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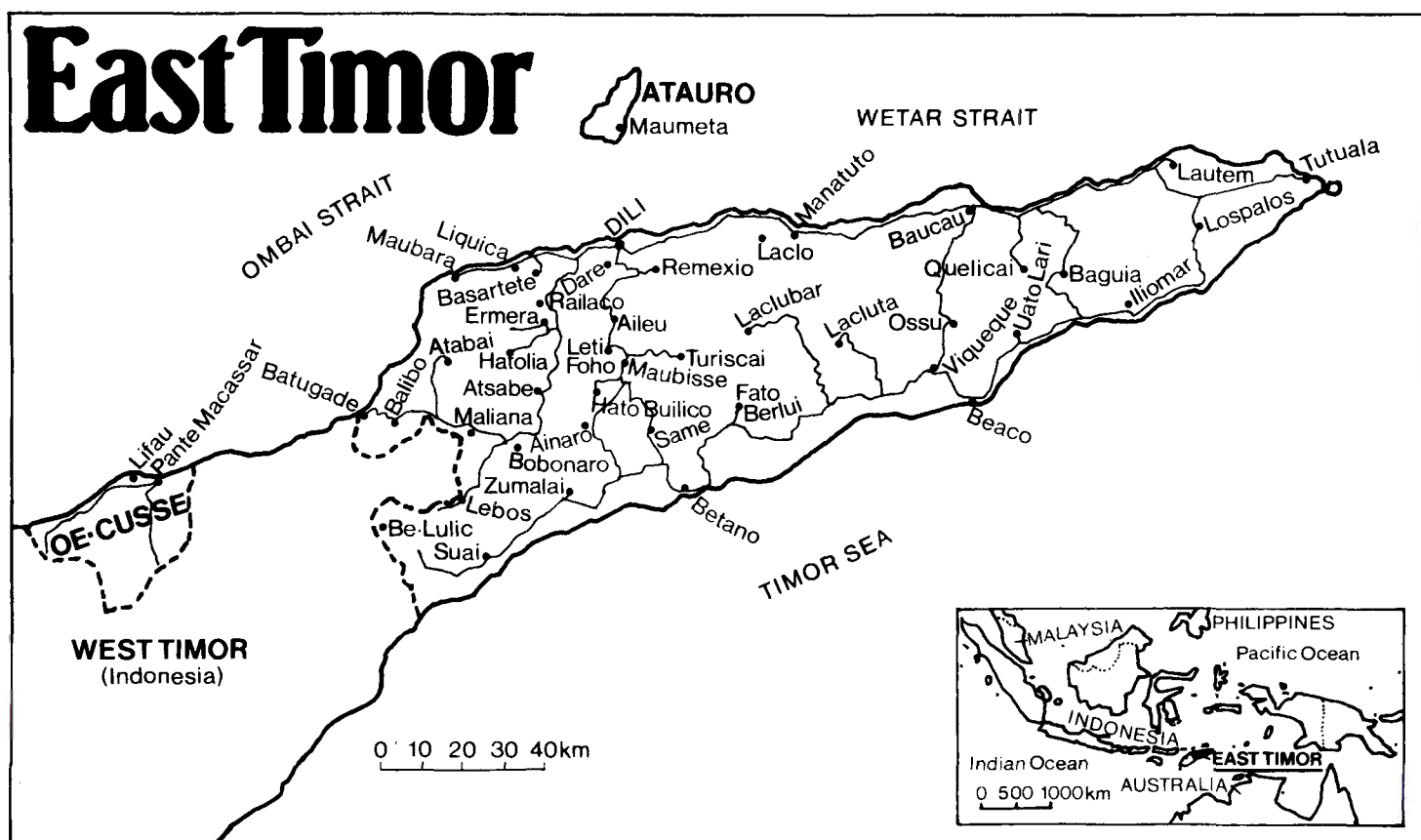
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No 3, October 1985

CIIR



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THE CHURCH IN EAST TIMOR

The Church and Indonesia's birth control programme

Controversy has arisen over the Indonesian birth control programme in East Timor. It has been attacked as part of the Indonesian strategy for dominating the East Timorese, and the Indonesian-appointed governor has responded by claiming that the leader of the territory's Catholics, Mgr Carlos Belo, has supported the programme. To clarify his position Mgr Belo issued a pastoral letter in March this year. However, while indeed voicing general support for the general aims of the national programme, the apostolic administrator of East Timor denounces the way it is carried out in the territory and raises fundamental questions about the purpose of birth control in East Timor. The pastoral letter is perhaps a further example of what can now be seen as Mgr Belo's way of 'saying and not saying'.

'Apprehension and unease'

Mgr Belo denounces the activities of Indonesian birth control promoters in East Timor. 'They simply go around the villages and hamlets indiscriminately distributing means of contraception (pills, injections and other means). These officials do not give the people information beforehand, nor do they respect the Christian sentiments of the Timorese, the majority of whom (438,000) are Catholics. This is producing apprehension and unease among Christians.' All this is happening, says Mgr Belo, although East Timor is not one of the areas where the Indonesian birth control programme is obligatory.

Catholic teaching

One part of Mgr Belo's pastoral is devoted to a summary of Roman Catholic teaching on birth control as set out in Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae vitae*. This holds that, while it is right and necessary to plan births, this must be done for the right reasons, for the wellbeing of the parents and children and the needs of society. According to *Humanae vitae*, the only permissible methods are the 'natural' ones of the safe period and temperature-based methods. 'Artificial' methods, the pill, condoms, IUDs, injections, are not allowed. In Mgr Belo's words, 'This means that all contraceptives are morally illicit,' and he notes that it is such methods which are being promoted in East Timor.

Reasons for family planning

Another strand of Mgr Belo's argument is more subtle, and indirectly addresses the criticisms of the programme which see it as something imposed by the Indonesian government for their own purposes, without regard for the welfare of the population. While noting that the Roman Catholic Church accepts 'responsible parenthood', Mgr Belo vigorously criticises the idea that the two-child family is a foolproof recipe for prosperity and happiness. This, he says, ignores the significance of children for Timorese as the materialisation and perpetuation of a couple's love, even, in a sense, their own fulfilment. Mgr Belo emphasises the generosity of Timorese families who have adopted some of the many orphans left by the invasion and the war.

Principles and practice

As with so many aspects of the East Timor situation, Indonesian principle is divorced from practice. Mgr

Belo allows positive elements in the national birth control programme, which is officially supposed 'to take into account the desire and religious values and beliefs of the population'. However, he 'regrets, rejects and condemns' the activities carried out in East Timor. It is these, and not the church, he adroitly remarks, 'which are distorting the true purpose of the national birth control programme'. Finally, elements of the programme conflict with the culture and moral values of the East Timorese people.

An issue of medical ethics

Several reports in recent months have suggested that women and men in East Timor have been forcibly sterilised or have been given treatment against conception either against their will or without their knowledge. A number of passages in this pastoral letter imply that such abuses have indeed been taking place. If so, the doctors and medical staff concerned would be in grave breach of medical practise and ethics, and the issue should be brought to the attention of international humanitarian agencies working in East Timor and in Indonesia. If you have information or evidence on this question, please send it to us at [East Timor Link](#).

DIPLOMATIC NEWS

At the UN: The Secretary General's Report

On September 16 Mr Perez de Cuellar issued his second report to the General Assembly, describing the progress of his initiative to bring the dispute in East Timor to an end. This year, like last, it was agreed that East Timor, which was debated annually at the UN General Assembly between 1975 and 1982, would not be included on the agenda.

Mr Perez de Cuellar stated that 'substantive talks' between Portugal and Indonesia were proceeding in a constructive atmosphere, and that he hoped 'for a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement of the question of East Timor'.

Religious Freedoms

With regard to the talks, it is believed that Indonesia and Portugal have moved from discussing the situation of Portuguese civil servants in East Timor to a discussion of religious liberty.

A number of documents have, as a result, been prepared on this question. The Indonesian authorities have circulated at the United Nations a document entitled 'Religious Life in East Timor' (copies may be had from [East Timor Link](#), for 35p), and *A Paz e Possivel em Timor Leste* has also prepared a document on the question (which can also be had, in Portuguese or French, from *Paz e Possivel* in Portugal, or [E T Link](#)).

The Indonesian report ends: "In conclusion, there is complete freedom of religion in East Timor. There are no restrictions placed on the clergy's pastoral duties who have total freedom of movement throughout the province as well as abroad. The Catholic Church has full authority over the parochial school system and has been steadily expanding its educational activities. In addition, the Catholic Church in East Timor participates with other humanitarian organizations in providing assistance to the population. The Provincial and Central Governments have and are continuing to allocate significant resources, financial and others, to facilitate the unfettered development of religious life in the province. Finally it should be made clear from all the foregoing that the Constitutionally guaranteed right of religious freedom is fully respected in East Timor as it is in all other provinces of Indonesia". (Copies may also be acquired from the Indonesian Mission to the UN, 666 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017).

The document of *A Paz e Possivel em Timor Leste*, published in July, 15 pages, refutes the arguments presented by the Indonesian government point by point: its sub-headings include a section on Pancasila; a discussion on the relations between Christianity and Islam in Indonesia; citations from East Timorese about the absence of religious liberty; the tendency of "Indonesianisation" to stifle the natural expression of Timorese religious life; cases of religious persecution; the imposition of birth control; a section on the origins and number of clergy; on restrictions on the movement of religious staff; and on restrictions on freedom of religious expression; there is also analysis on the effects of the educational reforms introduced by Indonesia on church schools; and the impact and character of local and international aid programmes.

It is the most authoritative available statement about the question of religious liberty - with however the exception of the reflection written in January by the Council of Priests, which was reprinted in the last edition of East TIMOR LINK.

Copies are available! WRITE!

Portugal after the elections

The legislative elections which took place in Portugal at the end of September produced a humiliating result for the Socialist Party of Mr Mario Soares - perhaps dashing the latter's hopes of becoming the country's next President, when Ramalho Eanes steps down at the beginning of 1986.

The Socialist Party's vote collapsed to 20% leaving the Social Democrats, who polled 29%, with a sizeable lead. The balance of power, however, may well remain with the entirely new Democratic Renewal Party (PRD) formed only three months ago and led by Dr Manuela Eanes (the President's wife), which attracted only 2% fewer votes (18%) than the Socialists.

It is too soon to say what effect this will have on Portugal's policy towards East Timor. The Socialist Party leadership has given no more than lip service to Portugal's commitment to self-determination for East Timor, so one cannot assume Portuguese policy will weaken. Indeed it is possible that the PRD will press for firmer action, owing to its links with President Eanes, who has consistently been the most forthright supporter of an active Portuguese policy.

Contacts with Fretilin

Has Portugal at last decided to consult Fretilin and within the process begun by the UN Secretary General to settle the conflict in the territory? Maybe. For

the first time since discussions with Indonesia began in 1984, the Portuguese government consented to meet representatives of Fretilin when Mr Jose Ramos Horta met the Foreign minister Mr Gama in New York at the beginning of October.

It is too early to say what Portugal's real intentions are, but this decision should be applauded: for a settlement to be successful, representatives of East Timor's people must eventually be included directly in negotiations about the territory's future.

Since we are reading straws, recent statements by the foreign minister and Portuguese diplomats, at the United Nations Decolonisation Committee debate in New York and in Geneva at the Human Rights Commission meeting, may also be significant. They were more positive than in previous years - though it must be repeated that Portugal's public statements on East Timor have consistently failed in their courage - accepting neither responsibility nor a leading role in pursuing a diplomatic settlement. This has been true although Portugal's own rights as a sovereign nation were abused when the territory was illegally invaded in 1975, as well as those of the East Timorese people.

Australia's position

This timorousness was illustrated by Portugal's handling of Australia's Prime Minister, Mr Bob Hawke, when he declared in August that Australia recognised Indonesia's *de facto* sovereignty over East Timor. Speaking in Parliament on August 23rd he said that "recognition of the fact of Indonesian control over East Timor has repeatedly demonstrated over the last several years".

It was only after several days of hesitation that Portugal formally protested to the Australian government, and recalled the Portuguese ambassador for consultations.

Where does Hawke's statement leave Australia? In one sense, it merely formalises a recognition that many have taken for granted. Nevertheless it means that it will now become very difficult for any Australian government to move back towards more positive support for East Timor. It is also difficult to see how Australia might play any constructive role in the negotiations taking place at the initiative of the UN Secretary General, either as mediator or as an interested party in the region: this, no doubt, is why Portugal claimed that Mr Hawke's statement was particularly inopportune in view of the "delicate international efforts on this question".

It should be noted that Australia is at present negotiating an oil rights deal in parts of the Timor Sea which are still claimed by Portugal. The timing seems to provide further evidence of the degree to which Australia's diplomatic stance towards East Timor is influenced by commercial factors. "The negotiations (over the seabed) the successful conclusion of which is of importance to Australia, can in practice be concluded only with the Indonesian government," Mr Hawke declared in his statement to parliament.

Radio Link

Australia has also refused to grant a license for the radio which has been receiving messages from Fretilin in East Timor since May 1985 (see article on the internal situation). It seems that the Australian government is even prepared to collude in the censorship of all information from East Timor which is not directly controlled by the Indonesian authorities.

Aid

Mr Hawke did emphasise, on the other hand, that Australia would continue to make representations about human rights abuses, and was ready to provide development aid. To date, since 1982 the Australian government has provided more than Australian \$4.3m for relief programmes, and A\$ 9m since 1975. The most recent substantial grant was announced in June: A\$ 750,000 is to be given to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), for basic nutrition, health and educational services for mothers and children.

Question It would be interesting to know what proportion of the funds spent by Indonesia in East Timor - the foundation of Jakarta's claims to be developing the territory - have been given by foreign governments or by international aid agencies. Answers Please to East Timor Link.

East Timor in the non-aligned movement

A report by Jill Jolliffe

The eighth ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Luanda in early September was the scene of a fierce debate over East Timor, which deadlocked and delayed the conference but was not finally accepted - except in a technical sense which could effectively re-introduce the issue to the non-aligned summit in Harare next year.

Indonesian lobby

A strong Indonesian lobby led by Foreign Minister Mochtar mustered an overwhelming majority among the 119 delegations present, but as all decisions of the non-aligned movement are taken by consensus and the supporters of East Timorese self-determination refused to concede, the issue was noted as one in which "no consensus was reached". An argument over a resolution on the Iraq-Iran war was similarly treated.

The contentious resolution said that the meeting of Ministers "noted with concern the existing situation in East Timor, recognising the need to find a peaceful settlement by means of dialogue" and appealed to the UN Secretary-General to "undertake efforts aimed at achieving a global, durable and stable solution for East Timor in compliance with resolution 37/30 of the 37th session of the United Nations General Assembly, as well as all relevant decisions of this organisation". It concluded: "In this respect the ministers considered as positive the conversations carried out between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary Generalrecognising the need for participation of representatives of the people of East Timor in this process, so as to safeguard the interests of all parties directly involved in the conflict".

Heated debate

The East Timor issue had been removed from the non-aligned agenda two summits ago, at Havana, a decision upheld in New Delhi. The draft resolution had been inserted by the host country Angola. Indonesia contended that a ministerial-level meeting had no authority to restore a resolution rejected by a full summit, and therefore moved for its complete deletion. The debate in the political committee which followed, according to delegates present, was extremely heated and went on until 4.15 a.m., with many on the speakers' list still waiting to be heard.

The Lusophone African countries led the argument, with the Cape Verdian delegate taking a particularly passionate stand.

A foot still in the door

A Fretilin delegation led by Mari Alkatiri attended the conference as guests of the Angolan government. Among the countries supporting Fretilin's position were the five former Portuguese African colonies, and Benin, Zimbabwe, Vanuatu, Vietnam and Laos. By the plenary session the resolution appeared to be totally lost. But when the Angolan government printed the final draft declaration a week later, after delegates had left, the Timor resolution's text was included with a note that no consensus was reached. This was the compromise Fretilin had hoped for but feared defeated.

In principle the text in this form should appear on the agenda at the Zimbabwe summit, so that the Timorese hope they may have a foot in the door for a meeting where the political climate may once again be propitious for them, as it was in Luanda.

Note. Zimbabwe will be the next country to chair the Non-Aligned Movement. Indonesia, which had considered presenting its candidature, withdrew - no doubt partly because of the furore in Luanda. Zimbabwe supports the claims of the East Timorese people, and its presidency should help the East Timorese to keep the issue alive in diplomatic circles. (Ed.)

Mgr Belo at the Vatican

Mgr Belo visited Rome at the end of June and, according to the Australian press, met the Pope and had a series of meetings with the Vatican officials in charge of East Timorese affairs. The Vatican has not recognised the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia, and has kept the Timorese church as a separate administrative unit, despite pressure from the Indonesian government for the Timorese church to be incorporated into the Indonesian church.

'The world's most difficult problem'

According to a report from Agence France-Press, Mgr Belo quoted the Pope as telling him, 'Now, Timor represents the world's most difficult problem.' The Pope told him to 'work for the church, to fight the suffering of the people, and seek for a right solution for peace in Timor'. Mgr Belo reportedly said that the purpose of his visit to Rome was 'to try to launch new negotiations between Fretilin and Indonesia' (The Australian, Aug. 9, 1985).

Visitors to East Timor cannot see the truth: Mgr Belo

Visits to East Timor by diplomats and journalists, which have recently become more numerous, are of little significance, according to Mgr Belo. 'Even if these people are independent,' Mgr Belo said, 'they cannot say the truth, because they are too closely guided to see the truth' (The Australian, Aug. 9 1985)

INSIDE EAST TIMOR

An Analysis by John Taylor

Radio link re-established

The most important event in recent months has been the re-establishment of a two-way radio link between Australia and East Timor, broken since September 1978. Communication was first publicised on May 26th, when the deputy leader of Fretilin, Mao Hunu Karatailanu took part in a two-way conversation with Australian journalists. The Indonesian government protested vigorously. General Murdani, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, assuming that the new transmitter had been airlifted, threatened to shoot down any planes that breached East Timor's air space, and Indonesia's ambassador requested that the Australian government "stop radio contact by all available means" (*Kompas*, June 1st). Canberra rejected the licence application for the radio, noting that under recent legislation the maximum fine for operating an illegal transmitter was A\$10,000. The transmitter is still being operated illegally and a substantial amount of information has been received about the situation in East Timor.

Concio de Gama disappears

In June, the president of Fretilin, Kai Rala Xanana Gusmao, reported that Concio de Sousa Gama, the Fretilin representative who contacted Mr Bill Morrison while he was leading an Australian parliamentary delegation to East Timor in July 1983, had been arrested, tortured and has subsequently disappeared.

Strategic hamlets mean hunger

Reporting earlier via the radio, Xanana outlined the continuing confinement of the population in strategic hamlets and villages, from which they are allowed to leave at military behest, and only under exceptional circumstances. Crops have traditionally been planted and harvested at some distance from villages in East Timor, so military control is preventing farmers from even limited cultivation. Fretilin has listed many places where food shortages and starvation have continued to occur.

Torture

Torture continues of the types recently recounted by Amnesty International (see our review). The tactics used by the Indonesian troops have caused many people to escape to Fretilin-held areas. Those who are caught leaving villages and hamlets in this way are currently subject to the worst treatment. In a report of January 2nd Fretilin gives details of one such case, providing the names of witnesses. It concerns an elderly man from Venilale, who left his village to collect palm-wine, though the village was under curfew. When caught, he said he wanted to feed his family, but he was severely beaten and eventually tortured to death. His ears and nose were cut off and his lips were slashed.

Rehearsals for elections

In a series of detailed reports, Fretilin radio operators have described the creation by the Indonesians of a new category of prisoners - 'Number 1' - destined for disappearance or death. They have also outlined the ways in which the population is being prepared for the 1987 Indonesian parliamentary elections. Special envoys from the Kodim (district military command) have been conducting 'election rehearsals' and telling people that they must vote for Golkar, which is dominated by the military, and also

saying that Fretilin is not a valid organisation because the United Nations no longer supports it. Fretilin messages have also given further details of a massacre in Bobonaro in January 1985, when 24 people were killed.

Psychological warfare

Apart from the exacting physical conditions under which Fretilin troops are forced to live, there are also intense psychological pressures from the Indonesians. For example, in 1983, leaflets were dropped by plane on to the eastern sector, with a photograph of Xanana's two children, held in Dili. The caption (in Tetum) under the photograph read: 'Daddy, we do not know what will happen to us if you do not come home.' It was followed by promises of safe conduct, pardon, security and financial reward if Xanana or any other member surrendered to the Indonesians. Under such pressures, it is hardly surprising to receive news of the defection of an Eastern Zone Commander, Mauk Morak, in a letter from East Timor, dated February 26th. It seems that Morak surrendered and then returned to Timor under Indonesian sponsorship, speaking at public meetings. The Guardian (July 7th) reported that Morak had been involved in planning a new campaign against Fretilin, pinpointing their locations, but no confirmation has been received of any recent offensives.

The military situation

Fretilin counter-attacks continue. Messages and radio reports describe regular engagements with Indonesian troops, and recount that Fretilin has captured large amounts of Indonesian weaponry.

In July, journalists from Agence France-Presse, the New York Times, Asiaweek and the Far Eastern Economic Review were allowed to visit a number of locations in East Timor. They had asked to visit Baucau, the second largest town, but, as AFP's Jacques Guillon reported, were refused 'because of recent incidents in the area between Fretilin and the army' (July 7th). Andre Feillard of Asiaweek claimed that while the western part of the province is almost entirely pacified, in the eastern sector 'only road links and towns and surrounding areas are considered under full control'. Villagers define the rest as 'a risk zone' (2nd August). Lincoln Kay, of the Far Eastern Economic Review, reporting church sources, concluded that 'the picture they draw is of battles far more numerous, geographically widespread and bloodier than the government admits. They tell of Fretilin detachments, 30 strong or more, roaming the countryside at will in the night. In some places, they report fighting taking place as close as 45km from Dili' (8th August).

Trials and detentions

Kay provides a detailed account of the trials of the detainees from the Comarca prison in Dili, all of whom were detained for political involvement, and many of whom have been held for several years. Of the one hundred defendants appearing since the process was initiated twelve months ago, all have pleaded guilty, many have been tried in groups, and most witnesses have been detainees who are about to be tried themselves. 'The longest sentence so far was for 17 years, but such terms are reserved for "serious traitors who persist in bad attitudes", the lawyers said' (August 8th).

Meanwhile, according to the International Red Cross (ICRC), 1,166 detainees are held on Atauro island. During the last two years, many have been moved from the island to detention centres scattered across East Timor, and others have been imprisoned in Indonesia itself. The Guardian reported recently (13.7.85) that 58 political prisoners had been removed from the Comarca prison to Cipinam prison in Jakarta. Letters received in April claimed that they had been tortured by having their fingernails torn off.

CHURCH ACTIVITY ROUND THE WORLD

US Bishops letter of support to Mgr Belo

In June of this year Cardinal John O'Connor, archbishop of New York, wrote to Mgr Belo Expressing the support of the US Catholic Church for the church of East Timor. His letter said:

"Last summer, your predecessor, Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopez, came to see me in New York. Over breakfast he recounted vividly the tribulations of the Church in East Timor. I promised him that we would try to provide you with as much support and encouragement as possible.

Since then I have been kept abreast of developments in East Timor by the staff of the Office of International Justice and Peace of this Conference. And we are not your only friends in the United States. You are probably aware of the interest of many members of the U.S. Congress and their repeated public expressions of support addressed to the Executive Branch of the United States government.

In Europe too, interest and awareness has been stimulated by the statements and reports of various Catholic justice and peace commissions. Later this month, Amnesty International will release an exclusive and well documented report on the situation in East Timor.

We support the efforts being made in many quarters to encourage greater access to East Timor by journalists and human rights organizations. And we hope that the efforts of our Catholic Relief Services have contributed in some measure to the alleviation of the sufferings being endured by your people.

I hope that following your receipt of this letter, we can arrange to be in regular communication and that you will not hesitate to write to me with suggestions of ways in which we can be helpful.

Above all I want you to be assured of our constant prayers that God will strengthen you and the Church in East Timor in your struggle to preserve and enhance the dignity of life and the right of your people to live in peace and freedom."

It is the first time that the Bishops of the United States have publicly and formally expressed their feelings about the situation in East Timor. Like the statements made by US congressmen on the occasion of President Reagan's visit to Portugal earlier this year, it indicates how much concern there continues to be about American policy towards East Timor.

Call for congressional enquiry

Later in June, Bishop Francis Murphy, auxiliary bishop of Baltimore, representing the USCC at the launch of the Amnesty International report on East Timor, called for a full congressional hearing on the allegations contained in Amnesty's report. 'We need to break down the walls of silence about a forgotten place,' he said.

The Brazilian Bishops discuss East Timor

The Brazilian bishops' conference (CNBB) discussed East Timor at their meeting in June, to which they had invited Mgr Martinho da Costa Lopes, the former apostolic administrator of East Timor. Mgr da Costa Lopes summed up his message to the CNBB in a five-point request:

1. Support from the Brazilian church for the church

of East Timor in defending the basic rights of the Timorese people, notably that of controlling their own destiny.

2. Support from the Brazilian church for the struggle of the people of East Timor for their independence and the defence of their ethnic, cultural and religious identity.

3. Support from the Brazilian church for a negotiated solution to the conflict with the participation of the interested parties: Portugal, Indonesia and representatives of the Timorese people, including Fretilin.

4. Solidarity of the Brazilian church with the churches of Portugal and Indonesia in denouncing the crimes committed in East Timor.

5. An appeal from the Brazilian church to the Brazilian government to give support at the UN to the initiatives of the five Portuguese-speaking African countries and to the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly designed to achieve a peaceful solution of the problem of East Timor.

The CNBB is actively discussing follow-up action.

Controversy at CCA Assembly

In July, the Christian Conference of Asia, which represents the majority of the protestant churches on the continent, held its eighth Assembly in Seoul, South Korea. As in the CCA Youth Assembly held in New Delhi in October last year, East Timor proved to be a contentious issue.

Although the Assembly made no formal statement about the issue, there was intense discussion, during which the strong Indonesian delegation from the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) argued against critics of Indonesia's record.

The PGI, which is contested by or feels itself to be at odds with a number of its church partners, declared on the day after East Timor was discussed that it would not put up candidates for the CCA General Committee which is the Assembly's central decision-making body. The PGI is not withdrawing from the CCA, however: "We have decided that we should continue our support of the programme of the CCA," declared the Rev Ms. Augustina Lementut. Rather, "the Indonesian delegation has come to the situation where we could not help feeling that we, as Churches in Asia, are being pushed to conduct our affairs in the Assembly in such a way that we lose our uniqueness of being churches."

It is not unusual for Indonesian representatives to withdraw their presence from forums in which they face criticism they are unable to contain or defuse. The decision of the Indonesian protestant churches to withdraw from accepting responsibilities for the policies of the CCA has important implications, which cannot yet be assessed - and which spread much further than the particular question of East Timor.

The dispute, and its outcome, nevertheless indicate quite clearly how much the Asian churches have begun to take seriously their responsibilities towards the church and towards the people of East Timor. Their concern takes the issue back into the countries of ASEAN, which until now have remained unreasonably silent about a matter of basic human rights, and basic political rights, which particularly concern their own region.

The debate in open plenary on East Timor had been sparked off by the distribution of two leaflets prepared by the CCA Youth Forum. In an editorial

following the debate, the CCA Youth Forum paper defended its criticisms of Indonesia and challenged the Asian churches to respond prophetically. "The official Asian ecumenical movement," the paper declared, "has not shown even the slightest concern through CCA for East Timor's bitter experience ever since the Indonesian invasion ten years ago. It is a dark stain on the conscience of the Asian churches and will remain so until we actively formulate a Christian response to such suffering."

ROUND-UP

ASIAN AND PACIFIC CHURCH GROUPS SIGN DECLARATION

In the last edition of East Timor Link, we reported the publication of a declaration on East Timor, which was signed at the final count by over 400 members of parliament from Sweden, Portugal, Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, West Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, France, Norway, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

The text of that declaration, which calls for the inclusion of representatives of East Timor's people in any negotiations concerning the territory's future, has now been taken up by Christians in Solidarity with East Timor (CISET) and circulated to church groups in the Pacific and Asia.

CISET got a tremendous response: over 100 organisations signed, from Australia, Fiji, Hong Kong, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands and Tonga.

For further information about CISET, and about the results of this initiative, write to

CHRISTIANS IN SOLIDARITY WITH EAST TIMOR
PO Box 1092, North Fitzroy 3068, Australia.

THE QUAKER OFFICE AT THE UNITED NATIONS

In August, the Quaker Office at the United Nations sent an information pack about the situation in East Timor to every government delegation represented in New York.

It included CIIR's Comment, a paper by Roger Clark, Vice President of the International League for Human Rights, entitled 'The Decolonisation of East Timor and the United Nations Norms on Self-determination and Aggression' and a document prepared by staff of the Quaker Office called 'Ten years of UN Action on the Question of East Timor'.

The pack was sent out in preparation for the UN debate on East Timor. For information about the work of the Quaker Office, write to:

Quaker Office at the United Nations
777 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 Tel: (212) 682 2745

NEW ZEALAND'S POSITION

In the last East Timor Link we noted with surprise the New Zealand Prime Minister's favourable attitude towards Indonesia's claim to East Timor, as reported in a radio discussion. We suggested Timor Link readers might write to New Zealand embassies asking for clarification.

David Wilson wrote directly to Mr David Lange himself, and received in reply a letter from the Prime Minister, part of which we quote:

"We do not condone the way in which the Indonesians incorporated East Timor into their country. We accept, however, that the process cannot be reversed. My Government's main concern is that living conditions in East Timor should improve as quickly as possible and to this end we are doing what we can to contribute to the economic and social development of the territory.

We are of course very concerned when we hear reports of human rights abuses from East Timor and we do not hesitate to let the Indonesians know about this."

MEETING OF CHURCH ORGANISATIONS IN HOLLAND

November 1-2 1985

At the beginning of November, Dutch Justice and Peace will be hosting an informal conference for organisations associated with the European churches. Those present will examine the situation in East Timor and reflect on the role which they, as representative organisations within the European Christian Churches, might play in showing their sympathy and concern with the church in East Timor.

It is the first meeting to be held within Europe which will specifically address the question of Christian responsibility towards East Timor. Organisations associated with churches which wish to be informed about the meeting, or wish to send information or messages to it, should write to:

The Secretary, Victor Scheffers,
Netherlands Justice & Peace
Statenlaan 35
2582 Den Haag, Netherlands
Tel: Holland (070) 558 436

MEETING OF EUROPEAN GROUPS IN PARIS

September 28 and 29 1985

At the invitation of the French Association de Solidarité avec Timor Oriental, 13 European organisations from 8 countries met in Paris in the latest in a series of regular meetings held by European groups working on East Timor. Several groups associated with the churches attended, including A Paz e Possivel em Timor Leste from Portugal, Christian Solidarity International from Switzerland, Pax Christi International, Pro Mundi Vita, Justice and Peace of the Netherlands, and CIIR. Mr Abilio Araujo also attended, and presented to the meeting Fretilin's point of view and current analysis of the situation in the territory.

This was essentially a working meeting, to enable European groups to catch up with the work each has been doing and share ideas for future activity. It is the sixth to have been held since 1981 and the series has helped considerably to increase the effectiveness of work in Europe on behalf of Timor and its people.

For further information about the meeting write to:

Association de Solidarité avec Timor Oriental
BP 235.07, 75327 Paris, France.

Review

VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS - THE AMNESTY REPORT

'The violations described in this report have occurred in a situation in which the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, association and movement have not existed and in the absence of the constraints of legality. People have been detained and ill-treated for asserting their right to these freedoms.'

Amnesty International takes no position on armed conflicts, and it has no position on the status of East Timor. This neutrality makes its catalogue of abuses an even more telling indictment of Indonesian actions in East Timor.

Amnesty's report covers the period from just before the Indonesian invasion in December 1975 to the end of 1984. It sets out to document two broad categories of human rights violations, the killing of noncombatants during military operations and the killing and 'disappearance' of people outside combat. In both categories it reports that abuses have continued long after the 1975 invasion. It reports 'a pattern of ...campaigns' against the resistance 'which have included extensive and apparently systematic killings and "disappearances" both of combatants who had surrendered or been captured and of noncombatants ...suspected of contact with Fretilin guerrillas' (20). The victims are reported to have included groups of as many as 400 men women and children, the latest of such mass killings being reported in June 1984. Amnesty also 'has the names of over 550 people reported to have been killed outside combat or to have 'disappeared' between 1975 and the end of 1984', 'but it considers that this figure falls far short of the true total'(20).

The report also documents torture of prisoners, apparently countenanced in Indonesian military documents, and the abuse of the civil population by Indonesian troops. Amnesty says that there has been no satisfactory investigation of any of these incidents, and no instance of disciplinary action against members of the Indonesian forces.

Evidence

Since the sources for Amnesty's report on East Timor are in many cases the same as those used by the Timorese solidarity groups round the world, it is valuable to have Amnesty's testimony that documents such as the Indonesian military manuals it received in

July 1983 have stood up to expert analysis and are corroborated by other evidence. The Indonesians have attacked Amnesty's sources, but have not succeeded in refuting the reports. Nor have they given independent observers adequate access to East Timor. An important part of Amnesty's report is its documenting of the restrictions imposed on foreign visitors. These range from limitations on movement, justified on grounds of security or inadequate transport, to instructions to interpreters to filter out information unfavourable to Indonesia. Even humanitarian organisations are subject to restrictions: 'Amnesty International has noted with regret that visits by humanitarian organisations, particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), have been irregular and have not involved full access to all parts of the territory'(15).

The Indonesian version

Amnesty's report is in effect a refutation of the Indonesian portrayal of events in East Timor. 'Since 1979 Indonesian government spokespersons have repeatedly represented the situation in East Timor as having returned to a state of normality with opposition to Indonesian rule allegedly confined to small bands of Fretilin "remnants". The main focus of Indonesian activity is claimed as having been the economic development of the territory.' Time and again, after Indonesian representatives have made such claims to the UN and other bodies, it has later been revealed that arrests and extra-judicial executions, and in one case a large-scale offensive, was in progress.

The underlying issue

Amnesty avoids making political points, but its report cannot fail to provoke the question why, if the overwhelming majority of East Timorese accept 'integration' into Indonesia and welcome Indonesia's development programmes, the Indonesians have to resort to such barbarities ten years after their invasion of this tiny territory. It is a question most Western governments prefer to ignore.

Amnesty International: East Timor. Violations of Human Rights: Extrajudicial Executions, 'Disappearances', Torture and Political Imprisonment, London 1985. Available from Amnesty International, 1 Easton St, London WC1X 8DJ.

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