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T A P O L B U L L E T I N

Published by: TAPOL, the British Campaign for the Release
of Indonesian Political Prisoners

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General Sumitro:

"JURIDICALLY WE'RE WEAK, FROM A HUMANITARIAN POINT OF
VIEW, WE'RE EVEN WEAKER..."

General Sumitro, the man who heads the powerful Army Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib) which controls the political and social life of Indonesia, has recently been quoted as saying with regard to the political prisoner issue: "Juridically, we're weak, and from a humanitarian point of view, we're even weaker."

This amazingly frank statement was made in a discussion between General Sumitro and the Dutch churchman, Prof. Verkuyl who spent several weeks in Indonesia recently. It is quoted by Prof. Verkuyl in an interview he gave to the Dutch newspaper Trouw, published on 23rd June, 1973.

But to show where Kopkamtib's priorities lie, the General first told Prof. Verkuyl: "For us, the priority goes to state security." These were his opening remarks in reply to a question from Prof. Verkuyl about the fate of the 'B' category prisoners, those who are being held indefinitely even though there is no evidence to bring them to court. Prof. Verkuyl had asked: "If there is to be no juridical settlement for these people, is there no way to ensure that they can be free as soon as possible?"

Only a short while ago, General Sumitro was quoted in the Indonesian press as saying that the detention of 'B' prisoners "would not last for ever". He said this a short while after his appointment as commander in chief of Kopkamtib, a post which he took over from General Suharto, the Indonesian President, in April this year.

So at last the commander of the powerful Kopkamtib has admitted that the condemnation of Indonesia's continued detention of political prisoners on juridical and humanitarian grounds is justified, and he has even hinted that the detention of 'B' prisoners may not last for ever. Yet, he still places security considerations above all else.

These admissions are undoubtedly the result of growing concern being expressed in the countries whose governments aid Indonesia over the flagrant violation of human rights in that country. But there is no reason to believe that his pious recognition of criticism will lead to any radical change in the political prisoner situation unless more attention is paid to the problem internationally, especially in those countries where it hurts most, including Great Britain.

These statements should be taken, therefore, as a signal for all concerned to redouble their efforts to bring the plight of Indonesia's political prisoners to the attention of world opinion.

Two Hundred Trials a Year Promised

General Sumitro also stated recently that, commencing with 1973, two hundred 'A' category prisoners would be brought to trial annually until the entire category had been tried.

The precise number of 'A' prisoners is not known. President Suharto recently mentioned a figure of 2,000 but the Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, speaking in The Hague a few months before, put the figure as high as 10,000. Even taking the lowest figure to be correct, General Sumitro's yearly target means that it will take ten years to complete the trials.

Most of the 'A' prisoners have been in detention for at least six years, and many for almost eight years. Thus it means that, even if the targets are fulfilled, some will have been held for twelve to fifteen years or even longer before being tried. So far, with seven months of 1973 already gone, there have been at most fifteen trials....

In the House of Commons:

THIRTY-NINE MPs EXPRESS DEEP CONCERN OVER INDONESIA'S POLITICAL PRISONERS

An Early Day Motion placed on the Commons Order Papers for the first time on 11th July, expressing deep concern over the Indonesian political prisoner situation, had won the support of thirty-nine members by the time the House recessed for the summer in the last week of July. The motion reads:

That this House views with deep concern the consistent pattern of violations of human rights in Indonesia, takes note that there are in that country some 55,000 political prisoners detained without trial, many without access to families, friends or legal advisers, and inadequately fed, and calls upon Her Majesty's Government to make known to the Indonesian Government the hopes of the British people for a speedy end to this situation.

The motion was sponsored by: Peter Archer, QC (Labour), Airey Neave (Conservative), Emyl Hoeson (Liberal), Sam C. Silkin (Labour), Ronald Mitchell (Labour) and Ernle Money (Conservative).

The following Members added their support to the motion in the two weeks before the recess commenced:

Frank Allaun (Labour); Guy Barnett (Labour), Albert Booth (Labour); Arthur Davidson (Labour); Jack Dormand (Labour); Robert Edwards (Labour); Andrew Faulds (Labour); Edward Fletcher (Labour); Sir John Foster QC (Conservative); Reginald Prosser (Labour); William Hamling (Labour); Peter Hardy (Labour); Mark Hughes (Labour); Hugh Jenkins (Labour); James Johnson (Labour); Russell Johnston (Liberal); Barry Jones (Labour); Sir Elwyn Jones, QC (Labour); Frank Judd (Labour);

Joan Lester (Labour); Marcus Lipton (Labour); William Molloy (Labour);*)Lawrence Pavitt (Labour); Paul B. Rose (Labour); Ivor Richard; QC (Labour); James Sillars (Labour); Dr. Tom Stuttaford (Conservative); Cyril Smith (Liberal); James Tinn (Labour); Thomas Urwin (Labour); Shirley Williams (Labour); Christopher Woodhouse (Conservative).

*) R. King Murray (Labour);

In the House of Lords:

LORD AVEBURY QUESTIONS DEFENCE SECRETARY ON INDONESIA

Lord Avebury, the Liberal peer, questioned the British Defence Secretary, Lord Carrington in the House of Lords on 23rd July, in connection with a statement he had reportedly made during a visit to Indonesia in February this year in which he publicly commended the Indonesian Government on the achievement of domestic security.

When the Defence Secretary denied having made such a statement and said that he had been much impressed with Indonesia's economic progress, Lord Avebury wondered why the statement attributed to Lord Carrington, which had been published both in the Indonesian press as well as in The Times had not been denied by the Ministry of Defence. He pressed the Defence Secretary to agree that it would be most inappropriate to make remarks commending the Indonesian Government on the attainment of domestic security at a time when there were no fewer than 55,000 political prisoners in Indonesia held without trial, and in the majority of cases for nearly eight years.

Since Indonesia is the country which receives the largest amount of British aid outside the Commonwealth, he went on, did the Defence Secretary not think it appropriate to make representations to the Indonesian Government in order that they either bring these people to trial within a reasonable time or release them.

Replying, Lord Carrington admitted that there were indeed a large number of political detainees in Indonesia, though he said he had been told that the figure given by the Indonesian Government was 18,000. He added that the Indonesian Government are aware of Her Majesty's Government's views on the subject.

Unfortunately, Lord Carrington did not divulge to the House of Lords what these views were.

THE NUMBERS GAME CONTINUES

Just about the time when the Amnesty International publication, Indonesia Special, came out, estimating that the number of political prisoners in Indonesia is at least 55,000, the Indonesian President, General Suharto told the Indonesian People's Congress that there are 2,000 'A' category prisoners and 13,117 'B' prisoners. The Indonesian Ambassador in London, Rusmin Nurjadin, takes that to mean that there are now 15,117 politi-

cal prisoners, or so he said in a letter sent in July to Guy Barnett, MP.

Yet this totally ignores the fact that President Suharto also said in the same speech that there are "a number of prisoners who, being still under investigation, have not yet been included in any classification". This little extra sentence, which the Ambassador conveniently omitted to mention, means that no-one can take the 15,117 figure seriously, even as an approximation.

To expect anyone to believe that there are only 15,117 political prisoners in Indonesia is to fly in the face of the known facts. Apart from the 10,000 prisoners on Buru Island and the 600 women prisoners at Piantungan in Central Java, there are at the very least 5,000 in the capital of Jakarta alone, several thousand in Central Java, and several thousand more (probably nearing 10,000) on the prison island of Nusakambangan. These places of detention represent but a small fraction of the prisons, detention camps and interrogation centres at which political prisoners are being held. Every one of the seventeen provinces of Indonesia has at least one large prison, several smaller ones, and a large number of Army units where detainees are held for varying lengths of time, often stretching into years.

The former Indonesian Attorney-General, Sugih Arto, himself admitted that Army units are not obliged to report to central headquarters on the number of political prisoners they arrest and detain. Few releases have been reported in the past few months. On the contrary, a number of new arrests have been made, notably at the time of the Session of the People's Congress in March this year when security precautions reached a state of frenzy, and also in January when a large underground network, extending over more than seventy villages was discovered.

The current state of affairs suggests that Amnesty's estimate of 55,000 is not an exaggeration; on the contrary it may well considerably understate the problem.

BRITISH AID TO INDONESIA FURTHER INCREASED

British economic aid to Indonesia, supplied through the IGGI (Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia), has increased to £12 million for the year 1973/74. This represents an increase of 20 percent over the amount allocated through the IGGI for 1972/73 which amounted to £10 million.

The decision to provide this higher sum was taken at the IGGI meeting last May in Amsterdam. At that meeting, it was decided to supply a total of \$876.6 million to Indonesia for the current financial year. This is \$116.6 million higher than the amount requested by Indonesia at the IGGI meeting in December 1972, and is much in advance of the amount supplied in 1972/73, which totalled \$723 million. Some analysts believe that in the next year or two, Indonesia will be receiving no less than \$1,000 million annually in economic aid from the IGGI countries.

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TAPOL CAMPAIGN GATHERS SUPPORT

TAPOL, the campaigning organisation for the release of Indonesian political prisoners which was established in London a couple of months ago, is gathering support. The following persons have agreed to become formal sponsors of the Campaign:

Peter Archer, QC, MP
Dame Peggy Ashcroft
Lord Avebury
Bishop Butler
Lawrence Daly
Robert Edwards, MP
Lady Fleming
Lord Gardiner, QC
Rabbi Dr. David Goldstein
Glenda Jackson
Sir Elwyn Jones, QC, MP
Joan Maynard
Dr. Joseph Needham
Prof. John A. Rex
Alan Sapper
Lord Soper
Han Suyin

Some other names are still being awaited before the list of sponsors is finalised.

TAPOL will concern itself with the humanitarian aspects of the political prisoner situation in Indonesia. It hopes to go on enjoying the support of people from all walks of life and all political parties.

The substantial number of Members of Parliament who have so far signed the Early Day Motion in the House of Commons indicates that concern about the problem is widespread and extends to all parties represented in Parliament.

The name TAPOL (pronounced 'tarpol') was chosen for the Campaign because it is the Indonesian word for political prisoner. It is a new word in the Indonesian language, coined since 1965, and derives from the acronym of tahanan politik.

TAPOL will be run by an executive committee. The following persons are officers of the committee:

Roger Hibbitt, Chairman
Sarah Leigh, Secretary
Andrew Kuttner, Treasurer

VIGIL PLANNED FOR INDONESIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY

August 17th is Indonesia's independence Day, the anniversary of the day on which the Republic of Indonesia was established in 1945. Ever since 1965, celebrations of this day have been marred by the fact that tens of thousands of men and women have been deprived of their freedom, making a mockery of the independence which was established and defended with so much effort and sacrifice.

TAPOL has therefore decided to organise another Vigil outside the Indonesian Embassy on August 17th. While the Indonesian representatives in London and their guests are celebrating the occasion, we shall seek to remind them that there is a growing body of opinion in Britain that demands the release of the political prisoners, and will continue to campaign until this appalling situation ends.

The Vigil will take place in two shifts: during lunch-time, from 12.30 till 2.30 pm, and in the evening from 6.00 pm onwards. We invite all our supporters to attend the Vigil and to make it even more successful than the Vigil last May.

The Embassy's address is: 38, Grosvenor Square, WC1.

SPECIAL CAMPAIGN FOR IMPRISONED INDONESIAN FILM DIRECTOR

A special campaign on behalf of the Indonesian film director, Basuki Effendi, will shortly be launched by TAPOL.

Basuki Effendi worked for many years in the nascent Indonesian film industry. Two films on which he worked, Sipintjang (The Cripple) as co-director, and Pulang (Homecoming) as director were shown at international film festivals and awarded special prizes. In October 1965, his career was rudely cut short when he was arrested for having been a member prior to the abortive 1965 coup of the leftwing cultural organisation, LEKRA.

He spent several months in prison without trial, and was released in 1966. He remained free for several years though unable to get a regular job in films or in other professions, and made a living from petty trading. In 1969 he was re-arrested and has been in detention ever since. In 1971, he was transported to the remote prison island of Buru where he lives a life of appalling physical hardship with nearly 10,000 other political detainees.

TAPOL has initiated efforts to obtain copies of Basuki's films for a special showing in London. Meanwhile, an Appeal has been launched urging the Indonesian authorities to permit Basuki to attend this showing of his films and to continue his work as film director abroad. The Appeal has been signed by a number of well-known British film workers, including: Lindsay Anderson, Alan Bates, Miriam Brickman, Albert Finney, Glenda Jackson, Michael Medwin, Rachel Roberts and Alan Sapper.

It is hoped that a large number of film workers, theatre artists, and technicians from both sectors will add their signatures to the Appeal, and make this campaign a success.

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Total British aid to Indonesia consists not only of disbursements based on IGGI-coordinated commitments but also includes technical aid and aid for special projects. This means that total planned disbursements for the current year are well in excess of £12 million.