

# Widespread Rapes of Chinese in Riots

by Seth Mydans

Following are some accounts of recent assaults against ethnic Chinese women compiled by human rights and women's aid groups in Indonesia:

❖ A student was abducted at a bus stop, taken to a swamp near the airport and raped by four men in a car. There was a green uniform in the car and she asked her abductors if they were police officers. "If you are police, you have to



courtesy of David Loh/Reuters

An Indonesian man runs past a torn Indonesian flag and a burned-out truck at an intersection near Triskati in central Jakarta.



courtesy of Huaren

Chinese rape victims

save me," she told them. One of them answered: "No, I have to give you a lesson. You are a woman and you are beautiful and you are part of the Chinese."

❖ In the midst of the riot, a group of men stopped a city bus and forced out all the non-Chinese women. "Then they chose the beautiful women among the Chinese and raped them inside the bus," a priest said. "The victims of that incident are really depressed. They are in the hospital with their families. They are trying to hide themselves from the public."

❖ A 10-year-old girl returning from school discovered that the shop-house where her family lived and worked had been burned. As she went in search of her parents, she was seized by two men and raped in front of her neighbors.

❖ One woman, a bank officer, told a local reporter that she was seized from the back of a motorcycle in the middle of the riot and thrown to the ground by a group of men. "She told me she was so hysterical and she was so panicked that she does not

remember what happened," the reporter said. "But she showed me a lot of bruises on her body, especially on her legs."

❖ In an incident of public humiliation, a group of about 15 men entered a bank where 10 ethnic Chinese employees were taking refuge from the riot. The men locked the door, made the women take off their clothes and ordered them to dance. In a similar incident during a riot in the city of Medan on 4 May, 20 female students at a teachers' training college were stopped by police officers when they tried to flee the violence on their campus. The officers forced them to take off their clothes and perform calisthenics. In both cases, the women reported that they were fondled but not raped. In another incident of harassment during the riot in Jakarta, a number of ethnic Chinese women were reportedly stripped and made to swim in a pond.

❖ An ethnic Chinese woman hid in her house with her two younger sisters as the rioters approached.

About 10 men came into the house and found the sisters on the third floor. They made the two younger women take off their clothes and told the older sister to stand in a corner, "because you are too old for us."

Meanwhile, arsonists entered the lower floors and set fire to the building. "After they had raped her two sisters, the two men said to her, 'We are finished and we are satisfied and because you are too old and ugly we weren't interested in you.' So they took her two sisters and pushed them to the ground floor where there was already fire, and they were killed.

"When her mother heard the news, she had a heart attack and died," reports said. "So now this woman is in a psychiatric hospital. Sometimes she cries when she tells the story and sometimes she is normal again. That is one of the stories we have confirmed."

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Source: <http://www.huaren.org>

## Forwarded from Missionnet's Urgent Prayer Network:

21 June 1998,  
Jakarta, Indonesia

Dear Friends,

Following is a victim's account during the May riots here in Jakarta. Reference to Huaren Bulletin Board, 12 June 1998.

The purpose is to request your prayers for hundreds of similar victims.

"My name is Vivian, and I am 18 years old. I have a little sister and brother. As a family we live in what is supposed to be a "secure" apartment.

At 9.15am, 14 May 1998, a huge crowd had gathered around our apartment. They screamed, "Let's butcher the Chinese!", "Let's eat pigs!", "Let's have a party!" We live on the seventh floor and we got a call from a family on the third floor saying that the crowd had reached the second floor. They even chased some occupants upstairs. We were all very frightened. In our fright, we prayed and left everything to God's hands.

Afterwards, we left our room and went upstairs to the top floor, as it was impossible to go downstairs and escape. We got to the 15<sup>th</sup> floor and stayed with some friends. Not long afterwards, we were surprised by the crowd coming out of the elevators right before we entered the room. We hurried into the room and locked the door tightly. At that time we heard them knock at the other rooms loudly and there were some screams from women and girls. Our room was filled with fear.

We realised that they would come to us. So we spread throughout the room hiding in the corners. We could hear girls of 10 to 12 years old screaming, "Mommy... mommy..mom..mom... it hurts." That time I didn't know that these little girls were being raped. After about half an hour the noise diminished and we had some guts to go out and check. It was indescribable. A lot, some of them young girls, were lying on

the floor. "Oh my God, what has happened?" Seeing all of this, we screamed and my little sister, Fenny, screamed hysterically and hugged her father.

Tears started coming down my eyes. With our friends, a newly wed couple, we started going downstairs. Reaching the 10<sup>th</sup> floor, we heard a scream for help. The scream was very clear and we decided to go down and see. But as we turned, we saw a lot of people. I saw a woman in her 20s being raped by four men. She tried to fight back but she was held down tightly.

Realising the danger, we ran as hard as we could. But unfortunately, the rioters caught Fenny. We tried to rescue her, but could not do anything. There were about 60 of them. They tied us with ripped sheets, myself, my father, my mother, Fenny, Donny, Uncle Dodi, and my Aunt Vera. They led us to a room. Uncle Dodi asked what they wanted, but they did not reply.

They looked evil and savage. One of them grabbed Fenny roughly and dragged her to a sofa. At that time, I knew she was in great danger. I screamed loudly but one of the mob slapped me in the face. My father who also screamed was hit with a piece of wood and he fainted. My mother had fainted when Fenny was dragged to the sofa. I could only pray and pray that disaster would not befall us.

Uncle Dodi tried to stop them by offering money. His efforts were fruitless. And in the end, five people raped Fenny. Before each raping, they always said "Allahu Akhbar" (an Islamic phrase in Arabic meaning "God is Great.") They were ferocious and brutal.

Not long afterwards, around nine men came to the room and dragged me. I also saw them forcing and dragging my Aunt Vera. But at that time I passed out and everything went blank. I became conscious at around 5 or 6 pm. My head hurt and I realised I had no clothing on my body. I cried

and realised my family was still there. My father was hugging my mother and little brother Doni. I also saw Uncle Dodi lying on the floor and Aunt Vera was crying over his body. I felt so weak and fainted again.

The next day, I was in the Pluit Hospital. My father and mother were beside me. With all the pains in my body, I asked, "Mom, why Fenny? Mom?" I felt a stinging pain as I said these words. My cheeks were swollen. My mother cried again and couldn't speak any words, while my father, holding back his tears, managed to smile at me. After four days in treatment, my condition improved. With a sad look, my father told me then what happened. After I fainted, seven people raped me. At that time, my father still couldn't see well after being hit with a piece of wood. They raped me repeatedly. Then my father said, "Vivian, Fenny is gone."

I was confused and cried out, "Why Dad?" My father couldn't answer. He told me to rest and went out of the room. I cried over and over again, feeling that my life had no meaning any more. A week ago, after I was released from the hospital I was told everything that happened.

When Fenny was raped, she kept on fighting and so she was repeatedly slapped by her rapists. The last time she fought, Fenny spat on one of them. Offended, the man grabbed a knife and stabbed Fenny's stomach over and over again. Finally, she died, blood all over her body.

My father told me that Uncle Dodi had the same fate. He watched my Aunt Vera who was also being raped. "God...why should all of these happen? Where are you God?" Aunt Vera is in shock. Her face is blank and she refuses to eat. Almost every hour, my mother and I cry over all these happenings. I can never forget. These mob of people are uncivilised monsters."

Source: Christian Leaders Association

From another E-mail came this appeal:

Dear Friends:

The International Human Rights Law Group is sending a letter to various government officials in Indonesia regarding the recent news of rape of Indonesian women of Chinese descent during the May 1998 riots in Indonesia.

The Law Group is asking for the following:

1. The government should provide full medical care to women victims
2. The government should launch a full investigation into these allegations
3. The government should take strong action against police officials and military personnel who reportedly witnessed a number of incidents but failed to take any action to protect women victims of violence

We are inviting NGOs to join this sign-on letter to make it an international concern for NGOS from around the world to express global concern to the government and global support for the Indonesian women.

You can support this letter in two ways:

1. If you would like to sign-on to this letter, please send us: the name of your organisation, name (or names of the persons signing the letter), and country

We would send one letter with all the NGOs names as co-signatories. If you would like to receive a copy of this letter, please send us your full mailing address.

2. If you would like to support this idea but prefer to send your own letter on your organisation letterhead, please feel free to use this letter as a sample letter.

Send letters to:

H.E. President, B.J. Habibie  
President of the Republic of Indonesia  
Jakarta, Indonesia  
Via Fax (62) 21 345 2685

RE: VIOLENCE AGAINST IN-  
DONESIAN WOMEN OF CHI-  
NESE DESCENT

Dear President Habibie:

We, the undersigned express our deep anguish and grave concern over the recent reports of alleged violence and rape committed against over 200 Indonesian women of Chinese descent. We urge you to take immediate steps to ensure that proper medical care is provided to women victims and an immediate investigation is launched for these cases by the Human Rights Commission of Indonesia.

We draw your attention to the international news reports between 12 May to 21 May 1998 which record that during the riots in Jakarta, Medan and in the Chinese commercial district of Glodok, girls and women between the ages of 10 to 55 were forced to take off their clothes and dance in the streets, raped and, in some cases, raped and burnt to death at various locations such as private homes, banks, public buses, streets and shops. In many cases, violence was committed in the presence of family members or neighbours.

It was also reported that these women were targeted because of their ethnicity and religion as some of them were told that they deserve this treatment because they are "Chinese and non-Muslims." Newspaper reports have noted

that apart from targeting Chinese owned homes and shops, at various occasions during the riots, groups of Indonesian men stopped city buses, entered banks or shops, forced all "non-Chinese Indonesian women" out and then raped the ethnic Chinese women.

We respectfully urge you to immediately act to take all necessary measures to ensure that the persons responsible for committing these violent crimes against Indonesian citizens of Chinese descent are held accountable.

We also urge you to take strong action against Indonesian police officials and army personnel who reportedly witnessed a number of incidents but failed to take any action to protect these women victims of violence.

Copies of this letter are also being sent to the following:

Mr. Marzuki Darusman and Ms. Miriam Budiardjo  
Deputy Directors, Indonesian National Human rights Commission

Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi  
Manusia Indonesia (KOMNAS-  
HAM)  
Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia  
Fax: (62) 21 520 7948

Dr. Tuty Awiyah  
State Minister for Women's Affairs  
Republic of Indonesia  
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Professor Dr. H. Muladi  
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Ambassador Dorodjatun  
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