large numbers of people and strict press censorship (see Chapter 11). The *Malari* Affair was, among other things, an expression of widespread economic discontent prompting criticism of the failures of the government's development policies. Although eventually, more than two years after the *Malari* Affair, all but three prisoners, who had been tried, were released. *Kopkamtib* surveillance persists in order to prevent criticism of government policies. The government has not lifted its ban on 11 of the most respected newspapers and weeklies.

In recent years, there has been some evolution in government policy statements. Since 1975 "Certificates of Non-Involvement"\*\*\* were declared no longer necessary prerequisites for access to jobs and education (see also Chapter 9). Because possession of the certificates was denied to the families of prisoners, and to released prisoners, more than half a million people and their dependants were deprived of employment and public education. Despite government statements the "Certificates of Non-Involvement" are still required; consequently many people considered suspect by the government, are effectively penalized and deprived of jobs.

Also in 1975, the government announced that ex-prisoners would have their right to vote restored. This move may have been politically significant; it is generally acknowledged that even in controlled elections, the government faces electoral pressure, especially from the Moslem vote. In the view of some political commentators, the government hoped thereby to draw some secular votes from the hundreds of thousands of released prisoners.

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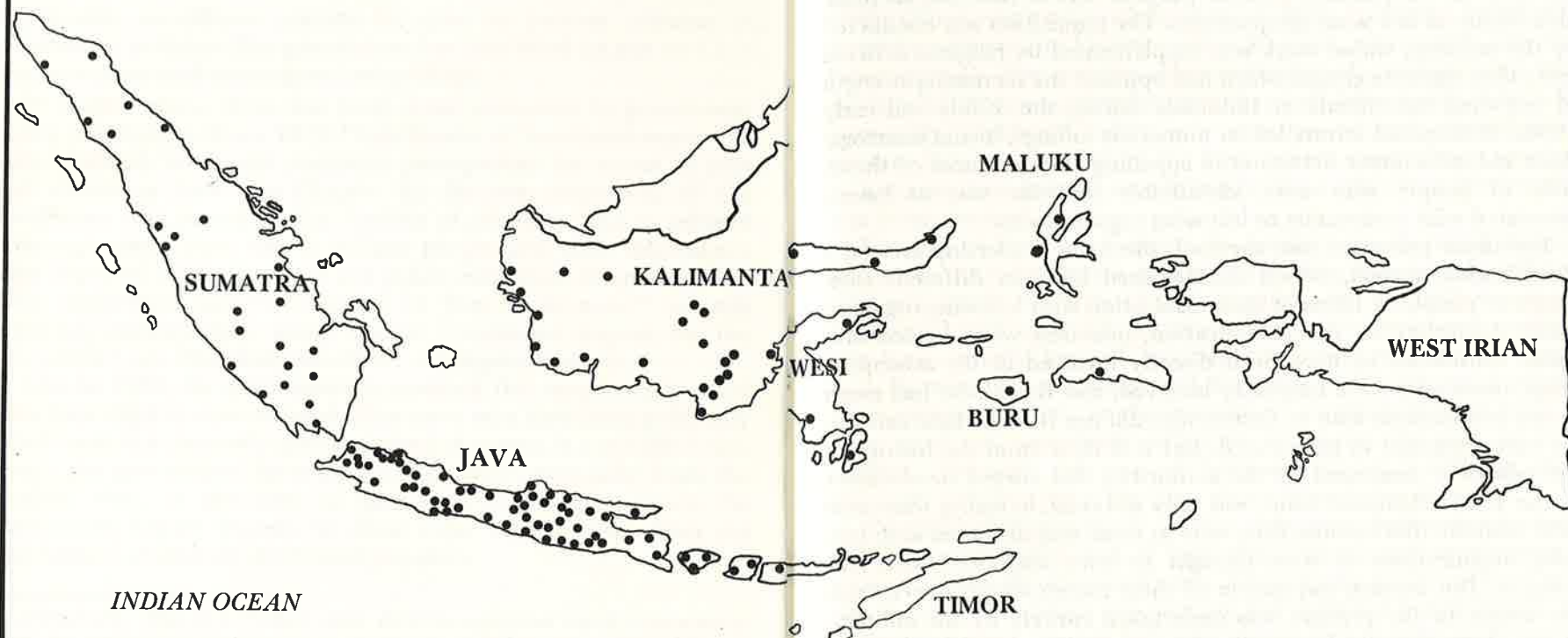
\* *Kopkamtib*. This is a massive state security apparatus which continues to exist and undertakes surveillance of all aspects of Indonesian political life (see Chapter 3).

\*\* "Certificate of Non-Involvement". A document stating that the holder was innocent of involvement in the events of 1965.

More recently, in December 1976, the government announced an apparently comprehensive release program for the 1965 prisoners (see Chapter 12). However, this program further delays the release of people held without trial for up to 11 years, and involves the transportation of large numbers of prisoners to permanent penal settlements. Moreover, the program is based on official prisoner statistics which greatly underestimate the actual number of prisoners.

**MAIN DETENTION CENTERS HOLDING UNTRIED PRISONERS  
HELD IN CONNECTION WITH THE 1965 EVENTS**

Small local prisons are not marked





## 2

## POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT: AFTER 1965

The complexities of political imprisonment in Indonesia following the 1965 attempted coup are most easily understood in terms of certain dominant features of government policy and of administrative procedures. Having crushed the attempted coup, the surviving Army leadership sought to eradicate all left-wing elements from the Indonesian body politic. This put at risk a considerable portion of the Indonesian adult population, of whom perhaps one quarter were in some way associated with left-wing organizations or mass movements of one kind or another. There followed what might be described as an "inquisition", whose purpose was to root out all those identifiable as left-wing sympathisers. The inquisition was conducted by the military, whose work was supplemented by religious activists and other vigilante groups which had opposed the increasing strength of left-wing movements in Indonesia during the 1950s and early 1960s. Widespread arrests led to numerous killings, brutal interrogations and subsequent detention in appalling circumstances of thousands of people who were identifiable in some way as having associated with communist or left-wing organizations.

For those prisoners who survived, the Army leadership created a classification system, which distinguished between different categories of people in terms of their association with left-wing organizations. According to this classification, prisoners were divided into those considered to have been directly involved in the attempted coup, those who were indirectly involved, and those who had much looser connections with it. Others who did not fit into these categories were supposed to be released. But it is clear from the history of the prisoners' treatment by the authorities that alleged involvement in the 1965 attempted coup, was only notional; in reality they were held without trial because they were in some way affiliated with left-wing organizations or were thought to have associated with left-wingers. The massive inquisition of these numerous prisoners, from the outset to the present, was undertaken entirely by the military. It was done completely outside the constitutional and legal framework, and except for those relatively few prisoners who had been brought to trial, the detainees were never permitted to see a lawyer, to have their cases examined in any court or in any judicial process. The entire procedure of arrest, interrogation and prolonged deten-

tion was undertaken entirely by the military, and all releases were determined by them too.

These then are the dominant features of the Indonesian system of political imprisonment. It was an inquisition carried out by the military against people whom it regarded as its left-wing enemies, and it was almost entirely conducted in an extra-judicial, extra-legal fashion, being essentially an arbitrary procedure decided on by the military.

When the attempted coup was suppressed by the Army, there were successive waves of arrests throughout the Republic. When the prisons were crammed full, temporary detention centers were established. The prisoners included Communist Party members and others who were affiliated to PKI mass organizations, or who were thought generally to have given support to the Communist Party. Others were arrested on suspicion because they had left their homes during the terror that swept the country during the final months of 1965. Others were arrested because of their extremely casual relationships with persons known, or thought to be, communist. Amnesty International's files provide many examples of prisoners who were denounced as communists because they had been involved in a dispute with neighbours, often over question of land ownership, or because they happened to be in a house where someone was arrested, or because they insisted on accompanying a spouse or relative who was being arrested.

The case of Bambang Supeno, an Amnesty International adoptee, illustrates the arbitrariness of arrest. Bambang Supeno, who is blind, deaf and dumb, was arrested in connection with the 1965 events and is detained without trial in Surakarta Prison. The Indonesian authorities have entirely ignored inquiries concerning the charges against him. He may have been detained because of some suspected offence never proven in court, or else because of an administrative error, or as a result of completely arbitrary action on the part of some soldiers. Although the case of Bambang Supeno is striking, there are many prisoners who, like him, are victims of circumstance.

All political arrests made at that time were undertaken by local military commanders, and all legal requirements such as warrants of arrest were totally dispensed with. The military could not cope with the vast numbers taken into custody and recruited people known for their strong opposition to left-wing movements to assist with interrogation. The process of interrogation was rough and arbitrary: on the basis of one word or the pointing of a finger, people were taken away to be killed. Interrogation was intended as revenge and meant to terrorize people. Torture was common and cruel. Estimates of the



numbers killed have varied from about 100 thousand to more than a million. In a Dutch television interview in October 1976, the head of the Indonesian state security agency, Admiral Sudomo, gave a definitive estimate: he said that *more than* half a million people were killed following the attempted coup. There can be no doubt about the authority of that estimate, except that the true figure is possibly much higher\*.

When "communist suspects" were arrested, their relatives and friends were afraid to visit them because of the real danger that they too would be arrested. Former associates of such prisoners were afraid to speak out for them. Prisoners were moved from camp to camp and eventually into more permanent, but inadequate, prisons. The numbers were so vast and involved chaotic transportation of prisoners and so many people died in detention, that the administration was incapable of keeping adequate records. Families of prisoners themselves often had to move because of desperate circumstances or local hostility. Many prisoners vanished without trace, and their families assumed they were dead.

Because of the massive scale of arrests, virtually every Indonesian now over the age of 30 can recall at least one occasion in the period following the attempted coup, when someone known to him or her was taken away. This might have been some close or distant relative, a school-mate or a university friend, a colleague or a neighbour. At that time, caution and obligations to their own dependants deterred them from making appeals on behalf of the prisoners. It was dangerous to be known to be helping a prisoner's family. As they were not in a position to help, nor even to discuss the position of individual prisoners, virtually every free person, including lawyers, avoided the question of political imprisonment. In a sense, the prisoners were forgotten by their own communities.

Even now, the plight of individual prisoners, or of prisoners generally, is a topic to be avoided, except when talking to the most intimate friends. People are still being arrested on the suspicion of being communist, or because they are suspected of some degree of involvement in the 1965 abortive coup. Numerous people are still being purged from jobs in government departments and agencies, and from

\* The grim events of 1965 and 1966 are described in a number of autobiographical short stories, by young Moslem men who describe how they were involved in the capture of communist suspects, assisted in interrogation and in the killing of prisoners. Ten of these short stories are translated by Harry Aveling in *GESTAPU: Indonesian Short Stories of the Abortive Communist Coup of 30 September 1965*, South East Asian Studies Working Paper No.6, University of Hawaii, 1975.

the armed forces, for allegedly having some connection with the PKI.

The events of the past decade have had increasingly disastrous repercussions on the prisoners' families. Less than 15% of all prisoners have received any visit from friends and relatives; and less than 3% are receiving regular visits from their relatives. Because of the widespread prejudice against prisoners and their families, and because it is difficult for married women to find work in Indonesian society, the pressure on the wives of prisoners has been such that out of the total population of married male prisoners, more than half have been divorced by their wives. Of those prisoners who are in the penal colony of Buru Island, more than three-quarters of the married male prisoners have been divorced by their wives. The same high statistic applies to prisons such as Cipinang, in Jakarta.

To summarize, the effects of the "inquisition" can be understood in crude statistical terms. In 1965, out of a total population of perhaps 120 million, there was an adult population of possibly 40 million. Of those adults, 10 million—that is, one-quarter of the adult population—were members of, or in some way connected with, mass organizations under Communist Party leadership. Those 10 million people were threatened by the inquisition. In the aftermath of the 1965 events, more than half a million were killed, and about one million people arrested, interrogated and detained. Many of them are still prisoners, held without trial after more than 11 years in detention. In mid-1977, they probably total as many as 100 thousand.

Mere statistics alone do not adequately describe the terrible experience of many people in the aftermath of the 1965 events. The following two accounts illustrate the arbitrariness and terror experienced by many people during that period. The first account is that of a prisoner, and the second of a person who became an inquisitor.

The prisoner, who cannot be named, was arrested in early 1966. Initially his wife was afraid to make inquiries about him for fear she too were arrested. Later, she searched for him and failed to find him. The prisoner could not contact his family. The wife could not support her children and was forced to abandon their family home. She assumed her husband was dead.

One of their children was six years old when his father was taken away. He was especially devoted to his father. He became emotionally disturbed and obsessive about finding his father, and walked the streets asking strangers whether they had seen him. In early 1974, eight years after his father's arrest, he had grown into a boy of 14 who was mentally retarded, still obsessive and wandering from home



in search of his father, showing passing strangers an old photograph. One day in early 1974, he walked by Salemba Prison in Jakarta and showed the photograph to a passing prison official. The boy thus found his father, after eight years. He was a prisoner in Salemba, where he had eventually been transferred.

The second account is that of an Indonesian writer who published an autobiographical short story using the pseudonym of Usamah.\* Usamah was fearful of a communist victory in the 1965 attempted coup. He described how he became a civilian member of an interrogation team, and on several occasions had to interrogate his own friends. The first was a woman schoolteacher, who during interrogation indicated that she knew him. Anxious that this should not be misinterpreted by the guards, he "was forced to order them to 'torture the bitch'". She was tortured, and later signed a confession.

The second case involved Usamah's former family doctor:

"I suggested to my superior that he appoint someone more scientifically minded to work on the doctor. The commander misunderstood me and sent a torturer. I watched the familiar gangland scene without being able to do anything to stop it. He screamed for mercy as the blows of the belt buckle rained down on him."

Later, Usamah had to interrogate another prisoner, a girl called Sri, who was a former classmate. He had to identify her and 13 other prisoners, and get them taken away by soldiers to be killed. Usamah identified Sri. He also identified Mrs Y, the schoolteacher he had previously interrogated, who was also on the list. The soldiers took the prisoners to Mojo, a village in the west of Solo. They shouted abuse at the prisoners, and "their shouts grew more hysterical and reverberated throughout the village as the 14 prisoners walked slowly to the river's edge. Sri cried as soon as she was taken off the truck. Mrs Y was calm, although her face was as bitter as a dry lemon. They were lined up in rows at the steep bank of the river. I can still hear them weeping. . .".

These two accounts illustrate many of the common features of the inquisition: arrest, extremely brutal interrogation, arbitrary selection of people for killing by soldiers and anti-communist militants, arbitrary detention of people without trial carried out in such a way

\* The article was first published in August 1969 in the Indonesian journal, *Horison*, and was subsequently re-published in the prestigious Jakarta paper, *Indonesia Raya*, which was banned in 1974. It is now available in English translation in Harry Aveling, *GESTAPU (Ibid.)*.

that prisoners still cannot be found by their families even after many years.



## 3

## ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL OF PRISONERS

The Army had rallied under the leadership of General Suharto to crush the attempted coup and to destroy its left-wing enemies. General Suharto, on 10 October 1965 set up a "Command for the Restoration of Security and Order", with himself as the Commander. The Command, known as *Kopkamtib*, has wide powers to investigate and control political activity in the Republic. The decrees and orders issued by *Kopkamtib* empower Army officers to arrest people for political reasons. To fulfil its tasks, *Kopkamtib* has at its disposal all the resources of the Army. The Command interrogates all arrested persons; in addition, it summons suspects to its centers for interrogation. *Kopkamtib* headquarters are in the same complex of buildings in Jakarta as the Ministry of Defence.

Arrest, interrogation, detention and classification are carried out by Army officers who derive their authority from *Kopkamtib*. Civilian officials, law officers, lawyers and the judiciary are entirely excluded from this process. Political prisoners are not allowed to consult lawyers, nor may they appeal to the court against wrongful detention. It is not until prisoners are brought to trial that their cases are transferred from *Kopkamtib* to the Office of the Prosecutor General, and it is not until then that civilian officials have access to their files. Only when the prisoners actually go on trial do they have the opportunity of consulting a lawyer, who is often appointed by the court.

Immediately after the 1965 attempted coup, it was standard practice for *Kopkamtib*, and Army officers acting under its authority to inflict extremely brutal torture when interrogating prisoners. This continued for several years, until gradually the use of torture in interrogation became less systematic. By 1970, those prisoners who had been detained for several years were less likely to be tortured; and whether a particular prisoner was tortured depended on the attitudes of the interrogating officers, and the practice at that particular interrogation center.

Today, torture is still used in the interrogation centers that exist in all the large towns throughout the Republic. Large cities have several interrogation centers. In Jakarta, for example, there are interrogation centers in Jalan Tanah Abang, Gunung Sahari and Kebayoran Lama. The center at Jalan Tanah Abang has been

particularly notorious for its use of torture.

Political prisoners can be kept in interrogation centers for varying periods of up to several years, and because they are under interrogation they are not allowed visitors. Quite often prisoners in regular political detention centers also are interrogated. It is common for prisoners who have been detained for more than 10 years to be subjected to renewed interrogation and they may be transferred to an interrogation center for this purpose.

Although 11 years have passed since the 1965 events, people are still often arrested on suspicion of past association with the banned organizations. Of these, the most unfortunate are officers and men serving in the armed forces who are suspected of some past affiliation with left-wing organizations, and are detained in special interrogation centers maintained by military units, where extremely brutal torture is usual (the Air Force detention center in Jakarta is particularly notorious).

Others as well as suspected communists are exposed to the *Kopkamtib* system. Although the people arrested and detained in connection with the *Malari* Affair of January 1974 were not regarded by the authorities as communists and were not tortured, many of them faced severe and prolonged interrogation (see Chapter 11). Journalists were summoned for interrogation and questioned about articles they had written. The distinguished former ambassador to the United States, Mr Soedjatmoko, was interrogated for three weeks for suspected involvement in the events of January 1974.

The various ways in which the state security system and control of prisoners operates is increasingly extreme and all-pervasive. The arbitrary powers available to *Kopkamtib*; the total military control in all matters relating to political arrest, interrogation and imprisonment, to the exclusion of civilian, judicial, and ordinary law-enforcement officials; the arbitrary nature of arrest, detention and classification, with denial of the right to appeal to the courts or to any other authority; the lack of supervision and the total absence of independent checks on the exercise of the almost unlimited powers of individual military officers; the use of torture; all these factors created an overwhelming structure of intimidation and repression. When Indonesian citizens are taken prisoner on suspicion of political deviations, they are at the mercy of their interrogators, who may treat them as they please.

## CLASSIFICATION OF PRISONERS

General Suharto relinquished his position as Commander of *Kopkamtib* when he became President of the Republic. But following the



student demonstrations of January 1974, he again appointed himself Commander of *Kopkamtib*, a position he still holds, indicating the importance he attaches to the state security agency. The workings of *Kopkamtib* are particularly important to political prisoners affecting their status and their prospects of release. This stems from *Kopkamtib*'s authority to classify prisoners by a process involving different military units, and especially their "screening teams" which examine the prisoners' files.

The official basis of *Kopkamtib*'s authority to classify prisoners is derived from the presidential instruction signed on President Sukarno's behalf by General Suharto and issued in May 1966. That decree defined three levels of "involvement" in the 1965 events. Under President Suharto, the 1966 presidential instruction was amended in 1969 to its present form currently applicable to all political prisoners held in connection with the 1965 events. The decree represents the Government's view of the varying degrees of alleged culpability of different categories of prisoners, and defines Government policy towards each category (see Appendix I).

This presidential instruction, as it stands and without further elaboration, has provided the sole basis for administrative action against more than one million people. Every Indonesian citizen who has been suspected of left-wing affiliation or opinions, fell into one or other of the vague categories defined in the presidential instruction. The purpose of interrogation and screening was to decide if and how a prisoner fitted into one of the categories listed in the decree.

These instructions to *Kopkamtib* were intended to be extraordinarily wide-ranging. They were supposed to apply not only to those who were suspected of having played an active part in the 1965 attempted coup, but also to those alleged to have known about it and to have "assumed an attitude" which suggested they had been sympathetic to it. It applied also to those who belonged to organizations before they were proscribed in 1966. Most imprecise of all, they were supposed to apply to "those who have shown sympathy for the PKI in their attitudes and actions".

The 1969 instructions were specifically intended to "improve" the screening of people serving in civilian government departments and in military units. Special screening teams employing large numbers of army officers operate in every region under the supervision of the central screening office in Jakarta. The amended 1969 instructions provided the basis for a major campaign which involved screening the staff of all departments and units, and this process was again initiated in 1974. There were many reports in 1974 and

1975 of regional and local departments, such as post offices, medical and educational institutions, being purged of large numbers of suspects. In some cities, entire government offices lost more than half their personnel following the screening of the staff.

The number purged was so great that some observers believe political screening was used partly to disguise rationalization of the administration, thereby eliminating the chronic problem of over-staffing in government departments. There appear to have been other reasons too, such as victimization and the continuing policy of punishment and stigmatization on the slenderest of evidence. Most of the victims of this general screening of people, non-prisoners found themselves put in one of the C sub-categories. In 1969 and 1970, C category people were still being arrested. By 1974 and 1975, they were supposed to have been released, and so most of those who were subject to the later screening did not end up as prisoners. However, people continued to be arrested as category A or B prisoners, or as prisoners of indeterminate category until the screening teams had completed their assessment of the individual cases concerned. Today, there are still category C prisoners and the authorities justify their continued imprisonment by maintaining that they have been re-categorized into category B.

Screening was aimed particularly at the "mass organizations" which were proscribed in 1966. These were listed in a presidential decision issued in May of that year, signed by General Suharto on behalf of President Sukarno. In addition to all the PKI committees, from the Central Committee down to the village committees, the list included 26 mass organizations and 23 educational institutions. It included in the case of the trade union federation *SOBSI* a sub-list of 62 trade unions, and *Baperki*, an organization of Indonesian citizens of Chinese ethnic origin, plus a sub-list comprising two mass organizations and the *Baperki*-run *Res Publica* University. The combined membership in 1965 of these organizations was estimated to be about twenty million. Allowing for double counts in the case of persons belonging to more than one organization and excluding those who were virtually inactive, the actual figure would probably have been about half this total. For the purposes of screening and arrest, the deciding factor was nominal rather than active membership. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the measures taken by the Government and the Army: the arrests, dishonourable dismissals and decrees of general ineligibility to obtain employment or education have, in some way, affected about ten million people plus the members of their families. Although the mass arrests that took place and still continue are in the main directed at left wingers,



their followers or supporters, many Indonesians, especially members of the armed forces, were also arrested for being "Sukarno-ists", since it was the continuing aim of President Suharto's "New Order" to condemn policies followed by President Sukarno in the period before September 1965.

Because the screening and classifying process did not in any way involve legal and judicial procedures, the categories to which prisoners were assigned by their military interrogators could not be questioned in any way. The prisoners are not informed of the category into which they have been placed, even though prison commanders keep lists of prisoners divided into the different categories. When prisoners are awaiting classification as categories A, B or C, they are placed in category X. This residual category is also used for those who are being re-classified—a haphazard process which can raise or lower a prisoner's status.

The formal classification system, although vague, nonetheless affected prisoners in a very direct way. Those in category A were deemed to have been "directly involved" in the 1965 events. These prisoners are supposed to be brought to trial, but the proceedings have been extremely slow: an average of less than one hundred prisoners a year having been tried. Then there are those in category B, deemed to have been "indirectly involved", whom the Government never intended to bring to trial but were being held indefinitely without trial. Category C, with its sub-categories, comprised those whose "involvement" in the 1965 events was presumed merely on the basis that "indications exist" or "may reasonably be assumed".

Most Indonesian political prisoners can only speculate about the category to which they have been assigned. They know that they have been classified as category A when they have been brought to trial; and they know they have been assigned to one of the sub-categories of category C when they are released. Occasionally, there are prisoners (such as those on the island of Buru, to which only category B prisoners are transported) who are reasonably certain what category they are in (see Chapter 4).

The general effect of the presidential decree about classification of prisoners rendered the entire process of political imprisonment a completely extra-legal, military monopoly. A vast military bureaucracy, quite arbitrary and unchallenged, made decisions affecting individual prisoners.

## CLASSIFICATION AND NUMBERS

The classification system allows local military commanders and their staff wide discretionary powers to classify particular prisoners. For the prisoners themselves, this arbitrary classification has far-reaching consequences. It may mean that the prisoner will theoretically face the prospect of a trial; it may mean that the prisoner faces the prospect of indefinite detention without trial; it may mean that the prisoner will be released. The implications for a prisoner of being placed in one or other of the categories are examined in this chapter.

### CATEGORY A

The Indonesian authorities regard category A prisoners as those whom they consider were directly involved in the 1965 abortive coup. This is the only group of prisoners whom the Government has stated it intends to bring to trial. Over the years, official statements have been made about the number of prisoners in category A:

- in September 1971, General Sugih Arto, then Prosecutor General, told foreign journalists that there were about 5,000 category A prisoners;
- in February 1972, General Sumitro, then Deputy-Commander of *Kopkamtib*, told journalists that there were 2,494 category A prisoners;
- in October 1973, General Ali Murtopo, deputy chief of the state intelligence agency and at that time a senior advisor to the President, told members of Amnesty International in Australia that there were 2,457 category A prisoners;
- in February 1976, Amnesty International was informed that the official *Kopkamtib* figure for category A prisoners was 1,745.

There have been a number of official statements about the Government's intention to bring category A prisoners to trial. In July 1974, the head of the Jakarta Prosecutor's Office, Soegiro Tjokrodidjojo, stated that 800 of the category A prisoners had been tried since 1965 (*Indonesian Times*, 26 July 1974). In February 1976, Amnesty International received the official *Kopkamtib* estimate that a further 745 category A prisoners were to be put on trial,



and that an estimated 200 cases would be tried annually. Moreover, it was stated that "the other 1,000 (category A prisoners) would be dealt with through re-classification".

Indonesian Government officials are prepared to concede that the rate at which category A prisoners have been brought to trial has been extremely slow. On average annually, less than a hundred have been tried since 1965. Despite repeated government statements that they intend to speed up the rate of category A trials, there has been no significant change in the annual number. At this rate, there will still be category A prisoners pending trial 15 years hence; which will mean that some category A detainees will have to spend a total of 25 years in prison before coming to trial. The Indonesian Government has been constantly criticized for the slow rate of trials of category A prisoners, as in effect it means many of the latter cannot expect to be tried within their lifetimes. This has prompted more recent official statements which try to avoid the issue. Hence, the *Kopkamtib* estimate that "the other 1,000 (category A prisoners) will be dealt with through re-classification", which apparently means that 1,000 category A prisoners will be re-classified as category B. And on 1 December 1976, the government announced that all category A prisoners "will certainly be tried in our courts of justice". Despite such assurances, it must be pointed out that government promises made over several years that category A prisoners would be brought to trial expeditiously have not led to any significant improvements.

Of the hundreds of thousands of prisoners arrested in connection with the 1965 events, a mere fraction have come to trial in 11 years. Besides, the conduct of trials is unsatisfactory (see Chapter 6).

### CATEGORY B

This category, by definition, includes not only those who had "assumed an attitude" which implied support for the attempted coup, but includes also those who were leaders and members of the PKI or related mass organizations. They are deemed to have been involved "indirectly" in the attempted coup. The Indonesian authorities have maintained that they would not put the category B prisoners on trial because there was insufficient evidence against them, even though the authorities continued to imprison them for alleged indirect involvement. The official view was that category B prisoners were a danger to security and public order. It was government policy to detain category B prisoners until they had abandoned their communist ideology and adopted the Indonesian principles of *Panca Sila*.<sup>\*</sup> Although the Government repeatedly stressed the

importance of "ideological rehabilitation" of category B prisoners, yet they never specified what they meant by an adequate process of rehabilitation, nor did they initiate programs to achieve the prisoners' rehabilitation. The Government never defined which criteria would indicate that "ideological rehabilitation" had been sufficient to warrant release.

Until 1975, less than five category B prisoners are known to have been released. In January 1975, nine prisoners known to be in category B were released. The fact that, after ten years, there were extremely few category B prisoners released revealed the emptiness of the government's policy based on the notion of "ideological rehabilitation".

In some ways, the plight of the category B prisoners arises from the most extreme aspects of the Indonesian Government's policy towards prisoners generally. Compare them, for example, with category A prisoners, who at least are promised trials even though the trial process is draconian and excessively slow; the latter at least face the prospect of release after serving specific sentences. And category C prisoners have been the subject of repeated government assurances that they would all be released, or else that they had been released. But nothing was known about category B prisoners, except that the Government intended to hold them indefinitely without trial, until the new programme of 1 December 1976 was announced.

In 1969 the Government transferred 10,000 prisoners from Java to penal camps on Buru Island; this scheme being intended to be a permanent solution to the problem of category B prisoners. It has been government policy that these prisoners should not leave Buru (see Chapter 9).

Until late 1976, Government policy as regards category B prisoners in no way suggested there was any possibility, even in the distant future, of all category B prisoners being released. Amnesty International is unaware of a single policy statement made before 1976, indicating that sometime in the future category B prisoners would not be a permanent feature of Indonesian society.

There was a remarkable change in government policy statements on 1 December 1976, when the head of the Indonesian state security agency announced plans to release and/or "transmigrate"\* all category B detainees (see Appendix II, for Admiral Sudomo's statement).

The new government program announced by Admiral Sudomo on

<sup>\*</sup> *Panca Sila*: these are the five "pillars" of the Indonesian State: belief in one God, nationalism, humanitarianism, democracy and social justice.

1 December 1976 was avowedly for the "release of the category B detainees" over a period of three years. During 1977 and 1978, 10,000 of these prisoners are to be released each year. In 1979, the remainder are to be released.

The 1 December program indicates significant progress in the Indonesian Government's attitude towards the prisoners. It was the very first time the Government had ever stated that all category B prisoners *could* be released, and that the Government intended to release all these prisoners. However, the Government's statement cannot be accepted at face value. Admiral Sudomo talked about releasing category B prisoners, but simultaneously announced the Government's intention to transport them to "transmigration centers in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and other places". Prisoners especially from Java are to be "transmigrated" to the penal island of Buru and other islands. "Release" of this kind cannot be thought of in the generally accepted sense, since the prisoners are virtually banished from their homes, in some cases to penal settlements more than 1,000 kilometers away from their families and home areas, to which they are not allowed to return. For those compulsorily transported to Buru or equivalent penal colonies, the so-called "releases" in fact amount to a fate worse than their present imprisonment without trial.

From what is known of the Government's program on Buru Island, Amnesty International has consistently and vigorously criticized the Indonesian Government for its schemes to "transmigrate" prisoners to penal colonies (see Chapter 9). The Indonesian Government has maintained that this "transmigration" of prisoners is "in accordance with the guidelines on national transmigration as set out in the second Five Year National Development Program". Amnesty International finds the Indonesian Government's explanation completely unacceptable and has pointed out that such policy and practice contravenes basic internationally-accepted standards of human rights. Transportation to indefinite detention in a penal colony cannot be interpreted as equivalent to release to ordinary life.\* Unlike ordinary Indonesian citizens, who choose to be "transmigrated", the prisoners cannot choose whether to be "transmigrated" rather than allowed to return to their families.

The reasons given by the Indonesian Government for their policy of "transmigration", delaying for a further three years the release

\* Transmigration: Ostensibly resettlement in accordance with the Government's intention to even out the distribution of population in the major islands. But the effect for political prisoners is virtually compulsory exile from their home regions and families.

of people whom it considers *can* be released, are based on arguments about unemployment in Indonesia. Admiral Sudomo said: "There must be sufficient employment opportunities for them, since unemployment would create fertile ground for all kinds of acts contrary to law, and this in itself would pose a threat to the national security, particularly to law and order."

National unemployment and underemployment in Indonesia is not a phenomenon for which prisoners can be blamed. The Government arguments about unemployment, used to justify the more than three year delay over releasing prisoners and the need to "transmigrate" them, is completely unacceptable, since these arguments apply to tens of thousands of prisoners, many of whom have been held for more than 11 years without trial and whose presumed guilt has never been established. National unemployment is a problem for the Government to solve in other ways, and category B prisoners should be released immediately. Amnesty International is in no doubt that the prisoners' greatest fear is compulsory "transmigration". They want to be released.

Amnesty International believes that only when the Indonesian Government implements prompt release of all category B prisoners, without qualification and without schemes to "transmigrate" them to Buru and other places, will the prisoners' position really change.

As regards the number of category B prisoners currently held, the Government's statistics have been confusing and misleading:

- in November 1970, Sean MacBride (then Chairman of Amnesty International's Executive Committee, also Nobel laureate), was told by General Sudharmono that there were 15,000 category B prisoners;
- in February 1972, General Sumitro told journalists that there were 16,076 category B prisoners;
- an article in the Indonesian newspaper *Merdeka* on 16 September 1974 quoted official statistics, that there were 27,000 category B prisoners, of whom 10,000 were on Buru and the remainder in various prisons in Java;
- official *Kopkamtib* figures, communicated to Amnesty International in February 1976, gave the total number of category B prisoners at that time as 29,480. (The official breakdown of the total number of category B prisoners is given in the following table).

\* Transportation: Compare for example, the practice of the British in the 19th century of transporting criminal prisoners to its Australian Colony.



Total of the category B detainees  
and those already released, according to *Kopkamtib*  
(February 1976)

No.	Regions	Detained	Released
1	Aceh	32	—
2	North Sumatra	1,728	62
3	West Sumatra/Riau	2,810	—
4	South Sumatra	588	—
5	Jakarta Raya	981	102
6	West Java	1,124	156
7	Central Java/Yogyakarta	1,799	828
8	East Java	1,404	47
9	East Borneo	1,172	—
10	South/Central Borneo	274	—
11	West Borneo	593	34
12	North/Central Celebes	1,515	10
13	South/Southeast Celebes	422	—
14	Moluccas	710	19
15	East Indonesia	363	51
16	Irian Jaya	24	—
17	Plantungan	380	—
18	Nusa Kambangan	2,379	—
19	Buru Island	11,085	—
20	Central Interrogative Team	87	—
Total		29,470	1,309

These *Kopkamtib* statistics are demonstrably false. To take the example of just one region—Central Java—the actual number of category B prisoners detained in that region is at least twice the *Kopkamtib* total. The *Kopkamtib* figure, although received by Amnesty International in February 1976, relates to the situation prevailing in 1975. It was in 1975 that the government announced that they had released 1,309 category B prisoners, which is the total figure of those released according to the *Kopkamtib* statistics. The information available to Amnesty International about the number

of prisoners in Central Java at that time gave a very different picture from that of the *Kopkamtib* statistics.

The official statistics for Central Java are confusing because figures for two major detention centers in that region (Plantungan and Nusa Kambangan) are given separately from the Central Java statistics. Therefore, the official statistic items numbered 7, 17 and 18 are combined to give a total number of category B prisoners in Central Java of 4,558, plus 828 released, giving an overall total of 5,386.

According to equivalent statistics available to Amnesty International, there were in the known main detention centers of Central Java, at that time, the following numbers of prisoners:

Nusa Kambangan	4,800
Plantungan	420
Purwokerto	750
Pekalongan	490
Bulu	120
Mlaten	680
Ambarawa	910
Magelang	180
Jogjakarta	590
Surakarta	470
Pati	460
<hr/>	
Total	9,870

The total number of prisoners in the known main detention centers in Central Java, according to Amnesty International information, totalled 9,870.

The official *Kopkamtib* statistics related only to category B prisoners, and separate figures were given for category A prisoners, which, according to *Kopkamtib*, totalled 1,745. The majority of the category A prisoners were detained in the prisons near the capital, Jakarta, in West Java. Even allowing for the fact that a number of category A prisoners are included in the Amnesty International figures given above, the real number of prisoners in this category in just the two regions of East Java and Central Java cannot be more than a few hundred. (Moreover, Government statistics given from 1974 onwards have consistently excluded category C prisoners, and the Amnesty International figures previously mentioned also do not include category C prisoners.)

The discrepancy between official *Kopkamtib* statistics and the



real situation in Central Java is considerable. Taking into account only the main detention centers in Central Java, at the end of 1974 there were at least 4,000 more prisoners than the official figure of 5,376. When remaining detention centers in the other cities and towns of Central Java are taken into consideration, the actual numbers of category B prisoners in Central Java must be considerably higher. Amnesty International consider the official *Kopkamtib* figures amount to no more than about half the actual totals. The actual numbers are considerably more than twice the total admitted by *Kopkamtib*.

It is because of such serious discrepancies that the *Kopkamtib* figure of 29,470 category B prisoners in detention during 1975 cannot be considered accurate. Claims by the Indonesian authorities that they hold less than 30,000 category B prisoners conceal the truth.

While the official breakdown of the category B statistics reveals that political prisoners are to be found throughout the Republic, the figures themselves are a serious underestimate of the actual numbers of category B prisoners being held. At the very least, the actual number exceeds the official total of 29,470 by a minimum of 30,000 more prisoners not accounted for in the official statistics.

### CATEGORY C

Category C comprises "persons of whom indications exist or who may reasonably be assumed to have been directly or indirectly involved" in the 1965 attempted coup. In practice, category C is divided into the following three sub-categories:

- category C-1. This sub-category resembles category B and includes persons whom the authorities consider to have been involved in the coup to a lesser degree than those in category B;
- category C-2. This includes those who were members of the mass organizations affiliated with the PKI or other mass organizations "based on the same principles" as the PKI;
- category C-3. This includes those who have "shown sympathy for the PKI by their attitudes and actions".

The sub-categories C-2 and C-3 apply also to people who are not prisoners but who may have been arrested for interrogation and detention and were subsequently released. The people in these two sub-categories have been subjected to the mass screening and purges (see Chapter 3).

The Indonesian Government has made particularly misleading

statements concerning category C prisoners:

- in November 1970, Sean MacBride was told by General Sugih Arto, then Prosecutor General, that government policy as regard category C prisoners was that they should eventually be released; that the original target had been late 1969 or early 1970, and that it was government policy to release all the category C prisoners by the end of 1971;
- General Sudharmono, then Secretary of the State Secretariat, told Sean MacBride in November 1970 that there were at that time 25,000 category C prisoners;
- in August 1971, General Sugih Arto stated that there were 50,000 category C prisoners, all of whom would be freed before the end of the year. In a speech to foreign journalists in September 1971, he said that the Indonesian Government was releasing category C prisoners and hoped not to have a single one left by the end of that year;
- in October 1971, General Marpaung, speaking for the Minister of Defence and Security, said that there were 3,112 category C prisoners;
- in January 1972, President Suharto announced that "all 22,000 category C prisoners" had been released;
- in February 1972, General Sumitro, then head of *Kopkamtib*, told journalists that there were no longer any category C prisoners in detention;
- in August 1972, and again in March 1973, President Suharto stated that all category C prisoners had been released and had been returned to normal life;
- in October 1973, the figures for political prisoners given by General Ali Murtopo to members of Amnesty International in Australia included no category C prisoners;
- a Dutch parliamentary mission which visited Indonesia in September 1974 was told by Mr Ali Said, the Prosecutor General, that the category C prisoners had *not* all been released. He said the decision had been made in principle to release these prisoners before 1972, but the power to decide on the phasing of these releases had been left to regional military commanders and these commanders exercised their powers in different ways. According to the Prosecutor General, "It is quite possible that one territory might have reached its target before another, but it is certain that ultimately in 1975 everyone must have solved this problem".

In January and in August 1972, and again in March 1973, President Suharto declared that all category C prisoners had been released. Other leading Indonesian generals claimed that there were no longer any category C prisoners in detention. In September 1974, the Prosecutor General revealed that there were an undisclosed number of category C prisoners in detention.

It is clear that, despite assurances by the President, and by the then Prosecutor General, there are still large numbers of category C prisoners in detention throughout Indonesia; and there is no doubt that the regional military commanders with "the power to decide on the phasing of these releases" have "exercised their power in different ways".

For example, on 5 October 1976, long after the deadline when it was "certain that ultimately in 1975 everyone must have solved this problem", the *Indonesian Times*, published in Jakarta, reported that the military commander of the Merdeka Division, Brigadier General Edi Sugarto, the official responsible for the maintenance of security in Manado, had released a group of 15 prisoners. Of these, six were category C. (The remaining nine prisoners were category B, and were described as having been "released" by changing their "status" to "city or house arrest".)

Official government estimates of the total prisoner population since 1972 have entirely ignored the category C prisoners, thereby giving a false impression of the real total number of all categories of prisoners. Again, to take only one recent example, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mr Adam Malik, when questioned by European parliamentarians in the debate following his speech to the Council of Europe at Strasbourg in April 1975, insisted that the total of prisoners in all categories in Indonesia was 20,000. The figure given by the Indonesian Foreign Minister was demonstrably false, since it failed even to account for all the prisoners in category B, and was clearly intended to give the misleading impression that all category C prisoners had been released.

## OVERALL DIMENSIONS OF IMPRISONMENT

When the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, replied to questions about political detention in Indonesia at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in the session of 22 April 1975, he indicated the scale of imprisonment in Indonesia:

"Immediately after the abortive coup in 1965, we began in 1966 to seize people for interrogation who had been connected with the coup. The number at that time was about 600,000. On the basis of our prevailing laws, our religious conscience and our humanitarian conscience, we immediately began to discover whether people were guilty or not. In that process, from a total of 600,000 there are now only about 20,000 left, and they fall into various categories. These people will be brought to trial. Those who already have been found not guilty have been released. As others are found not guilty, they too will be released."

It was noted in the previous chapter that the Indonesian Foreign Minister's claim that "there are now only about 20,000 left", is demonstrably false. Moreover, it has never been Indonesian government policy that all those prisoners remaining "will be brought to trial".

The Foreign Minister's statement about the overall numbers detained since 1965, giving the figure of 600,000, relates to arrests in the years immediately following 1965. His figures should be compared with those of Admiral Sudomo, Chief of Staff of *Kopkamtib*, who said in an interview with a Dutch television journalist that after the coup, 750,000 people were arrested. (*Televisie Radio Omroep Stichting*, 9 October 1976).

The official figures of 600,000 or 750,000 arrested, do not include the number who were killed. In the same television interview, Admiral Sudomo said that half a million "communists" were killed. In another interview with the same journalist, quoted in the Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* (11 June 1976), Admiral Sudomo said, "Well, there were between 450,000 and 500,000 [alleged communists killed after the attempted coup], but those had not been killed by the military forces. This was revenge from the people of Java and Sumatra, mostly Islamic youngsters. If the communists had come to power it would have been much worse".



The official figures also do not take account of the pattern of arrest and detention that has continued long after the immediate aftermath of the abortive coup. The former Indonesian Prosecutor General, General Sugih Arto, explained to a gathering of foreign journalists in Jakarta in September 1971, "It is impossible to say exactly how many political prisoners there are. It is a floating rate, like the Japanese yen vis-à-vis the dollar". He further explained, "The thing is that local commanders have the power to arrest and interrogate any person under suspicion of being a threat to national security. These people can be held for an unlimited period of time. It is not always compulsory to report such security arrests to the central command in Jakarta".

In October 1972, a senior officer of *Kopkamtib* said that the number of political prisoners being held had its "ups and downs". This was because "On the very day we release or sentence someone, we shall probably be arresting others".

All available information from Indonesia confirms the official statements that arrests continued to be made of people suspected of involvement in the 1965 events. Because of the so-called "floating rate" in the number of prisoners, it is important to know what the actual scale of imprisonment is at any one time, rather than accept the artificial and illusory precision of official figures. Being aware of this problem, Amnesty International rounds off figures to the relevant tens of thousands.

The official figures of 600,000 and 750,000 people arrested and imprisoned, should be considered also in relation to the Indonesian Government's claims about releases. One statement about releases was issued by the Indonesian Embassy in London on 14 November 1972: the statistics released then were described as official statistics originating from the Prosecutor General's Office and the Department of Security and Defence about the number of political prisoners released each year from 1966 to 1972:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of prisoners released</u>
1966	146,200
1967	94,000
1968	86,000
1969	61,000
1970	49,000
1971	35,000
1972	30,000
Total	<u>501,200</u>

After 1972, official overall statistics were no longer made available. The only figures about releases are those relating only to category B prisoners, 1,309 of whom the Government claimed to have released by the end of December 1975, and 2,500 were declared released on 1 December 1976.

Note that the above listed figures add up to 501,200. These figures were given at a time when the Government claimed that it had released all category C prisoners, and the figures issued were intended by the Government to bear out this claim. In other words, by November 1972, when the Indonesian Embassy in London released these statistics, the Indonesian President had already announced in January and August of that year that all category C prisoners had been released, and the official statistics were intended to confirm that statement. This may be why subsequent figures were never declared, and subsequently there were announcements only about the relatively small number of category B prisoners.

The Foreign Minister mentioned 600,000 prisoners and Admiral Sudomo mentioned 750,000. According to their own reckoning therefore, the Indonesian authorities have failed to account for at least 90,000 prisoners not claimed to have been released, (that is, when arrest totals of 600,000 or 750,000 are compared with a release total of just over 500,000 people).

In line with this conclusion, there are other grounds for questioning the accuracy of official government statements about the number of prisoners. In the previous chapter, the situation of category B and category C prisoners was examined. Study of the former supported the conclusion that, according to the official *Komkamtib* prisoner statistics, the alleged total numbers were at most only half the real totals; accordingly there are strong grounds for believing that the number of prisoners was much more than double the total admitted by *Kopkamtib*. The official *Kopkamtib* figure for category B prisoners was almost 30,000; and taking into account only this category, it can be concluded that there are at present more than 55,000 prisoners in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the preceding chapter's examination of category C prisoners revealed that this category is completely ignored in official statistics after 1972, but that nonetheless many of these prisoners are still in detention. Then there are those prisoners assigned to category X, described by the authorities as "non-classified". According to the February 1976 official *Kopkamtib* figures, they totalled 3,273; but the actual numbers are virtually impossible to verify independently.

In addition there are the category A prisoners who, according to



the February 1976 official *Kopkamtib* statistics, totalled 1,745.

Taking all these factors into consideration, Amnesty International concludes that there are certainly more than 55,000 prisoners held without trial in Indonesia, and the actual number of prisoners held without trial is probably about 100,000.

## 6

### TRIALS

By early 1966, the Army leadership had destroyed left-wing mass organizations, and they next forced the resignation of President Sukarno, who was replaced by General Suharto. The military government of President Suharto's "New Order" then set out formally to discredit the Sukarno administration. One of the ways in which this was done was by means of public show trials, the most prominent being that of Dr Subandrio, who was Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister until 11 March 1966. In October of that year, he was put on trial on charges of subversion. The hearings before a special military tribunal in Jakarta were clearly intended by the military government to be a publicity exercise; a denunciation of the ousted Sukarno administration's policies. Subandrio was sentenced to death on the basis of flimsy evidence relating to his performance of official duties.

During the early months of 1966, a PKI leader, Njono, was brought to trial and accused among other things of having organized the recruitment of members of pro-PKI mass organizations to support the coup at Halim. He denied the charges but was found guilty and sentenced to death. He was executed.

Next came the prominent trial of Sudisman, General Secretary of the Indonesian Communist Party, before a special military tribunal in Jakarta in mid-1967. Sudisman insisted the PKI knew nothing about the attempted coup and that the affair was an internal army matter. The military tribunal sentenced him to death. He was executed in October 1968.

From 1967 until the present, prisoners have been put on trial in different parts of the Republic. By early 1977, of the hundreds of thousands arrested in connection with the 1965 events, the government claimed to have tried about 800 prisoners in all, that is, an annual average of less than 100 cases.

Initially the trials were held before special military tribunals, which invariably imposed the death sentence. Later, the political prisoners were tried by the ordinary courts and the death penalty was frequently imposed. In recent years, a small but increasing number have not been sentenced to death, but to sentences ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment.

The government's handling of the trials has tended to take two

forms. A very few were given great prominence and were in every way political show trials. The hearings of special military tribunals were filmed, and broadcast outside the courtrooms through loudspeakers to large crowds. However, most of the trials were held without advance warning and in secrecy. They were occasionally reported briefly in the press, which would state whether the prisoner had been found guilty and sentenced to death or to a very long jail sentence. Throughout a decade of trials Amnesty International has not found a single case of a prisoner not being found guilty.

By any standards, these trials cannot be considered fair. They are rituals used by the government for political and public relations ends. The defendant is invariably convicted. The death penalty or extremely long jail sentences are, as a matter of course, imposed by the courts on people who were innocent of criminal offences.

The courts continue to pass death sentences. Although, judging from the more recent cases known to Amnesty International, a number of death sentences have not been carried out, it is impossible to estimate how many have been implemented since official figures are not available. Possibly more than 50 prisoners currently held are under sentence of death. There have been no reports of commutations of death sentences.

#### *The Trial of Dr Subandrio \**

Dr Subandrio was Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister until 11 March 1966. In October of that year, he was put on trial on charges of subversion. The evidence presented at his trial was completely circumstantial. The proceedings were clearly intended by the military authorities to be a publicity exercise, using the courts to indict the policies of the ousted Sukarno administration. Subandrio was, therefore, placed on trial as a proxy for President Sukarno, who still had popular support, which inhibited the military authorities from attacking him directly. The charges of subversion against Subandrio were based on his actions as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister before and after the 1965 attempted coup. The court proceedings were used to discredit President Sukarno for his domestic reliance on the PKI and for his foreign policy favouring the People's Republic of China.

Subandrio was born in Kependjen, near Malang in East Java on 15 September 1914. When at secondary school, he became active in nationalist youth movements. In 1942, he graduated from medical

\* Like many other Indonesians, such as President Suharto, Dr Subandrio is known only by the single name.

school and became an assistant surgeon at the Central General Hospital in Jakarta. During the Japanese occupation he became director of a Semarang hospital.

After the establishment of the Indonesian Republic, he joined the Indonesian Socialist Party (PSI). In 1947 he was sent to the United Kingdom as the Indonesian Republic's first representative there, and established a Republican information office. He set up the first Indonesian Embassy in London in 1949 and was appointed Ambassador in 1950.

In the mid-1950s, he was appointed his country's first Ambassador to Moscow, an appointment which he held for two years. In 1957, he returned to Indonesia to take up the post of Secretary General of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry. At about this time he left the Socialist Party and joined the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). Shortly afterwards, he left the PNI when a regulation was introduced banning government employees from being members of political parties.

After only several months in his new post, he was appointed Foreign Minister, a position which he held until his dismissal and arrest in March 1966. With the establishment of "Guided Democracy" in 1959, Subandrio became increasingly identified with President Sukarno's foreign policy of alignment with Third World countries and with socialist and communist governments. He also became identified with President Sukarno's external initiatives including confrontation with the Dutch which led to the transfer of West Irian from the Netherlands to the Republic, and later military confrontation with the Federation of Malaysia.

From 1963, Subandrio became increasingly involved in economic policy-making. Continuing as Foreign Minister, he became Second, and subsequently First Deputy Prime Minister, and also held a number of key posts in economic affairs. In addition, he was put in charge of the state intelligence unit, BPI. Although identified with Sukarno's policy of working closely with the PKI over domestic and foreign policy, Subandrio has never been regarded as an active supporter of the Communist Party.

When the 1965 coup attempt took place, he was away from Jakarta on a tour of North Sumatra. He returned immediately and, continuing to hold office in Sukarno's Cabinet, supported the President's attempts to stop the widespread killings and to restore national unity. He was sharply criticized by the Army and militant advocates of their New Order and while still Deputy Prime Minister he was kept under surveillance by the Army. He was arrested five months after the abortive coup and his trial began in October 1966.