

desperate and frustrated about his condition. And the last time he went to hospital, he died. We don't know why."

Wasn't his cause of death recorded on the death certificate?

"We don't know," Sucipto said. "Maybe his wife does."

If Syahromi died as a result of his injuries, as his friends believe he did, then he is the Jakarta bombing's unacknowledged 11th victim. There may also be a 12th, a woman who was riding on the back of her husband's motorbike outside the embassy when the bomb went off. He lost an eye and she suffered only minor injuries to the back of her head. She died some time later, perhaps as a result of her head injuries.

She had been pregnant at the time of the explosion and gave birth to her child prior to her death. The couple decided to name the baby Bombom (which is also an Indonesian pet name for a chubby child).

Sucipto said the group had lost contact with the woman's husband and had been unable to find him. They didn't know, either, how to get hold of Wartini, who was emerging as the only person who would be able to shed some light on Syahromi's fate. "We don't know where she is," Daisy said. "She has no phone and disappeared after he passed away."

ON NOVEMBER 19, 2006, a short statement was posted on then foreign affairs minister Alexander Downer's web page. More than two years after the bombing, the news failed to register in nearly all Australian media.

"I was deeply saddened to hear today of the death in Jakarta of Syahromi, one of the victims of the bombing outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta on September 9, 2004."

"Syahromi's sacrifice and the courage he demonstrated after the bombing will never be forgotten ... I wish to express my deepest condolences to Syahromi's wife and two children."

IT WAS MY LAST DAY in Jakarta when Daisy called with the news that someone might know where Wartini was. A guard at the embassy named Sudjarwo was a close friend of Syahromi and had kept track of his widow. He would take us to her.

We had tried Mulyono one more time with no luck. He had failed to get help at the hospital and fallen further into depression. "What is the point of talking? What will change?" he said.

He seemed convinced he would end up like Syahromi and die in pain as doctors pleaded ignorance.

No one had been able to answer the many questions surrounding Syahromi's death. But his widow hopefully had the answers and Sudjarwo had agreed to take us to her, winding through the Bangkalan laneways on his undersized motorbike into that area that Daisy Nelly called "kumuh".

He slowed down near a small house and invited us in. We should wait there, at his home, he said, and sat us down on a frayed couch while his girlfriend, Julia, brought in soft drinks from the stall adjoining the house, where she worked.

Pictures hung on the walls — portraits of family members staring stiffly at the camera and one of Sudjarwo having his hand shaken by Jakarta's police chief at a ceremony for the guards who survived the embassy blast.

Sudjarwo said that before Syahromi's death, he had been in increasing pain and asked the embassy if he could be sent to Australia or Singapore for tests. They told him he had to go through Aisyiyah, which told him he needed medical proof first.

A woman's voice interrupted the conversation: "He was in hospital 11 times."

It was Wartini, the woman we had spent the past week looking for, standing in the doorway and looking like she had aged more than she should have in the four years since we met by her husband's hospital bed. She led in her two young daughters, 11-year-old Puspa and 18-month-old Syahwa, who she was pregnant with when Syahromi died. (Her son wasn't there at the time.)

She sat down on the sofa and said she didn't want to think about whether he would still be alive if his pleas for help had been heard.

"Before the bomb, Syahromi never had headaches. After the bomb, he got these very bad headaches all the time," she said. "He didn't know what was wrong and was so frustrated because 11 times he was in and out of

hospitals and there was no result. No one would say what he was suffering from. And the last time, when he died, the diagnosis was given to Aisyiyah and they never told me what he died from. I still don't know why he died."

What did it say on the death certificate?

"I didn't get any certificate or letter from the hospital, nothing to explain that Syahromi had passed away. Even when Syahromi left the hospital, they never gave me paper or anything like that, explaining that he had died."

She said she had banked a small insurance payout from the company which contracted him to the embassy and was using that to live off, along with a collection done among his colleagues at the embassy.

"After Syahromi passed away, Aisyiyah promised to give me some money to open a shop or a stall, something like that. But they never gave the money," she said. "Then they told me the agreement with the embassy was over and that all the money had been given back."

Now she was working in a small food stall to make whatever money she could and had set up home nearby. She agreed to take me there and led the way through winding alleyways, deep into one of Jakarta's poorest slums. A stream of sewage flowed through a tiny laneway which separated rising tin towers that blocked out much of the sunlight.

She pointed to a ladder, which led up two levels to a small tin space, no bigger than 4sqm, where she lived with her three children.

"After the bomb, after my husband has died, no one thinks of us. There is nothing," she said.

I looked around at where she lived — at the sad legacy of Syahromi, the forgotten hero of the Jakarta bombing and its unacknowledged 11th victim — and asked her if it made her angry.

"I can't have any hard feelings," she said. ❧

"AFTER THE BOMB, AFTER MY HUSBAND HAS DIED, NO ONE THINKS OF US. THERE IS NOTHING."

Wartini



Left Kevin Rudd, then opposition foreign affairs spokesman, tours the site of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, days after it was the target of a suicide bomb attack in 2004.