

August 31, 2005
New York Times

Indonesia to Give Amnesty to 2,000 Rebels

By REUTERS

JAKARTA, [Indonesia](#), Aug. 30 (Reuters) - Indonesia's president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, signed a decree on Tuesday giving amnesty to some 2,000 jailed members of the separatist Free Aceh Movement and to leaders of the group living in exile.

The amnesty is a main provision of a peace deal agreed to this month that saw the rebel group give up its demand for independence in the tsunami-devastated northern province of Aceh, effectively ending three decades of fighting.

According to a copy of the decree obtained by Reuters, the amnesty takes effect immediately. It covers about 2,000 members of the movement, including hundreds sent to prisons on Java, ministers have said. Those prisoners are expected to start leaving jails on Wednesday. The peace agreement was reached after a series of talks prompted by the Indian Ocean tsunami on Dec. 26 that hit the island of Sumatra particularly hard, leaving 170,000 in Aceh dead or missing.

Some nationalist legislators in Jakarta have attacked the truce as being too soft on the rebels. They have called on the government to give amnesty only to those willing to pledge allegiance to Indonesia.