# Data

## Chronology for Chinese in Indonesia

View Group Assessment

View Additional Chronology Information

| Date(s) | Item |
|---|---|
| **1990** | After about a quarter of a century, full diplomatic relations have been established between Indonesia and China. This has taken place as a result of mutual visits at the highest levels including a visit to Jakarta in August by Chinese Premier Li Peng and a counter visit to Beijing in November by Indonesian President Suharto. However, Indonesia and China still must resolve the sticky question of 300,000 stateless Chinese living in Indonesia. In the 1950s, Indonesia gave its Chinese residents the choice of becoming either Indonesian or Chinese citizens, but those who opted for China ended up stateless after Jakarta froze relations with Peking in 1967. |
| **1991** | President Suharto held a much-publicized "summit" meeting in May with the nation's big Chinese business tycoons. He exhorted them to distribute equity in their enterprises to indigenous cooperatives. Chinese President Yang Shangkun visited Jakarta in June. |
| **1992** | A 25-year old ban on the import and use of written Chinese characters was lifted and Chinese language schools were allowed to operate. At a meeting in April, Indonesians including a brother of President Suharto demanded that anti-monopoly laws be enacted to restrict the economic domination of Chinese-Indonesians. They also demanded that Chinese conglomerates sell shares to Workers' Cooperatives to narrow the gap between the ethnic Chinese and the indigenous population. An aide of President Suharto reiterated that investment by Chinese-Indonesians in China is "not a flight of capital." |
| **1993** | Public celebrations of the Chinese New Year were permitted for the first time since 1967. The Defense Minister, General Benny Murdani, said in April in an economic forum: "I don't want to have to say this, but anti-Chinese feelings in this country run very high....that is why it has taken so long (to restore relations with China)". Business Times reports that Chinese-Indonesian companies have already announced plans to invest more than $1 billion in different projects in China. |
| **Apr 1994** | Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas assured China that his country could handle anti-Chinese rioting in northern Sumatra. Beijing has expressed concern over recent violent demonstrations in Medan, the third largest city located 870 miles northwest of Jakarta. Anti-Chinese riots in Medan left one Chinese businessman dead, scores of Chinese-owned stores destroyed and dozens of cars overturned or set ablaze. The mid-April rioting in Medan was believed to be most serious anti-Chinese sentiment in northern Sumatra in more than 12 years. Unlike most Indonesian cities, Medan has a large ethnic Chinese community making up a third of the city's 2.2 million people. The incident alarmed government and business leaders who fear that the violence could spread to other parts of the vast Southeast Asian nation, which has an economy |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| | dominated by ethnic Chinese and a work force consisting mainly of ethnic Malays. The riots began as thousands of laborers took to the streets demanding higher wages and an explanation for the mysterious death last month of a union activist. |
| **May 1994** | The Jakarta municipal administration is going to register all stateless Chinese living in the city in order to get accurate data on the group and to settle the issue of their status once and for all. Nurhadi Djudi, Director of the Office for Developing National Unity, said the registration is in adherence to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Indonesia and China in 1992 on the status of ethnic Chinese living in Indonesia. According to the records at Jakarta's Population Affairs Office, around 27,590 stateless people of Chinese descent live in the capital (Central News Agency, 05/07/94). "It is interesting the census is coming after the Medan incident, which had quite obvious racial overtones, but I would not conclude anything out of the ordinary," a member of the Indonesian Human Rights Commission said. "I can see this would be a problem in either Europe or the United States where people might see it in a racial light," one Chinese resident of Jakarta stated (Reuters, 05/07/94). Indonesia's President Suharto asserted that the public fails to appreciate the benefits large private businesses (mostly controlled by the ethnic Chinese) bring. He also stated that they have been unfairly attacked for their dominance of the market (UPI, 05/30/94). |
| **Aug 1994** | Under a new policy aimed at increasing the number of Chinese tourists, hotels and tourist agencies will be allowed to publish Chinese-language brochures and conduct Chinese-language training classes for employees, Coordinating Minister for Security and Political Affairs Sudarman said. He further stated that the brochures must be printed by the government-sponsored Harian Indonesia Newspaper, which uses both the Indonesian and Chinese languages. However, no Chinese signs will be allowed at the entrances of hotels (AP Worldstream, 08/02/94). Indonesia's potentially-explosive income gap is widening and will probably worsen unless steps are taken to support small businesses, the Planning Minister said (Reuters, 08/14/94). The Minister's comment follows calls from senior economists that Indonesia must build up its small-scale businesses to help stem the concentration of economic power and wealth in the hands of mainly ethnic Chinese businesses. |
| **Nov 1994** | While visiting Indonesia, Chinese President Zemin asserted that China will never try to use people of Chinese origin living in Indonesia to seek political or economic gain. He expressed the Chinese government's appreciation that the application procedures for citizenship had been simplified for Chinese residing in Indonesia (The Xinhua News Agency, 11/18/94). |
| **Jan 1995** | Indonesian President Suharto defended the role of conglomerates in an effort to counter growing resentment over the power of big business. Suharto also stated that the conglomerates, which are mainly controlled by the ethnic Chinese, are not planning to leave the country and take their business with them. In August, the armed forces warned that national stability could be disrupted as the economic power of the ethnic Chinese was widening the country's income gap (Reuters, 01/21/95). |
| **Mar 1995** | The Jakarta government has rebuffed plans by West Kalimantan provincial leaders to establish "Chinatown" enclaves in order to promote tourism. Vice-President Try Sutrisno says that the government never promised to allow the Chinese to retain their outward cultural attributes. Further, he stated that the Chinese should forget their ethnic origins as much as possible (Asiaweek, 03/31/95). While forming around 3% of the country's population, the Chinese reportedly control some 70% of the national wealth. Of the top 15 private Indonesian companies, 11 are owned by the Chinese. Jakarta has recently attempted to encourage Chinese businesses to help smaller businesses with capital, training, and |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| | marketing, in order to spread wealth more equitably (Asiaweek, 03/31/95). |
| **May 1995** | Once President Suharto retires, analysts believe that the ethnic Chinese community will be the most vulnerable to any instability. The most affected are expected to be poor and small-scale Chinese business people. Suharto, who is 73, has not indicated that he will not run in the 1998 presidential election. However, he has not groomed a successor (Reuters, 05/05/95). |
| **Jul 1995** | Indigenous businesses in Indonesia are now benefiting from a range of developments that are propelling the country's rapid economic growth. Around 20 large pribumi businesses have profited from privatization, deregulation, and foreign investment (Asian Business, 07/95). |
| **Jul 26, 1995** | Rioting in the south Kalimantan provincial capital of Banjarmasin has resulted in the destruction of at least seven shops owned by ethnic Chinese. Eleven arrests have been made. The rioting began as the result of an argument between a shopkeeper and a customer (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 0726/95). |
| **Nov 1995** | More than 60 people have been arrested following three days of riots in Purwakarta district in West Java. The riots reportedly began when a 14-year old Muslim girl was allegedly slapped by her ethnic Chinese employees and the owner of a local shop for stealing chocolates. At its highpoint, more than 20,000 people rampaged the business center. Over 20 shops and several cars and homes were seriously damaged (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 11/04/95). |
| **Nov 26, 1995** | Calm is now reported in the city of Pekalongan, 325 km east of Jakarta, following three days of anti-Chinese riots. The rioting reportedly began after an ethnic Chinese tore pages from the Koran. The police have released 23 people arrested in connection with the violence. Property owned by the ethnic Chinese was ransacked (Reuters, 11/26/95). |
| **Nov 30, 1995** | The Chinese man, who reportedly instigated three days of riots in Pekalongan when he allegedly tore pages of the Koran, has died under mysterious circumstances in a Pekalongan jail. The results of an autopsy were not released (BBC, 11/30/95). |
| **Dec 1995** | President Suharto recently ordered that the naturalization process for ethnic Chinese born in Indonesia be speeded up from a few years to a few weeks. Ethnic Chinese who are Indonesian citizens are still required to have a special "citizenship card" that is not required of other Indonesian nationals (Agence France Presse, 12/04/95). |
| **Jan 15, 1996** | Chinese businesses and vehicles are targeted in riots that erupt in the West Java city of Bandung following a rock concert. Some reports indicate that the Chinese control around 80% of the Indonesian economy (Agence France Presse, 01/15/96). |
| **Jul 29, 1996** | The most violent riots in three decades erupt in Jakarta. Government buildings and banks are burnt, three people are killed and some 200 arrested as thousands protest against the Suharto regime. The riots come on the heels of the government-supported ousting of Megawati Sukarnoputri as leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party. Some reports indicate that Chinese businesses were specifically attacked (Washington Post, 07/29/96). |
| **Sep 6, 1996** | China protests to Indonesia about the recent visit of Taiwan’s Foreign Minister. Indonesia says that it was not an official visit (Agence France Presse, 09/06/96). |
| **Sep 15, 1996** | Indonesia completes its biggest ever war games. Military observers indicate that they were a "hands off" warning to China about the resource rich Natuna islands. While the sovereignty of the islands isn't contested, China claims part of the maritime zone around |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| | them. This region is rich in fish and natural gas reserves. Over the last six months, Indonesia has almost completely overhauled its military (Agence France Presse, 09/15/96). |
| **Oct 12, 1996** | A heavy security presence remains in the East Java town of Situbondo after some 3000 Muslims riot. Five people are killed and around 120 arrested. Eighteen churches are burnt; a Chinese temple and Chinese-owned stores are vandalized. The rioters were reportedly angered by a court decision to impose only a five year prison sentence on a Muslim sect leader who was charged with insulting Islam (Agence France Presse, 10/12/96). |
| **Nov 8, 1996** | Some 200 villagers scuffle with security guards employed by a company owned by three prominent Chinese businessmen. The villagers state that the company evicted them from their land. They also chant anti-Chinese slogans, referring to them as parasites (Agence France Presse, 11/08/96). |
| **Dec 27, 1996** | Chinese businesses and Christian churches are targeted as thousands of Muslims riot in Tasikmalaya, West Java. Two of the four dead are Chinese. 100 buildings are damaged or burnt while some 200 are arrested. The riot reportedly erupted due to the police's mistreatment of three Muslim teachers (Agence France Presse, 12/28-30/96). |
| **Jan 1, 1997** | Vatican authorities summon Indonesia's ambassador to seek an explanation for the December 27 riots that singled out Christians (Agence France Presse, 01/01/97). |
| **Jan 10, 1997** | Officials warn the Chinese community to keep their New Year's Day celebrations low-key and indoors following recent communal tensions (Agence France Presse, 01/10/97). |
| **Jan 30, 1997** | Thousands riot in the West Java town of Rengasdengklok, attacking 4 churches, 2 Buddhist temples, and some 100 buildings, many owned by the Chinese. The incident occurs after a Chinese woman complains about the noise being made by Muslims who are observing Ramadan. A few days ago, flyers that threatened to destroy Christian and Chinese properties were distributed in Bandung (Agence France Presse, 01/30-31/97). |
| **Jan 31, 1997** | A Muslim scholar and social commentator, Emha Ainun Najib, asserts that recent religious and ethnic unrest stems from social and economic gaps and the people's distrust of the government and legal authorities. Academics also note that the government has stifled political outlets for expression and that frustration is mainly channeled against the Chinese and non-Muslims. The government blames unnamed third parties for inciting the riots; this is often an allusion to communists. Communism was banned in Indonesia in 1965 after an attempted coup was largely blamed on the Indonesian Community Party (Agence France Presse, 01/31/97). |
| **Feb 11, 1997** | Four men who belong to Muslim organizations will be charged with subversion for inciting violent riots in Tasikmalaya in December. 21 others will face lesser crimes (Agence France Presse, 02/11/97). |
| **Mar 30, 1997** | 30 people are charged in connection with three days of riots last week in the Central Java town of Pekalongan. Over 60 buildings, mostly Chinese, were damaged. The rioting occurred in the context of political disputes between Golkar and the Muslim-based United Development Party (PPP), who are contesting the May 29 federal elections (Agence France Presse, 03/30/97). |
| **May 25, 1997** | 80 people are killed as fire engulfs a shopping centre in the South Kalimantan capital of Banjarmasin. The fire occurs as thousands of Golkar and PPP supporters rampage through the city. Some churches and a Buddhist temple are burnt along with Chinese-owned businesses. The violence that has occurred almost daily during the election campaign is described as the worst in more than 20 years (Agence France Presse, 05/25/97). |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| **May 29, 1997** | Golkar wins 74% of the votes in federal elections. The small Muslim party, the PPP, increases its share of the popular vote from 17 to 23%. The third permitted party, the Indonesian Democrat Party (PDI), receives only 3%. The PDI split into two factions last year and the faction led by Megawati Sukarnoputri was not allowed to participate in the polls. An assembly will convene next year to choose the President (Economist, 07/26/97). |
| **Jun 2, 1997** | Chinese properties and three churches are attacked as hundreds rampage in Kadipaten, West Java. The unrest allegedly began due to a rumor that a Chinese shop owner strip-searched a female who was accused of shoplifting (Agence France Presse, 06/02/97). |
| **Jul 26, 1997** | The Chinese are reported to control about 3/4 of the 140 big conglomerates that dominate Indonesia's private sector. The Economist also reports that the Suharto clan usually operates in partnership with Chinese-owned businesses (07/26/97). |
| **Sep 16, 1997** | Three days of anti-Chinese riots in the South Sulawesi city of Ujungpandang result in four deaths. The damage to over 1000 buildings is valued at $4 million. The unrest reportedly arose when a Chinese man with a history of mental disease allegedly killed two females (Agence France Presse, 09/16-18/97). |
| **Oct 18, 1997** | International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials visit Indonesia to help restructure its economy in response to the Asian financial crisis (Economist, 10/18/97). |
| **Oct 24, 1997** | The former minister of home affairs urges the government to ban the Chinese from some economic activities to avoid racial tensions. Rudini specifically calls for measures to prevent the Chinese from buying out small businesses run by pribumi (indigenous) and for the extension of these protective measures to informal sectors. Rudini is a member of the influential ICMI, an association of Muslim intellectuals which is close to the government (Agence France Presse, 10/24/97). A study by Indonesia's Episcopal Conference indicates that attacks against Catholic and Protestant churches have markedly increased in recent years. It says that while there were no attacks in the first decade after independence, there were an average of 13 yearly between 1965 and 1974 and 24 annually from 1975 to 1984. In the past two years, 104 churches were attacked, raising the total since independence to 374. Most of these incidents have occurred in the three provinces on the island of Java. Since 1945, twenty priests or religious leaders have been killed. Many Indonesian Chinese are Christians (Agence France Presse, 10/24/97). |
| **Oct 31, 1997** | The Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy states that social unrest in Indonesia will likely increase over the next several months with the Chinese being targeted. It says that as the economy seeks to deal with the effects of a drought (due to forest fires) and the financial crisis, prices for basic goods will surge and that rice will have to be imported to cover shortfalls in domestic production (Agence France Presse, 10/31/97). |
| **Nov 1, 1997** | Singapore pledges $10 million to help support Indonesia's economy. Malaysia has also offered $1 billion (Economist, 11/01/97). |
| **Jan 3, 1998** | Indonesia postpones seven massive infrastructure projects and reviews eight others as it seeks to manage its worst economic crisis in three decades. Some 16 banks recently closed and consumer prices are soaring (Agence France Presse, 01/11/98; Asiaweek, 11/28/97). |
| **Jan 16, 1998** | The military recently called for 13 prominent businessmen, all believed to be of Chinese descent, to sell their US dollars to boost the rupiah's value. Indonesian Chinese businessmen have expressed fears that they might become scapegoats if the economy worsens. The use of the Chinese characters on storefronts is banned and there are no Chinese language schools. The Indonesian |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| | Chinese are also banned from most civil service and military careers (Agence France Presse, 01/16/98). |
| **Jan 18, 1998** | Riots occur in various Indonesian towns as the prices of basic commodities rise. Economic growth is projected to be zero this year, compared to 8% last year. The country recently received $40 billion from the IMF as part of an international bailout (Agence France Presse, 01/18/98). |
| **Jan 21, 1998** | Chinese shops are attacked in the East Java town of Jember following increases in the prices of basic goods (Agence France Presse, 01/21/98). |
| **Jan 25, 1998** | Unemployment in Indonesia this year is expected to reach 13.5 million people or 14.7% of the estimated 90 million workforce. This projection is up 51.7% from last year's total of 8.9 million jobless. 2.7 million new workers are also expected to enter the job market this year (Agence France Presse, 01/25/98). The military again issues a call for the non-indigenous population to turn in their US dollars to help support the rupiah. It also warns that it will take action against anyone who openly celebrates the Chinese New Year (Ibid.). |
| **Jan 28, 1998** | Some 100 people demonstrate outside the offices of two Chinese brothers whom the military allege are implicated in a January 18 bombing incident in Jakarta. A bomb accidentally detonated in an apartment whose residents are alleged to be linked with the outlawed communist People's Democratic Party. The two brothers have been publicly critical of the military and the government (Agence France Presse, 01/28/98). |
| **Feb 10, 1998** | Several Chinese-owned shops are targeted in two days of riots and looting in Ende on Flores Island. Hundreds of Indonesian Chinese seek sanctuary with the military and police (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 02/10-13/98). |
| **Feb 12, 1998** | 16 people are arrested after around 400 persons attack 40 Chinese stores during a riot in Jatiwangi, West Java. Many Chinese shops are also destroyed in the town of Bumiayu (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 02/11-12/98) |
| **Feb 13, 1998** | Thousands rampage in the town of Losari, on the border of West and Central Java. Chinese properties are damaged. The price of basic commodities has increased from 100 to 300% as the country enacts austerity measures mandated by the IMF, including an end to subsidized fuel prices (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 02/13/98). |
| **Feb 15, 1998** | Riots due to increasing food prices in 12 cities result in the deaths of 5 people and some 270 arrests. 150 Chinese businesses are destroyed (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 02/15/98). |
| **Feb 19, 1998** | Up to 6000 people riot in the Southeast Sulawesi capital of Kendari. Chinese-owned properties are attacked (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 02/19/98). |
| **Feb 20, 1998** | The government says that those found guilty of hoarding essential commodities could face the death penalty. Yesterday, officials banned any demonstrations in Jakarta (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 02/19-20/98). Some reports indicate that recent anti-Chinese riots may have been partly provoked by conservative Islamic scholars who have called for a jihad against financial speculators and commodity hoarders. Violent unrest in Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi during which Chinese shops were attacked was preceded by the Indonesian Ulemas Council's call for a jihad to deal with the country's social and economic problems. In the past three weeks, more than 100 shops in some 20 towns have been burnt down. The leader of the 28-million strong Muslim organization Muhamadiyah has condemned the anti-Chinese attacks (Ibid.). Chinese residents of Indonesia's second largest city Surabaya have donated food to 960 needy families following calls by the city's mayor for the rich to |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| | sacrifice part of their wealth. In South Sulawesi, the Chinese gave money and some 5.58 kilograms of gold to the authorities (Ibid.). |
| **Mar 1, 1998** | Human Rights Watch asserts that "senior government and military officials have fueled anti-Chinese sentiment through veiled references to rats and traitors". It urged the government to make it clear that anti-Chinese violence will not be tolerated (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 03/01/98). |
| **Mar 10, 1998** | Suharto is re-elected as President (Economist, 03/14/98). |
| **Apr 12, 1998** | The leader of the Muslim organization Muhamadiyah calls for a peaceful popular movement to press for reforms. Amien Rais is also critical of attacks against ethnic groups (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 04/12/98). |
| **May 7, 1998** | Three days of anti-government rioting in Medan, North Sumatra targets Chinese properties. Four Chinese are killed and more than 400 people arrested. Some Indonesian Chinese have sought refuge in local hotels while others have fled to Singapore and Malaysia. This is the worst unrest in Medan since 1994 (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/07/98). |
| **May 13, 1998** | Record numbers of Chinese are seeking refugee status in Australia. So far, most of the applications have been rejected (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/13/98). |
| **May 14, 1998** | This is the third day of massive anti-Suharto riots in Jakarta that were allegedly triggered by the deaths of six student protestors who were shot by police forces. Suharto, for the first time, is reported to have publicly stated that he is considering stepping down. The capital's Chinatown district is targeted as hundreds of businesses are destroyed. Anti-government violence has also been reported in several other Indonesian cities including the university town of Yogyakarta and the West Java city of Bandung (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/14/98; Washington Post, 05/14/98). |
| **May 15, 1998** | 15,000 troops are deployed in Jakarta as major riots continue. Some 220 people have died and over 800 arrested. Hundreds of Chinese-owned shops have been destroyed and thousands of Chinese are fleeing the country. Most of the destroyed shops belong to poor or lower-middle class Chinese who couldn't afford plane tickets overseas. The government Commission on Human Rights criticizes the anti-Chinese violence (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/15/98). |
| **May 19, 1998** | President Suharto offers to hold new elections and institute radical reforms (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/19/98). |
| **May 21, 1998** | President Suharto resigns amid continuing unrest. B.J. Habibie becomes interim President (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/21/98). |
| **May 26, 1998** | President Habibie tours a Chinese area in Jakarta and says that the government will help Chinese traders in order to accelerate the country's economic recovery. No details are provided (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/26/98). |
| **May 28, 1998** | Officials state that 25,000 foreigners and Chinese left Indonesia between May 13 and 20 (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/28/98). |
| **May 29, 1998** | Rioters in Jeneponto, South Sulawesi target Chinese shops. This is one of the first outbreaks of violence since Suharto resigned (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 05/29/98). Twelve out of the fifteen wealthiest families are reported to be Chinese. The Indonesian Chinese are alleged to make up the single largest group of clients at Singapore's private banks where the minimum deposit is $1 million. Most of the rich already have residences and resources abroad in case of anti-Chinese violence. The majority of attacks have occurred against middle and lower class Indonesian Chinese. There are |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| | reports that some Chinese have formed vigilante groups to protect their property (Asiaweek, 05/29/98). |
| **May 30, 1998** | Senior Economic Minister Kartasasmita says that Indonesia has vowed to provide security for its Chinese residents (Asiaweek, 06/19/98). |
| **Jun 3, 1998** | The National Commission on Human Rights says that 1188 people were killed in the riots from May 12-25. Over 5000 buildings were burnt, damaged or looted (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/03/98). |
| **Jun 5, 1998** | Since January, capital flight from Indonesia is reported to be from $7 to 15 billion. Most of this is attributed to the Indonesian Chinese (Asiaweek, 06/05/98). |
| **Jun 10, 1998** | A group of Chinese Indonesians urges the National Commission on Human Rights to immediately launch an investigation into the May riots and to take strong measures against law-breakers. The group is particularly concerned with reports of widespread rapes of Chinese women along with the destruction of Chinese property (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/10/98). |
| **Jun 11, 1998** | President Habibie asks the armed forces (ABRI) to investigate allegations that "well-organized groups" were behind the May riots. Some analysts suggest that elite military units may have been involved in promoting unrest (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/11/98). |
| **Jun 13, 1998** | Leading Indonesian figures warn of another outbreak of violence as the economy sinks further into a depression. They urge the IMF and donor countries to speed up the distribution of aid. The IMF has delayed a $4 billion loan citing recent unrest. The IMF will contribute $10 billion out of an international rescue package worth $43 billion. Meanwhile, thousands of Chinese in Jakarta are reportedly prepared to leave should further unrest break out. Some 150,000 likely fled during May (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/13/98). |
| **Jun 14, 1998** | Jakarta's Military Commander denies allegations by the National Commission on Human Rights that "well-organized groups" were behind the May riots. The human rights organization has also asked Habibie to investigate why the security apparatus didn't prevent the riots (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/14/98). |
| **Jun 16, 1998** | Peaceful protests in three Java towns turn violent as thousands attack Chinese properties. The demonstrators were protesting against corruption and rising food prices. The distribution of food has been worsened in Indonesia as many of the networks were run by ethnic Chinese, many of whom have abandoned their businesses (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/16/98). |
| **Jun 18, 1998** | A leading Indonesian economist asserts that the plunge of the rupiah has been made worse by the large-scale buying of dollars by the Chinese. Kwik Kian Gie, an ethnic Chinese, says that this buying was by Indonesian Chinese who were leaving the country for good (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/18/98). |
| **Jun 19, 1998** | Chinese entrepreneurs form the Indonesian Chinese Reform Party on June 5. The next day, Indonesian Chinese announce the establishment of the Citizens' Forum for Reform. Both organizations aim to guarantee the civil rights of the ethnic Chinese (Asiaweek, 06/19/98). |
| **Jun 27, 1998** | Chinese businesses are among others targeted in a riot in the city of Purworejo on Java (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 06/27/98). |
| **Jul 3, 1998** | The chairman of the Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Abdurrahman Wahid, says that the government has not taken any action to accelerate the return of the Chinese who fled during the May riots. An Indonesian Chinese leader states that some 100,000 remain overseas (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 07/03/98). |

| Date(s) | Item |
|---|---|
| **Jul 8, 1998** | The National Commission on Human Rights denounces the "systematic, barbarous and sadistic" rapes of Chinese women during the May riots. It calls for the punishment of those responsible. Human rights groups say they have documented evidence of over 100 cases of rape and sexual assault, most against Chinese women. Many of these victims have fled the country. The military says that is has no information on the rapes (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 07/08/98). |
| **Jul 17, 1998** | Around 1000 people riot in Jeber, East Java. Chinese properties are looted and burnt (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 07/17/98). |
| **Jul 20, 1998** | Malaysia's Chinese party, the Democratic Action Party, calls for the culprits behind the mass rapes and killings of the Chinese in Indonesia to be tried for war crimes at the newly created International Criminal Court. The DAP also demands that the Malaysian government condemn the attacks (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 07/20/98). |
| **Jul 23, 1998** | The Indonesian government establishes an official fact-finding team to probe the May riots. The team has no representatives from the Chinese community; the military (ABRI) is represented. ABRI also plans to conduct its own investigation (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 07/23/98). |
| **Jul 24, 1998** | More than 50 people protest outside the Indonesian consulate in Hong Kong demanding an end to violence and discrimination against the Indonesian Chinese. The internet has been a major avenue through which the plight of the Chinese has been publicized (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 07/24/98). |
| **Jul 29, 1998** | Taiwan formally protests the mass rapes of Chinese women during the May riots and offers assistance to the victims. More than 200 Indonesian Chinese women were reported to have been raped (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 07/29/98). An Indonesian General admits that the security apparatus was late in dealing with the riots (Ibid.). |
| **Aug 2, 1998** | Eight Taiwanese female activists arrive in Jakarta to conduct their own investigation of the mass rapes of Chinese women. Taiwan has threatened to suspend cooperation agreements with Indonesia if the situation is not properly dealt with (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 08/02/98). |
| **Aug 3, 1998** | Hundreds of protestors toss eggs at the Indonesian consulate in Taipei to protest the rapes of Indonesian Chinese women. Women in Singapore also condemn the actions (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 08/03/98). |
| **Aug 13, 1998** | Singapore's most prominent women's organization is circulating a petition that calls on the United Nations to impose political and economic sanctions against Indonesia should mass rapes of Chinese women occur again (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 08/13/98). |
| **Aug 14, 1998** | The UN Development Fund for Women maintains that at least 168 Chinese women were raped during the May riots and that these were planned to terrorize the Chinese community (Asiaweek, 08/14/98). The PRC has issued a statement of "deep concern" and says it is watching to see if the perpetrators are found and punished (Ibid.). |
| **Aug 17, 1998** | Three student protests in the past week in Beijing were stopped by the authorities. The students wanted to demonstrate against the treatment of the Chinese in Indonesia (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 08/17/98). Some 1000, mostly Chinese-Filipinos, demonstrate outside the Indonesian embassy in Manila to protest the anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia (Ibid.). |
| **Aug 25, 1998** | The chief of Indonesia's state intelligence agency expresses doubts over the claim of mass rapes of Chinese women during the May |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| | riots. He says he has yet to find any evidence (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 08/25/98). |
| **Aug 27, 1998** | Information Minister Yurus Yosfiah says the police have investigated 103 cases, but found no evidence of rapes of Chinese women during May's unrest (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 08/27/98). |
| **Aug 29, 1998** | Around 10,000 fishermen in the Central Java town of Cilacap set fire to 10 trawlers believed to be owned by ethnic Chinese. The incidents occur during three days of riots. In the East Java city of Wonosori, thousands loot rice mills owned by the Chinese (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 08/29/98). |
| **Aug 31, 1998** | Some Chinese businesses are attacked during two days of rioting by some 2000 people in Aceh. The riots erupted as troops were leaving the region in which a separatist insurgency is being waged by the Aceh Merdeka rebel organization. The troop withdrawal is subsequently reversed (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/02/98). |
| **Sep 3, 1998** | Officials state that there are strong indications that the Aceh Merdeka was behind anti-Chinese attacks during recent rioting in the region. Riots have also occurred in the Aceh Timur district where Chinese shops were vandalized (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/03/98). |
| **Sep 8, 1998** | Chinese properties are attacked during two days of riots in the Central Java town of Kebumen. The rampage reportedly occurred after a rumor spread that a Chinese shop owner had hit an indigenous worker. Meanwhile, student protests against the rising prices of basic goods occur in Jakarta and Surabaya (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/07-08/98). A human rights group, the Commission on Disappearances and Violence, says it has documentation that shows that the military engineered riots in Aceh to justify reversing a troop withdrawal. Two people died when police fired on the crowds (Ibid.). |
| **Sep 9, 1998** | More than 40,000 people in Singapore have signed a petition condemning the mass rapes of Chinese women. The petition will soon be presented to the Indonesian embassy. Another petition calling for sanctions against Indonesia were this to happen again will be sent to the UN High Commission for Human Rights (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/09/98). |
| **Sep 17, 1998** | Some 3000 people rampage through the Sumatra town of Bagansiapi-api. Government offices and around 400 buildings owned by the Chinese are torched. The unrest allegedly began after rumors spread that a Chinese had killed an pribumi (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/17/98). |
| **Sep 21, 1998** | Hundreds demonstrate in Jakarta against the government. They are particularly concerned with rising prices for basic goods (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/21/98). |
| **Sep 22, 1998** | The leader of a government fact-finding team investigating the May riots says that sexual assaults including rapes did occur. Its full report is due in October. Last week, the military stated that there was no proof to support the rape allegations (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/21/98). |
| **Sep 26, 1998** | Indonesian police recorded at least 69 new riots between May and August of this year. More than 4800 people were arrested and 267 have already been tried. Police state that 1/3 of the riots were triggered by ethnic issues, 16 by political factors, 15 due to economic reasons, 6 by improper law enforcement, and 9 are still under investigation (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/26/98). |
| **Sep 30, 1998** | Chinese businessmen, retired generals, and former Golkar members are among those flocking to join Megawati Sukarnoputri's unofficial faction of the People's Democratic Party (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 09/30/98). |

| Date(s) | Item |
| --- | --- |
| **Oct 13, 1998** | Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International call for an investigation into the murder of a teenage activist who was counseling women raped during the May riots. She was an ethnic Chinese who was a member of the NGO Volunteers for Humanity. She was scheduled to travel to the US to testify before a human rights group. Threats have been issued to some people helping the victims (Asiaweek, 10/23/98). |
| **Nov 13, 1998** | The fact-finding team investigating the May riots links the incidents to "an elite political struggle". It also notes that while some of the unrest was spontaneous, instigation was present. No mention is made of specific agitators. Besides for political reasons, the team points to the economic crisis, the socio-economic gap, and popular perceptions of injustice for inciting the violence. No final death toll is reported. It notes that 52 women had been raped. It offers no proof that the riots and rapes had intentionally targeted the Chinese community (Asiaweek, 11/13/98). |
| **Nov 23, 1998** | Thirteen people die after hundreds of Muslims and Christians clash in Jakarta. Seven churches are burnt down (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 11/23/98). |
| **Jan 8, 1999** | Hundreds riot in the West Java town of Karawang, some attack Chinese properties. Two people are killed (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 01/08/99). |
| **Jan 21, 1999** | At least 20 people are dead after two days of clashes between Muslims and Christians on the island of Ambon. Some 5000, including ethnic Chinese, have sought shelter at police headquarters (Agence France Presse, 01/21/99). |
| **Feb 20, 1999** | In the past three months, mobs are reported to have sacked some 80 police stations and dozens of mosques and churches have been burnt down. Several hundred have died. Around 80 million Indonesians are now below the poverty line (Los Angeles Times, 02/20/99). |
| **Mar 1, 1999** | Clashes between Muslims and Christians in Ambon result in the deaths of nine people. Since January 19, unrest between the two communities has led to 200 deaths and the destruction of over 3000 properties (Asiaweek, 03/01/99). |
| **Mar 8, 1999** | Indonesia launches plans for a peoples' economy to help pull the country out of the recession. The plan calls for breaking up the state's large, mostly Chinese dominated, enterprises and using the approximately 8000 state-controlled cooperatives to redistribute wealth. Cooperatives will also be responsible for distributing essential goods. This has traditionally been done by the State Logistics Agency and Chinese businesses. While the plan has won support from indigenous peoples, the Chinese fear that this is a government-sanctioned anti-Chinese movement. Some Indonesian Chinese acknowledge that more economic equality is needed. The plan is the brainchild of an Islamic activist. Some analysts believe that it is just an attempt to win votes for Golkar (Nikkei Weekly, 03/08/99). |
| **Mar 24, 1999** | A UN investigator says that Chinese women who were raped during last year's riots in May have been threatened to keep them quiet. None of some 85 victims of sexual assault or rape has filed charges (Agence France Presse, 03/24/99). |
| **Apr 3, 1999** | Analysts predict that future instability is likely as Indonesia's economy is sliding further into disarray in the run-up to June's parliamentary elections. Reforms are proceeding slowly and many Indonesians are disheartened about the future and are closing down their businesses. Last month, under pressure from the IMF, Indonesia closed 38 insolvent banks and nationalized seven other large banks. A longtime US diplomat says that Indonesia's recovery depends on President Habibie taking a stronger stand against the persecution of the ethnic Chinese. He states that Indonesia cannot |

| Date(s) | Item |
|---|---|
| | operate with the Chinese as the pribumis are not in a position to financially or technically lead the recovery (Los Angeles Times, 04/03/99). |
| **Apr 7, 1999** | Numerous clashes between Madurese settlers, Malays, Dayaks, and the Chinese in West Kalimantan have been reported in recent weeks. More than 200 people have been killed. The major battles are between the indigenous Dayak peoples and the Madurese (Agence France Presse, 04/07/99). |
| **Apr 11, 1999** | The Association of Indonesians of Chinese Descent is formed to help promote the group's civil rights. It states that for generations it has been considered acceptable and proper for various forms of discrimination to be imposed on Indonesian Chinese. The association, formed by non-business people, has an open membership policy. It was formed a few days after the House of Representatives passed a bill to ratify the UN convention banning all forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin (Japan Economic Newswire, 04/11/99). Last September, President B.J. Habibie issued a presidential directive that ordered a halt to discriminatory policies, especially those against the Chinese. It required that national and local governments stop using terms such as pribumi and non-pribumi. However, some ethnic Chinese state that the order has had little impact and that they continue to have problems obtaining official government documents such as passports, identification cards, and marriage certificates. They say that they are still treated as second class citizens (Ibid.). |
| **Apr 13, 1999** | President Habibie is speaking openly about an incident late last year when he was reported to be close to throwing a Canadian cabinet minister out of his office over a dispute about the treatment of Indonesia's Chinese population. The Canadian Secretary of State for the Asia-Pacific, Raymond Chan, is an ethnic Chinese. Chan was in Indonesia to examine the human rights situation surrounding last May's unrest (The Toronto Star, 04/13/99). |
| **Apr 15, 1999** | A bomb explodes in a Chinese-owned department store some 800 meters from the presidential palace where President Habibie was in residence. Federal elections are slated for June 7, 1999 (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 01/08/99). |
| **Apr 14, 2004** | President Megawati Soekarnoputri revoked the requirement necessitating that all Chinese carry an Indonesian Citizenship Certificate (SBKRI). This declaration was formalized in July with the passage of the law making it punishable for not recognizing Chinese citizens. (The Jakarta Post, 4/15/2004, "SKBRI not Required by Chinese: MEGA"; The Straits Times (Singapore), 7/12/2006, "Indonesia passes landmark citizenship law") |
| **Sep 27, 2006** | Sikad, an organization of ethnic Chinese, was founded in response to problems of discrimination. (US Department of State. 03/06/2007. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-2006: Indonesia." Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.) |

top

University of

© 2004 - 2026 • Minorities At Risk Project

Center for International Development and Conflict Management

Information current as of July 16, 2010

2117 Chincoteague Hall
University of Maryland
College Park, MD  20742