



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Timor link, no. 14, July 1988

This is the Published version of the following publication

UNSPECIFIED (1988) Timor link, no. 14, July 1988. Timor link (14). pp. 1-8.

The publisher's official version can be found at

Note that access to this version may require subscription.

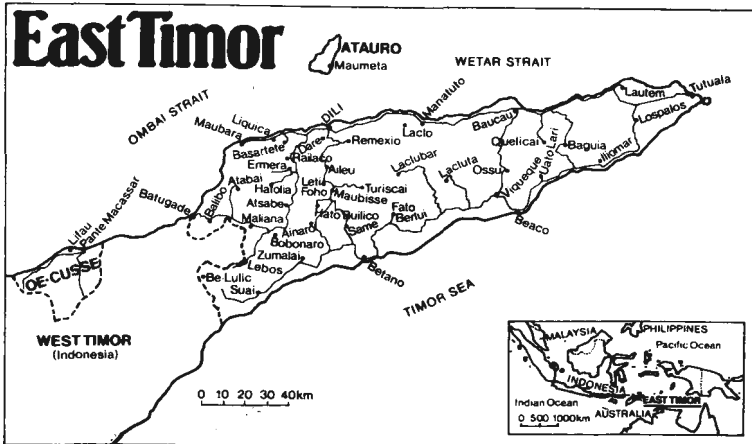
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ISSN 1010 1888

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EDITORIAL

THE POWER OF SINGLE VOICES

A long silence has been broken. In recent weeks a number of important witnesses have come forward to speak in public about life in East Timor.

There have always been witnesses, of course. Documented public statements have been rare not because the refugees have nothing to say, but because many are afraid for the safety of their relatives and friends who are still in East Timor.

Among those who have been tortured, many are also reluctant to speak because their experiences involved humiliation and degrading abuse.

Those who have recently testified are therefore doubly courageous. In this issue of *Timor Link* we draw upon the declarations of three particular individuals. Cristiano da Costa is from Baucau; he went to Indonesia in 1979 and escaped abroad at the end of 1987. Inacio de Moura was the most senior Portuguese official to be left behind in East Timor after the invasion. After periods in detention, in recent years he acted as the official guide to the majority of foreign visitors. Both men testified this year before the UN Commission on Human Rights, meeting in Geneva. Betty Sarmiento, the third witness, was also detained; her sister was executed after torture, her uncle 'disappeared'. ■

Testimonies

On Torture

Torture of detainees in Timor has undoubtedly been widespread since 1975. Amnesty International has documented numerous allegations, and Indonesian documents — notably a military manual published in 1983 — make clear that its practice is institutionalised.

Cristiano da Costa

I was arrested by the military command in Baucau, Kodim-1628. They started interrogating me around midnight. The man in charge was Captain A. Haryanto, a Catholic, assisted by three soldiers. On that first night, I was not tortured. On the second night, they started torturing me and that was when I lost my front teeth. They held me on the ground, face down, and trampled so hard on my head that my two front teeth fell out and a third one was broken.

I refused to tell them anything, so on the third night, they used electric shock and threats of all kinds. I was subjected to some of the worst torture at the time. [...]

The interrogation and torture went on for fourteen days till 3 September, when twenty of us were taken to Comarca Prison, Dili, with our hands tied behind our backs. When we arrived at the prison, two rows of soldiers were waiting at the entrance; each one of them clubbed and beat us with iron rods as we entered the prison. They hit us on the head and back, and kicked us as well.

For the first 24 hours, we were not given any food or drink. The first food we got was in the evening of 3 September. But the food would not have been enough for a chicken. You may find this difficult to believe, but I got so little food during this time that for the first 36 days in Comarca, I never defecated. Some friends didn't defecate for 40 days or more.

Betty Sarmento

In a recent interview, Betty Sarmento told of the torture and rape of her teen-aged sister, Maria Gorete Joaquim, who was imprisoned with her and later executed in a country churchyard.

Ms Sarmento said she was arrested in February, 1977. On arrival at the San Tai Ho building she was taken to a bedroom where instruments of torture were laid out — a whip, sticks, and electric wires for administering shocks.

During her interrogation, Ms

Sarmento said she was threatened but not beaten. Afterward, she was allowed to see her sister, who had been arrested a few days before.

"Maria Gorete ... had cigaret burns on her arms and chest and had electric shocks applied to her neck, ear and arms. We embraced and cried and that night we shared a cell, sleeping in the same bed."

Ms Sarmento was released, but when she later returned to visit her sister, she found Maria Gorete crying in her cell.

"In my absence she had been raped by the prison commander ... She was 14 and a virgin and she had resisted but he had a black belt in karate."

Ms Joaquim was held another eight months, and then released in December, 1977, under a general amnesty granted by President Suharto.

She went back to school and resumed a fairly normal life, except that she continued underground work for the liberation movement FRETILIN, the Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor.

On March 11, 1979, she and her uncle, Leopoldo Joaquim, were taken from their homes by Indonesian military officers and transported by helicopter to Baucau, 100 kilometres east of the capital.

There, they entered Amnesty International's list of the "disappeared" of East Timor. Their story was brought to Lisbon by refugees.

The Indonesian Government denied any knowledge of the case, although according to the allegations, Mr. Joaquim and his niece were in the hands of a senior military commander.

The fate of Leopoldo Joaquim has never been confirmed, although it appears he was executed some months later at Laclutar village.

Only last year, when Ms Joaquim's family reached Lisbon, was it discovered she had communicated with them from Baucau until her execution. The night before, she was permitted to write farewell letters.

This sad family keepsake dated May 1, 1979, tells of her last night.

"Betty, I can't find words to say much, because I have a lump in my throat and in my heart. How are my beloved nephews? I want to say more, but it's impossible, because I have more letters to write ... so, goodbye ... As for what I'll suffer, I submit myself to God, hoping for the final reward."

Timorese in the town of Qualicai near Baucau, later told her family that Ms Joaquim was shot behind the church there.

Another torture victim, a 51-year-old man who asked that his name not be published because he still has family in East Timor, arrived in Lisbon in 1986.

He said he was strung-up from a cross-beam in the San Tai Ho prison in July, 1977, and beaten for two hours by an Indonesian intelligence agent and his assistant, who carved patterns on his back with a knife.

Moved to another prison, a military officer fixed him to a wall in a crucifix position and again beat him for hours.

[From Jill Jolliffe, *Witnesses Tell of Torture in East Timor*, Toronto Globe & Mail, 9 March 1988]

Manipulation of Foreign Visits

In the last issue of *Timor Link* we printed a translation of the official 'guidelines' given to civil servants who were preparing to host a UN official in 1976 [Issue 12/13, June 1988]. Indonesia's military presence was to be effaced, the correct answers given to probable questions, prisoners replaced by military personnel dressed for the part, etc. Inacio de Moura, chief guide for visitors in recent years, confirmed that little has changed when he visited Portugal in February and March of this year. Inacio de Moura said that when he accompanied the Portuguese parliamentarian Anacoreta Correia in 1986, for example, "I was instructed to not translate everything they told him and to not show a lot of things, in addition to not revealing that many of the civilians he saw were Indonesian soldiers in civilian clothes."

[*Diario de Noticias*, Feb. 20 1988, translated by US Congress.]

"Inacio de Moura states that all visits by foreigners, even those by international non-government groups, to the former Portuguese colony are today prepared "down to the millimeter and to the second" by the Indonesian occupation forces, with distinction for Intel, which is the body that oversees, defensively, Jakarta's image before the world. According to him, not only are the itineraries rigorously selected, but staged scenes that have nothing to do with Timor's reality are set up. Even the jailed prisoners, Inacio de Moura tells us, "are replaced by administration officials who have a good physical appearance."

[*Expresso*, Feb. 20 1988, translated by the US Congress.]

"I think Indonesia should be pressed to give access to East Timor. The only people they allow in are friendly parliamentarians from Australia, or the Canadian parliamentary delegation last year. Or the German television crew that came last September. I was asked

to accompany the Germans to a coffee factory in Dili. I was working for the Central KUD (village co-operatives). But the visit did not take place. They were accompanied all the time by security personnel in civilian clothing. Timorese are always afraid to say anything to foreigners. Those foreign journalists leave East Timor and make all kinds of comments. It amazes me how they think they can speak for the Timorese, yet while in East Timor, they don't speak to any Timorese.

[Cristiano Costa, interviewed in *Tapol Bulletin* April 1988.]

Of the visit of Mr Nuno Rocha to East Timor, Inacio de Moura was particularly caustic. Mr Rocha is the editor of a Portuguese newspaper. After visiting Dili in 1987, he published a series of articles, and subsequently a book, in praise of Indonesia's record in East Timor. These reports had been widely criticised before Inacio de Moura's visit to Lisbon; but the latter's personal observation of the visit finally gave the lie to Mr Rocha's credibility as a witness.

"I was called by the Governor's secretary to go and receive journalist Nuno Rocha at the airport and accompany him during his visit to Dili. They told me to arrange for everything he needed and that they would foot the bill for it all." "As an eye-witness to what happened in East Timor in recent years, and also since it was I who accompanied him during his fleeting visit to Dili, I should say that the essence of his book is a lie." [...]

"Nuno Rocha did not leave Dili. He arrived at 13.00 hours on a Saturday and left at the same time on Sunday. He had a long interview with Mário Carrascalão, was received by Monsignor Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, about which he said nothing and later confided in me that "the Church sees the problem of Timor in its own light — different light from that in which the government views the problem." "He visited the Dili municipal market, he watched as people left church after mass, and he took photos of the city streets". "Just before his departure, to "kill time", and following instructions from Intel, I took Nuno Rocha to the Areaia Branca beach [Dili's beach] and to Becora [a Dili neighbourhood]. I was specifically instructed not to drive him towards Tacitolo where at that time reinforcements of Indonesian troops were doing military exercises prior to leaving for the Fretilin combat areas".

"Nuno Rocha saw nothing [...] In contrast with other foreign individuals

and delegates who had visited Timor in the past and who, in spite of the limitations imposed on them, had made efforts to — and were successful in — getting into closer contact with the Timorese, Nuno Rocha showed absolutely no interest whatsoever in such contacts". "In summary, Dili is not simply the tranquil and prosperous city which Nuno Rocha so passionately describes in his book, to Indonesia's delight: beyond the Indonesian curtain drawn in front of him, there are still concentrations of troops, tanks, combat helicopters, prisons full of prisoners who were never brought to trial, interrogation and torture centres for detainees (in the Korem, former Portuguese students' home; in the Kodim, formerly the museum building; on the Intel premises in the Farol neighbourhood), a military hospital full of soldiers wounded in combat, and a cemetery overflowing with the corpses of Javanese soldiers killed in combat. This is a little of a great deal which an honest observer would find out in Dili".

[Inacio de Moura, quoted in *East Timor News*, issue 11, March 15 1988.]

On Trials

Human rights organisations have followed closely the publication of trial reports from East Timor. The first of these trials took place in 1984. Although they requested to attend, no representatives from Amnesty International or other human rights' organisations have been allowed to observe the trials, at which procedures have been deficient. Cristiano da Costa, arrested in 1983, observed trial preparations as a detainee.

We were asked whether we wanted to be brought to trial. They kept saying that if we refused to go on trial, we would never be released. But I refused to sign. As I recollect, there were over a hundred of us being asked to agree to a trial.

They asked us over and over again, with the result that many agreed in the end to be tried. You should remember that before this, we weren't allowed any family visits. After that first Red Cross visit, our families were allowed to come to the prison to bring food, but they were not allowed to meet us. Supplies from home were extremely important, as you can imagine, because we were not getting enough food. The clothes we wore were all from our families.

Some of the prisoners who agreed to sign false statements were illiterate, people who knew nothing about politics. They had no idea what it meant to be tried, and they were people who had never had any contact with Fretilin. The Indonesians used their ignorance

to stage the trials. many of us refused from the start to have anything to do with this, so in the end we were released without being tried. [...]

What they did was to force a prisoner from a particular region to make a statement implicating others from the same region. If someone agreed to sign a false statement, two witnesses were needed for his trial, so two others had to be found to make false statements about him. Once this had been done, all three were tried. So, after A had been tried and sentenced on the basis of false statements by B and C, B was tried on the basis of false statements by A and C, and so on. [...]

Sometimes, the trial would begin on the very same day. The person would be taken across the road to the court and the trial began later that day. There was a prosecutor, a defence lawyer and a judge waiting to do their bit in the trial. The prosecutor read out the indictment, then the prisoner was taken back to the prison.

The trial went on for two or three days, perhaps up to a week. On the day the indictment, the next day the defence, then a day or two later, the judge would deliver the verdict. The whole thing had been fixed in advance by the military. The prosecutor would ask for, say, ten years; the defence lawyer would say this was too long and the judge would pass a sentence somewhere in between, according to what had been fixed by the military. No-one was acquitted, no-one rejected the verdicts and nothing was ever heard about any right of appeal.

Those who were tried weren't guilty of anything and didn't have proper statements; yet because they signed false confessions, they were sentenced and had to serve their sentences.

When I and the forty-nine others were released, there was a public ceremony in the forecourt of Comarca Prison, attended by two delegates from the International Red Cross, and representatives of the Bishop of Dili, the regional government and the military operations command, Kopskam Timtim, which had recently been established to take charge of military operations in East Timor. One of the Red Cross delegates was a man called Alfred; I don't remember his surname. Just a week before we were released, there had been an International Red Cross visit to Comarca, which is how they were around to attend the release ceremony.

Some of the people who had been tried remained in Comarca to serve out their sentences, some with longer sentences were sent to Cipinang and Tangerang in Jakarta, and some went to the new Comarca Prison called Becora, a newly built prison in east

Dili. The old Comarca is used for prisoners who are still in the hands of the military. Those in Becora are in the hands of the justice ministry. With a few exceptions, all tried prisoners are moved to Becora, or to Cipinang in Jakarta for those with longer sentences. Some who are regarded as troublesome remain in Comarca.

About twenty prisoners were released on 22 August last year, and twenty more on 19 September, then on 5 or 6 October, more were released. They were all people who signed false confessions in 1985. Some were released before serving their full sentences, because the Indonesians are so eager to project a better image to the world.

[Cristiano da Costa, interviewed in *Tapol Bulletin*, April 1988

On Leading Actors

Much speculation has turned in recent months upon the personality of the two Timorese who occupy senior positions in East Timor: the Governor, Mário Carrascalão, and the head of East Timor's church, Mgr Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo. Both men are subject to intense scrutiny and criticism, for the way they exercise their responsibilities, and because they are squeezed at all times between the demands of the Indonesian military and government, who are currently masters of East Timor, and the expectations of the majority of Timorese people. It is therefore interesting to note Inacio de Moura's personal judgment on their character, for he has reason to know each well from close at hand.

Of Mário Carrascalão: "If he had been governor in the Portuguese colonial times, he would have been the best one of all. Despite not being in agreement with him in political direction, I consider him as a very good person as a man. He has helped the poor a great deal and is doing what he can. And he does not co-operate in the violations of human rights. He has already denounced and succeeded in transferring soldiers who commit abuses." Of Monsignor Belo: "an honest person who has denounced the atrocities and whom the Indonesians are desirous of banishing."

From *Diario de Noticias*, Fed. 24 1988, translation by the US Library of Congress.]

The Current Situation

"A lot of people continue to die due to the war and starvation. Agriculture is not exploited, especially in the east and

Timorese do not leave their villages for fear of falling into the occupiers' hands and being shot for collaborating with the guerrillas. Starvation affects about 200,000 of the 600,000 Timorese; they are forced to eat grass, shrubs and wild fruit." "The Indonesian armed forces have about 20,000 men there, but have suffered over 15,000 casualties. The first cemetery was built near Dili harbour but it became too small so they set up a second one in Santa Cruz.

The soldiers are tired of so much ... They die or are mutilated ... Many soldiers say "We come here to die while the generals back in Jakarta are living at our expense." One has to go to Baucau, the military base from where (US-manufactured) planes take off each day to bomb Fretilin positions.

The bombardments are followed by incursions by ground troops but as soon as they leave the area, the guerrillas return."

"The resistance controls over a hundred villages in the east ... The Indonesians do not even try to control the Baucau-Vikeke road. In that area, the people say: "Indonesia rules till 4 pm, then Fretilin takes over."

It's not just Fretilin which is resisting, it's all the Timorese. On 12 December 1987, posters appeared demanding the withdrawal of the occupiers and making an appeal to Portugal. The people also resist by boycotting the initiatives of the Javanese."

[Inacio de Moura, quoted in *Tapol Newsletter* of April 1988.]■

English-Tetun Dictionary

The Australian National University has published a Tetun-English dictionary.

It has been written by Cliff Morris, who fought in East Timor as an Australian soldier during the Second World War.

The dictionary is published by the Department of Linguistics, is 192 pages in length, and includes maps and

tables.

It may be bought from: Pacific Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, GPO Box 4, Canberra A.C.T., 2601 Australia.

No price is given in the notice which *Timor Link* has received.■



Picture: E. J. Biere

Belo becomes a Bishop

Mgr Filipe Ximenes Belo has been appointed titular bishop of Catula, responsible for the diocese of East Timor. Since May 1983, Mgr Belo, like his predecessor, Mgr da Costa Lopes, has led East Timorese Catholics as an Apostolic Administrator.

This has reflected the anomalous and transitory status of the diocese, which has been administered directly by the Vatican since Indonesia invaded and occupied East Timor in 1975.

Timor Link has been told that Mgr Belo's nomination does *not* mean that the Vatican has agreed to attach the diocese to the Indonesian Bishops' Conference. Mgr Belo's change in status will not cause any change in relations between the diocese of Dili and the Indonesian Catholic church.

East Timor will continue to be administered by Rome. The Bishop of Dili will be independent of the Indonesian bishops. Mgr Belo will continue to attend meetings of the Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Con-

ference as an observer. It may be the case, however, that Mgr Belo's preferment is intended to strengthen his position within the diocese, where for some time he has faced difficulties caused by pressures imposed on him by the Indonesian authorities and by differences with members of his clergy. The wording of the press release issued by the Vatican to announce his appointment seems to echo this concern, saying that "by promoting Msgr. Belo to the episcopate with the office of Bishop of Catula [the Holy See] wishes to recognise his pastoral merits and to encourage better and more intense collaboration in the Christian community and in Timorese society." [Cited in *East Timor News*, issue 12, June 25 1988.]■

CRS Staff Leave

American Catholic Relief Service staff working on its large agricultural project are to leave East Timor and be replaced by local staff working for the Catholic church, reports *Eglises d'Asie* in its issue of May 15 1988.

CRS was one of the two foreign organisations permitted by the Indonesian government to provide emergency relief during the famine of 1979. Its presence in East Timor has

since been controversial. CRS was attacked by some critics for allegedly colluding with the Indonesian occupation, criticised by others for what they said was an unproductive and inappropriate form of development, and — all at the same time — suspected by some officials of giving protection to Timorese at risk.

CRS will continue to fund the project, and is also expected to help finance a new hospital.

However one calculates CRS' contribution to East Timor, the first effect of this decision is to reduce further the number of foreign witnesses living in the territory. Unless the new Indonesian government allows more visits by staff members of independent humanitarian organisations, East Timor will become even more isolated.■

Fr Felgueiras

In the last two issues of *Timor Link* we reported the difficulties of Fr João Felgueiras SJ as he tried to return to East Timor after taking a holiday in Portugal.

We are glad to report that, according to the latest issue of *East Timor News* (No. 12 of June 25), Fr Felgueiras arrived in Dili at the end of May.■

Letter from the Uniting Church

In *Timor Link* 11 of last November, we reported a statement on East Timor published by the Uniting Church in Australia. In April, the Director of the Uniting Church's Commission for Mission, John P. Brown, wrote to Mgr Belo, expressing his church's sympathy and concern. This letter is significant, coming as it does from a protestant church, for it reflects the thinking that emerged from last year's document. One of the issues highlighted by East Timor, that document said, "is the question of who is the church to which we relate ecumenically. Is it simply the official (Protestant) council of churches? [...] It may be time that the UCA turned for advice to that church which is most closely aligned to the people of East Timor, viz: the Catholic Church".

The letter to Mgr Belo, reproduced below, clearly takes that reflection another stage forward.

Dear Monsignor Belo,

I would like to convey to you and your church the prayers and support of the Commission for Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia. We are aware that in the years since 1976 there has been tremendous pastoral demands placed upon your church and its priests.

We would wish you to understand that we are aware that through droughts and military violence your people have faithfully endured. We give thanks to God for your fine witness and pray for the time when your sufferings will cease and political freedom will come.

As you know, we have thousands of Timorese people here in Australia whose pain remains as long as families are separated. We also know of similar situations in other countries, including Portugal. To these people we extend our love and prayers in their extreme difficulties.

We ask that in whatever way

appropriate you might convey our prayerful and pastoral concerns to your clergy and people. When we think of your oppression we are assured that God is the defender of the defenceless and will end the injustice under which you live.

As the Psalmist says:

May the wicked return to Sheol, all the nations forgetful of God.

For the needy is not always forgotten, the hope of the poor is never brought to nothing.

Rise Yahweh, let not people have the upper hand, let the nations stand on trial before you!

Strike terror into them,

Yahweh,

let the nations know that they are only human beings!"■

New Group of Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians from Japan, Australia and Britain have formed a new international lobby on East Timor.

The formation of *Parliamentarians for East Timor* was announced in Lisbon on June 28 by Mr Satsuki Eda, a member of the Japanese Diet and secretary to a sizable block of Japanese MPs opposed to Indonesia's presence in East Timor; Mr Tony Lamb, an MP of the Australian Labour Party; and the Liberal peer Lord Avebury, who chairs the all-party British Parliamentary Human Rights Group.

The three met Timorese refugees, representatives of Fretilin and UDT, and Portuguese MPs and officials, including President Soares, during a three-day visit of inquiry from June 24 to 28. The new organisation's mission will be to "co-ordinate and promote activities in support of a just solution to the problem of East Timor". Its activity will be based upon the Declaration signed by some 450 Parliamentarians in June 1985.

This affirmed that:

Negotiations will not lead to a just settlement unless they:

1. Involve representatives of the East Timorese people including those who resist the present occupation;
2. Secure an end to hostilities which prevent the people of East Timor and their representatives from contributing freely to negotiations leading to self-determination;
3. Provide internationally acceptable conditions of access to relief and development agencies and to independent visitors, journalists and diplomats;
4. Include an act of self-determination, which is free from interference and verified by international observers acceptable to the East Timorese people."

[For details of this initiative, see *Timor Link* number 2, June 1985].

Action

The new group will appeal for parliamentary support in as many countries as possible and has already outlined a programme of activity. This includes:

- Publishing a historical record of the invasion and annexation of East Timor;
- Publishing reports on the

application of UN principles with regard to East Timor;

- Requesting the UN Secretary General to include representatives of the East Timorese people in the talks he has convened (which at present include only Indonesian and Portuguese officials);

- Speaking at the UN Hearings on Decolonisation this August;

- Applying to visit East Timor;

- Campaigning against Indonesia's election to the Presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement while the question of East Timor remains unresolved;

- Appealing for a full inquiry into the Indonesian government's family planning programme in East Timor, and the World Bank's sponsorship of that programme;

- Raising human rights issues within the Inter-Governmental groups on Indonesia (IGGI).

Contact Points

Further details of this initiative may be obtained by writing to the offices of:

Mr Satsuki Eda: 703 243-7
Yamasaki Okayama-Shi, Japan

Mr Tony Lamb MP: House of Representatives, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia

Lord Avebury: The House of Lords, London SW1A OPW. ■

Australia

We failed to report in our last issue that Australian organisations working on East Timor resolved last December to set up an *East Timor Independence Office* in Canberra. According to *AETA Newsletter* the Office would act as a "predecessor of East Timorese diplomatic representation in Australia. A working party has been set up to look at this and other initiatives. It is composed of Ken Fry, João Carrascalao, Pat Walsh, Agio Pereira and Manuel Ximenes.

Those wishing to know more should write to Ken Fry, c/o AETA, PO Box 93, Fitzroy 3065, Australia. ■

Switzerland

According to *East Timor News* (No. 12, June 25), Mr René Felbert,

Federal Counsellor responsible for Swiss Foreign Affairs, told *Diario de Notícias* (May 20, 1988) that Switzerland "is in favour of Timor's independence" and that it placed the question "on the level of the solutions for Namibia". ■

European NGO's on Development

The fourteenth General Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations, meeting in Brussels from 18-21 April, passed a resolution on East Timor that addressed developmental as well as political issues.

In addition to calling for a withdrawal of Indonesian forces and a settlement which would "respect the rights of Timor's people, including the right of self-determination", the delegates resolved to ask that:

"international aid sent to the people of East Timor should no longer be channelled through Indonesian organisations without the prior agreement of the receivers, but partners trusted by the majority of Timorese, should be found in the territory"; and appealed to

"humanitarian organisations working in East Timor to assert the UN's position and to demand that humanitarian aid be controlled and carried out by independent partners."

A Challenge to Development Agencies

If a serious attempt to implement them is made, these are very challenging demands, both for organisations already working in East Timor and also for those which are not. How are such 'independent partners' to be found in a territory under close military occupation? If 'partners' are not free, should development agencies withdraw altogether, thereby reinforcing the international isolation from which East Timor suffers as a result of the Indonesian blockade.

If (as most believe) Indonesia cannot be forced out of East Timor within a few years — and if equally the people of East Timor will not cease to struggle for their rights — development agencies will soon have to face up to such questions. For how long is East Timor to remain isolated from international and NGO contact? If the Indonesian government begins to offer opportunities for NGOs to work in the territory, how should NGOs respond?

The resolution is therefore worthy. But the real challenge lies not in

disengagement but in finding ways of providing assistance and support to the people of East Timor without at the same time colluding with the policies of the Indonesian authorities. How is this to be done? And when?■

New Newsletter from Japan

Timor watchers can now make use of a new source of information in English — the *Japan East Timor Memo*. Started in Holland, it will draw on information published by East Timor solidarity groups in Japan. There are already six such groups in Japan, which loosely co-ordinated their work.

The effectiveness of their activity is demonstrated by the number of Japanese who have signed the *Christian Reflection on East Timor*.

The newsletter will analyse Japan-Indonesian relations as they affect East Timor, and also report the activity of parliamentarians in the Japanese Diet. Seventy two politicians now belong to the Dietmen's Forum on East Timor. Its secretary is Mr Satsuki Eda, whose visit to Lisbon with Lord Avebury from the United Kingdom and Australian MP Mr Lamb is reported elsewhere in this issue.

Issue Number 1 of JETM reported on New Zealand's policy towards Indonesia and East Timor. Issue Number 2 analyses Indonesia's debt problems (see our summary in this issue).

Those wishing to receive the newsletter should write *before August* to Akihisa Matsuno, Koninginnelaan 9, 2341 EW Oegstgeest, the Netherlands. From August onwards, the newsletter will be produced in Japan. We will make known the address when it is available.■

Papua New Guinea

The Commission for Justice, Peace and Development of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea is organising a meeting for PNG Christians in Solidarity in East Timor.

The meeting will be held at the end of August, and is in response to the Consultation on East Timor which was held in Manila last November.

Those interested in news of this initiative may write to PO Box 6576, Boroko, Papua New Guinea.■

Portugal's Position

Readers of *Timor Link* may be interested to know that the Portuguese Government periodically updates a statement of its official policy towards East Timor, and that this may be obtained from its embassies. The latest available statement, five pages in length and dated February 25th of this year, contains Portugal's summary of the historical record and a short description of Lisbon's attitude towards the UN talks which is worth quoting in full.

"10. It is our strong conviction that a peaceful and negotiated solution to the East-Timor question requires the mutual and positive co-operation of all parties concerned, in the light of the principles of the UN Charter and of its relevant resolutions.

11. Portugal has therefore fully supported the mandate entrusted to the Secretary General by General Assembly resolution 37/30 (which it co-sponsored) requesting him to initiate consultations with all parties directly concerned, with a view to exploring avenues for achieving a comprehensive settlement of the problem.

12. Under the auspices of the Secretary General there have been talks going on at the United Nations in New York since November 1984 between representatives of Portugal and Indonesia. Although some progress has been achieved (mainly concerning some of the humanitarian questions, such as civil servants, repatriations and family reunions) they have failed to advance significantly on the crucial issue of self-determination, due to the Indonesian refusal to admit any form of genuine consultation of the people of East-Timor to take place in the territory.

13. There can be doubt on Portugal's commitment to find a just and acceptable settlement to this issue. It reiterates its willingness to continue the ongoing dialogue in a constructive and flexible spirit, under the auspices of the Secretary General. We are open to any internationally acceptable formula, provided that the Timorese — whose interests and aspirations are paramount — be allowed to express themselves validly on their future. We believe this is an indispensable condition to promote the peace and development they so desperately need."■

Parliamentary Delegation to Indonesia

In our last issue, we discussed the political implications for Indonesia as well as Portugal if the Portuguese Parliament accepted Indonesia's invitation to send a delegation to visit East Timor. We concluded that, because of the risks involved, negotiations would advance very slowly. In this we were right: after six months, Lisbon has still not made up its mind how to reply to Jakarta's proposal.

The text of the Indonesian letter of invitation has now been published, however, by the Portuguese *Semanário*. Written by the President of the Indonesian House of Representatives to the President of Portugal's National Assembly, it is carefully worded.

Jakarta, January 23, 1988.

Your Excellency,

As Your Excellency is aware, the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and Portugal in New York have been engaged in a continuing dialogue, under the auspices of the Secretary General of the United Nations, with a view to achieving a comprehensive and international settlement of the question of East Timor. In the course of these talks, the possibility of an observation visit to East Timor by a Portuguese Parliamentary delegation was recently considered.

In pursuance of this idea and on behalf of the leadership and members of the Indonesian House of Representatives, it gives me great pleasure to extend an invitation to Your Excellency and to the honourable members of the Portuguese Parliament to send a delegation to visit East Timor. With regard to the proposed visit to East Timor, it can only be effected after the Permanent Representatives of Indonesia and Portugal in New York have reached agreement on the terms, modalities and timing of the visit.

I believe that such a visit will provide the delegation with the opportunity to obtain objective and first-hand information on the actual situation and conditions in East Timor and I can assure Your Excellency that the delegation will be accorded the necessary facilities to enable it to do so. [Republished in English by East Timor News No 12, June 25 1988]

The marked emphasis on negotiating the "terms, modalities and

timing" of any visit suggests that Indonesia is taking just as many precautions as Lisbon.

It is reported that the UN Secretary General is keen to see progress made on this project, and that the Portuguese parliament will make its response soon.

The letter that will finally speed, via New York, to the authorities in Jakarta will doubtless be just as carefully composed as the original invitation. But, underneath the civility and artifice, it is not difficult to guess what it will say: ... *delighted to accept ... only on the following conditions ... look forward to hearing from you via New York.* This game will surely be a long one. ■

Ambassador Appointed

The Portuguese government has appointed a roving ambassador to follow East Timorese affairs.

He is to be Mr Pinto da Frana, who until 1975 was in charge of Portugal's interests in Jakarta.

East Timor News (No 12 of June 25) reports that Mr Rui Quartin Santos will stay in charge of East Timorese affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ■

EEC Agrees Position on Timor

The EEC has agreed upon a common position on East Timor. The formula was approved by EEC foreign ministers during a meeting in April, and is expected to be the basis for European diplomacy at the UN and in other fora during the next few months.

The position represents an advance, because the position has been formally approved by all twelve member states. In addition, it is thought that the Portuguese government, which pressed for the statement, considers the content to be more robust. The Portuguese Foreign Minister, Mr João de Deus Pinheiro, commented that this was "the first time, after a period in which there had been opposition from one or other Community member [that] the Twelve signed a statement on East Timor based on Portugal's position."

According to *East Timor News* (Monthly Memo Number 11 May 22 1988) the agreed position reads as follows: *East Timor: The Ministers*

took a favourable view of the contacts between Portugal and Indonesia, under the auspices of the UN Secretary General, with a view to achieving a comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement, ensuring to the people of East Timor its rights and cultural identity."

EEC and ASEAN in Düsseldorf

The statement was put for consideration before the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN, meeting with their counterparts in Düsseldorf on May 2 and 3. It was not accepted, and in the final joint *communiqué* no mention was made of East Timor.

As host government, speaking on behalf of the EEC states, the Foreign Minister of West Germany, Mr Gensher, nevertheless remarked that "*The Twelve will make their agreed position known in greater detail at the United Nations which is the appropriate forum to address these matters.*" The EEC formula of April does not oblige EEC governments to act with any decisiveness on East Timor. Still less are they committed to encouraging

their allies to vote in the same spirit. If they did this, it really would be a turning point because the diplomatic balance of forces within the UN would be altered substantially. Even so, the show of unity is potentially significant, as is the EEC's apparent readiness to declare at this stage that it will speak as a *bloc* at the UN. After Düsseldorf, Indonesian diplomats may possibly recalculate their options.

Parallel European Meeting

Running in parallel to the EEC-ASEAN meeting, German NGOs organised a Conference on "Human Rights in South East Asia" which was sponsored by 11 NGOs, including Amnesty International, Pax Christi and the Campaign for Endangered Peoples, as well as members of the Green Party in Parliament and academics.

East Timor was on the agenda, and two Timorese — Cristiano Costa and Estevão Cabral — travelled to Düsseldorf to speak about the situation in their country. ■

Indonesia's Debt Problem

The second issue of the *Japan East Timor Memo* examines Indonesia's international debt. This is, of course, an important matter for the annual meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) which was held in Holland during the week of June 13. The JET Memo reports that, according to the Far Eastern Economic Review, Indonesia is now Asia's greatest debtor. Government loans as of September 1987 amounted to US\$35.2 billion. Over one third of the budget (36.6%) will be spent on interest and capital repayments on this sum.

Japan is comfortably the largest creditor, having lent 32% of the entire amount. Other major creditors include the World Bank (16%), the United States (7%), West Germany (6%), France (4%), the Netherlands (3%), and the Asian Development Bank (3%).

Indonesian officials have signalled that they do not intend to request any part of the debt to be rescheduled. Nevertheless, the fall in income that followed the oil crash in 1986-7 (see *ETL* 9, March 1987) and the rise in value of the Japanese *yen* have placed

great strain upon the budget. At the beginning of March it was reported that Indonesia had officially requested Japan to turn its *yen* loans for 1988 into 'financial assistance'. If this request is granted, the Indonesian government would be able to use the money to pay its foreign debt. Since the amount involved is some US\$7,700 million, a lot is at stake. Not least for Indonesia's poor, because aid money is normally earmarked for development projects, and it is these which are principally at risk when budget cuts are being planned. ■

