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Subject: **URGENT ACTION TO HELP RAPE VICTIMS IN INDONESIA**
Date: Tue, 16 Jun 1998 15:25:57 +1300
From: sonny inbaraj <ausasia@ozemail.com.au> Organization: The AustralAsian

URGENT APPEAL TO HELP THE RAPE VICTIMS OF THE RIOTS IN - JAKARTA - INDONESIA

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Please pass this message around to as many people as you can!

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Dear Friends

We are sure that many of you were shaken and outraged by the tragedy that Indonesian Chinese women and girls had to endure during the three days of riots in Jakarta last month.

Recent reports over the last few days tell hundreds of horrifying stories of both indiscriminate and organised gang violence:

* Chinese women and girls, some as young as age 10 were raped, some of them were assaulted in front of their families, neighbours and gathering crowds. * Women were raped on buses. * A group of women were stripped and forced to dance in front of a crowd. * Women were raped repeatedly, and later they were burned with fire.

These stories are only the tip of the iceberg, there is a long list of similar incidents. Many women have chosen to remain silent because of fear of reprisals against themselves or their families. They are too traumatized to talk about their experiences. They are overwhelmed by enormous pain and shame of their suffering.

This tragedy is a tragedy that continues in Jakarta. It is reported that some victims of rape have committed suicide, unable to cope with their ordeal. A mother died of heart attack after learning of what happened to her daughters.

Indonesians of Chinese descent often become targets of violence, especially during times of economic hardship, as people seek an outlet for their frustration and anger. Gang rapes of the scale reported in Jakarta this week mark a significant increase in the violence orchestrated against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia.

A number of eyewitness accounts give strong indications that the rapists were well organised and coordinated possibly by units from the military. Whatever the reasons and motives, we can never tolerate these kinds of atrocities against fellow human beings.

WARTA - Forum for Democracy in Indonesia, a Sydney based organization which works to support the Indonesian peoples desire for political, democratic, economic and social reform, believes that all Australians share the commitment we do for a just world.

Many of us will feel frustration and anger as we watch as these tragedies continue to unfold.

What can you do?

The sexual violence against the woman and girls of Indonesia and especially the ethnic Chinese should not be permitted to continue. We can offer our support in a number of ways: lobby your local Members of Parliament to speak out against these crimes against humanity. At the same time we can offer a concrete financial support through a volunteer group in Jakarta, namely the *Tim Relawan Untuk Kemanusian Divisi Perempuan* (Volunteer team for humanity, Women*s Division) which is helping the rape victims and their families to deal with their the tragedy which has befallen them.

The Tim Relawan is led by the highly regarded and respected Catholic Priest Mr. Sandyawan, its activities are carried out by a dozen dedicated human rights workers and a number of volunteers. They have started collecting and collating information about the sexual assaults that occurred during the riots. They are running a number of crisis hotlines, providing various kinds of material assistance and counseling to the victims and their families. This important work has been hindered by a series of death threats and other forms of harassment (i.e. grenades were sent to them), but the team workers have stood firm against this attempted intimidation, continuing their support for those women suffering severe trauma.

The Team Relawan's coordinator, Ms. Ita N Nadia, recently told us that many women are yet to receive proper physical or psychological treatment, this is an urgent need, but many of these women are unable to pay medical bills because they have lost everything they owned during the riots.

WARTA extends an urgent call for your generous donations to support the Tim Relawan's humanitarian assistance.

A WARTA member is going to Jakarta in early July and this person will ensure all donations are directly passed on to the Team Relawan. This is important as it is paramount that the victims receive these donations as soon as possible.

Therefore, it would be greatly appreciated if your donation is made as soon as possible, hopefully by the end of June before our member leaves for Jakarta. We apologize that this is on such short notice, but given the urgent nature of the matter we think this is the fastest and most effective way to support the work being done in Jakarta.

Please send donations to:

Yayasan Warung Nusantara Acct. No.: 222210074861 Commonwealth Bank Panania Branch

or Cheques to:

Yayasan Warung Nusantara P.O. Box 665 Kensington NSW 2033

Thank you very much in advance for your donations to this appeal.

Sincerely,

Akiko Tsuru (WARTA)

For further information and inquires: Akiko Tsuru phone: 02-9557-2733 or email: akikot@ma.kcom.ne.jp) Fax : 02-9792 1214 or 049-653 709

P.S. Upon your request, we will be happy to forward the following information. Please send your request to akikot@ma.kcom.ne.jp

* SiaR (9/6/98) Tim Relawan lmbau Komnas Ham Bongkar Aksi Kerusuhan Mei 1998. (in Indonesian language) * NY Times: Indonesian Report Widespread Rapes of Chinese in Riots * Radio Netherland Wereldomroep (8/6/98): Pemerkosaan Perempuan Ethnis Cina di Jakarta (in Indonesian language)

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