

December 1992

## HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN INDONESIA

### ISSUE

Indonesia has a long history of serious human rights abuses, the most well-known cases being associated with East Timor and Aceh.

### BACKGROUND - ACEH

In Aceh, a province in Northern Sumatra, a rebellion surfaced over the past three years, led by the GPK (Aceh Mederka - Free Aceh Movement). Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) crushed the rebellion in 1989 and are believed to have terrorized local villagers into not supporting the GPK. It is estimated that between 1000 and 1500 civilians have been killed by ABRI in Aceh. Since then, the situation has much improved with the abatement of the anti-subversion campaign by the security forces by the fall of 1991. There are still reports of abuse, but in terms of sheer scale, the situation has improved dramatically. Whatever remaining abuses appear to be isolated incidents.

### BACKGROUND - EAST TIMOR

The situation in East Timor continues to impact on Indonesia's human rights record after Indonesian soldiers opened fire on 12 November, 1991, on a procession of around 1,500 mourners who were marking the death of an East Timorese killed in an incident in October. Between 50 and 100 people were killed and many were injured. The international community has condemned the shootings.

On December 26, 1991, a Commission of Inquiry set up by the Indonesian Government to investigate the shootings, submitted a preliminary report, which increased the early casualty figures from 19 to 50 and acknowledged that the military had lost control. Indonesian President Soeharto took the following initiatives after the issuance of the report: a) its immediate translation and release; b) removal of two generals most directly responsible for the shootings; c) set up of a military inquiry, which took disciplinary action against six officers in the chain of command plus the court martialling of eight others including four officers, three non-commissioned officers and one private; d) review of the Indonesian development program in East Timor; e) the army commander was instructed to account for those missing and; f) public apologies to the families. In addition, the Indonesian government invited a representative of the United Nations Secretary General to visit East Timor.

The report of the military investigation issued in February indicated that six senior officers, eight junior officers, and soldiers of other ranks will be subject to military discipline

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