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Exodus of Timorese youth

Despair is driving many young East Timorese to leave their friends and family for the uncertainty of exile. They are fleeing from relentless persecution by the Indonesian military: harassment, rape, unprovoked attacks and beatings. The Indonesians, says one refugee, want to 'kill every Timorese youth'.

Since September 1995, almost 100 East Timorese, mostly youths and students, have sought political asylum by occupying foreign embassies in Jakarta. The exodus began when five youths occupied the British embassy on 24 September. They were allowed to leave for Portugal four days later. Requests to the Dutch, Japanese and French embassies followed. On the 20th anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on 7 December 1995, 112 East Timorese and their Indonesian supporters staged sit-ins at the Russian and Dutch embassies. Pro-integrationist East Timorese also entered the Dutch embassy grounds, resulting in violent confrontations in which the Dutch ambassador was among the injured.

In the second week of January 1996, two East Timorese women asked for asylum at the Australian embassy, and five East Timorese men jumped over the fence of the New Zealand embassy, also seeking asylum. On 25 January, 12 East Timorese entered the Polish embassy, asking for asylum in Poland, and on 29 January four entered the French embassy – its third incursion by Timorese in as many months. In the second week of February two more Timorese

men invaded the French embassy, and a further nine the Australian. On 27 February four East Timorese were ejected from the Palestinian embassy after failing to secure asylum in Palestine.

Most asylum seekers have settled for asylum in Portugal, through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. However, many had first asked for asylum in the country whose embassy they were occupying. Nine asylum seekers who spent a month in the Australian embassy refused to go to Portugal, and insisted on going to Australia. But the Australian government, which hosts the largest East Timorese exile community, is reluctant to accept new refugees. Australian immigration officials claimed the young people knew insufficient English to be accepted in Australia. This group abandoned their asylum bid in late February, preferring to stay in Indonesia.

Indonesian solidarity

The occupations at the Dutch and Russian embassies marked a new departure: the East Timorese were accompanied by a number of Indonesian supporters from relatively new organisations such as Solidaritas Mahasiswa Indonesia untuk Demokrasi (SMID – Solidarity of Indonesian Students for Democracy), Solidaritas Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia untuk Maubere (SPRIM – Indonesians in Solidarity with the Maubere People), and the Centre for Indonesian Workers' Struggle (PPBI). These groups together constitute an umbrella movement known as Persatuan Rakyat Demokratik, or Democratic People's Alliance, formed in May 1994. Knowledge of and support for East Timor's plight have been growing steadily among democrats in Indonesia, who link many of their own democratic aims with the search for self-determination for East Timor. This was their first high-profile demonstration of solidarity. The courage of the Indonesian activists is remarkable given that they would not have been able to secure asylum, in Portugal or elsewhere. One group was forced out of the Dutch embassy after the Indonesian authorities



The statue of Christ the King looking out over Fatukama Bay is intended to show recognition of East Timor's Christian identity. But with no sign of official respect for the aspirations of the East Timorese, it may become just another symbol of Indonesian dominance. See page 8 for story.

Summary

This issue of *Timor Link* describes the growing international pressure on Indonesia over its occupation of East Timor: the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has proposed a UN presence in Dili; after 20 years of official reticence, the Australian government has launched an inquiry into the deaths of six journalists during Indonesia's invasion of East Timor; and the European Union is moving to a tougher stand. We also report on the pressures forcing young Timorese to seek asylum abroad. An eyewitness account tells how the authorities tried to prevent contact between East Timor and the outside world on the fourth anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre.

IN THIS ISSUE

Inhibited dialogue	2	Recent human rights violations	4	New ambassador to Australia	5
Eyewitness account	2	Asia-Europe summit	4	Murder inquiry	6
Human rights: Amnesty International report	3	Xanana's release requested	5	International Round-up	6
UN High Commissioner reports	4	Portugal-Indonesia talks	5	Church news	7
		EU common position	5	Who rules in East Timor?	8
		Clinton meets Suharto	5	New publication: Partners in repression	8

assured Dutch officials of their safety. Some of them were forced to take refuge in a Catholic church hostel afterwards to escape pursuit by the security forces.

Hardships of exile

Despite the efforts of Portuguese solidarity groups and volunteers, life in Portugal for East Timorese refugees is not easy. Most East Timorese are accepted as students, particularly at the universities of Minho and Oporto. With subsistence grants of 17,500 escudos (about US\$115) a month for six months only from the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, they soon find themselves struggling to survive. Their housing is often poor. Students arriving nowadays experience communication difficulties: Portuguese has not been taught in East Timor during the past 20 years and they speak

only Bahasa Indonesia. They find they must spend at least a year or two studying Portuguese before they can train in anything else.

Church representatives in East Timor have appealed to the youth not to leave. They believe the departures demoralise those who remain and play into the hands of Indonesian military strategists by reducing the East Timorese population.

Meanwhile, foreign embassies in Jakarta have added barbed wire to their fences. Solidarity groups around the world have appealed to their governments to treat asylum-seekers with understanding, and to grant them maximum protection. They have asked governments to help the Portuguese authorities, who, in the absence of diplomatic relations with Indonesia, have no personnel on hand to deal with asylum-seekers. ■

Inhibited dialogue

The second session of dialogue between pro-independence and pro-Indonesian East Timorese proved disappointing. Pressure from Indonesia restricted the agenda and prevented the return of key participants from the first meeting.

The second 'all inclusive intra-East Timorese dialogue' was held at Burg Schlaining, Austria, from 19 to 22 March 1996, under the auspices of the United Nations secretary general. It brought together 15 East Timorese living under Indonesian rule and 14 pro-independence Timorese from exile communities in Portugal, Macao and Australia. Participants attend in their individual capacity.

The Indonesian government, which considers its annexation a *fait accompli*, has always refused to negotiate directly with East Timorese organisations. The intra-East Timorese dialogue provides a way for Indonesia to consult Timorese opinion without raising the fundamental question of sovereignty, which at Indonesia's insistence is excluded from the agenda. Only questions relating to the preservation of religion, culture, language, and so on are permitted. The dialogue has no legal or official diplomatic status.

Indonesia alarmed

At the first meeting, in June 1995 (see *Timor Link* 33, p1), the participants signed a courageous declaration referring to UN resolution 37/30 of 1982, which upholds East Timor's right to self-determination. Participants from inside East Timor had been warned before the meeting of the consequences of embarrassing Indonesia. Afterwards, the Indonesia authorities persuaded them to withdraw their support for the declaration.

One participant in the first dialogue session who did not return was Guilherme Gonçalves. A *luirai* (traditional leader) from inside East Timor and its first governor under Indonesian rule, Gonçalves had unexpectedly spoken up for independence on the previous occasion. This time his

ticket was delivered too late and his passport was confiscated.

Bishop Carlos Belo of the diocese of Dili was also absent. This was a blow to the remaining participants, given his important contribution in dispelling tensions and keeping dialogue going at the 1995 meeting. Indonesia put pressure on the Vatican to prevent the Bishop from attending. A UN diplomat said the UN secretary general considered Indonesia's action to be gross interference. The Bishop's place was taken by his Vicar General, Fr Jose Antonio da Costa.

The March 1996 meeting was tense and the statement agreed at its conclusion is short and uncontroversial. Strong disagreements emerged between the pro-integrationists from East Timor and Indonesia, led by Lopes da Cruz, Indonesia's ambassador for Timor affairs, and pro-independence exiles such as the leaders of the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) and the national liberation movement, Fretilin. There were even disputes about tactics between various pro-independence activists. The pro-integrationists opposed most proposals for the final declaration from the pro-independence camp. It was with heavy hearts that some of the exiles signed the statement so as not to jeopardise opportunities for future meetings.

The main points in the document include:

- an expression of concern at the current human rights situation and particularly the plight of East Timorese women;
- a request for Portugal to set up an East Timor cultural centre in Dili; and
- a request for financial and technical assistance for the University – for human resource development and the teaching of Portuguese and Tetum.

This second meeting made no progress on fundamental issues. Indonesia's attempts to control the participants mean the dialogue is no longer productive. However, the pro-independence National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) believes the process is the only forum where East Timorese people can contribute to the UN-sponsored talks between Indonesia and Portugal. It therefore continues to support the dialogue. ■

Eyewitness account

Hugh O'Shaughnessy, of *The Independent* newspaper, reports on continuing repression in East Timor.

My fourth visit to East Timor was cut short by the expulsion of all foreigners two days before the fourth anniversary of the massacre by Indonesian troops of 279 unarmed Timorese at Santa Cruz cemetery on 12 November.

The anniversary was an opportunity for the Timorese to demonstrate their resistance to visiting foreigners, and through them to the outside world. By expelling foreigners immediately before the anniversary and preventing others from entering East Timor, the Indonesian occupying forces tried to remove that opportunity.

The Timorese made up for this by continuing to put asylum seekers into foreign embassies in Jakarta (see p1). And many people travelling to Dili for the anniversary managed to reach their destination, revealing deficiencies in Indonesia's immigration and border controls.

In the days leading up to the anniversary I saw many troops and police patrolling the streets. The deterrent presence was increased at night, with riot police stationed at every crossroads and gangs of Indonesians, in uniform or in civilian clothes, roaming the city and breaking into houses as they sought Timorese resisters.

Hawk jets buzz Dili

In 1991 I reported that Indonesian troops were using British transport vehicles. On 10 November 1995 I saw two British-built Hawk warplanes make a low pass over Dili, a manoeuvre staged to intimidate the inhabitants on the eve of the massacre anniversary.

British arms sales to Indonesia continue and Britain has offered military training to Indonesian officers. This, and the German effort to sell part of the former East German navy to Jakarta, must boost Indonesia's morale. The regime knows that for now, it can ignore UN resolutions.

The Santa Cruz massacre and the capture in the following year of guerrilla leader Xanana Gusmão shifted the emphasis of resistance from guerilla to civilian groups. The importance of civilian opposition has been reinforced by a new development. The demonstrators are younger, with boys under the age of 10 protesting against the occupation.

Transmigration and immigration

The principal threat to Timorese identity is the strategy of transmigration, the transfer of Indonesians to East Timor. One Timorese source suggested that the total number of Indonesians who have come to East Timor is about 120,000. The countryside is dotted with settlements built by the government on Timorese land for the incomers.

But the traffic is not all one way. After the Timorese burned down Dili's Comoro market, chiefly used by Javanese, a number of Javanese are reported to have returned to Indonesia. ■

HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International report

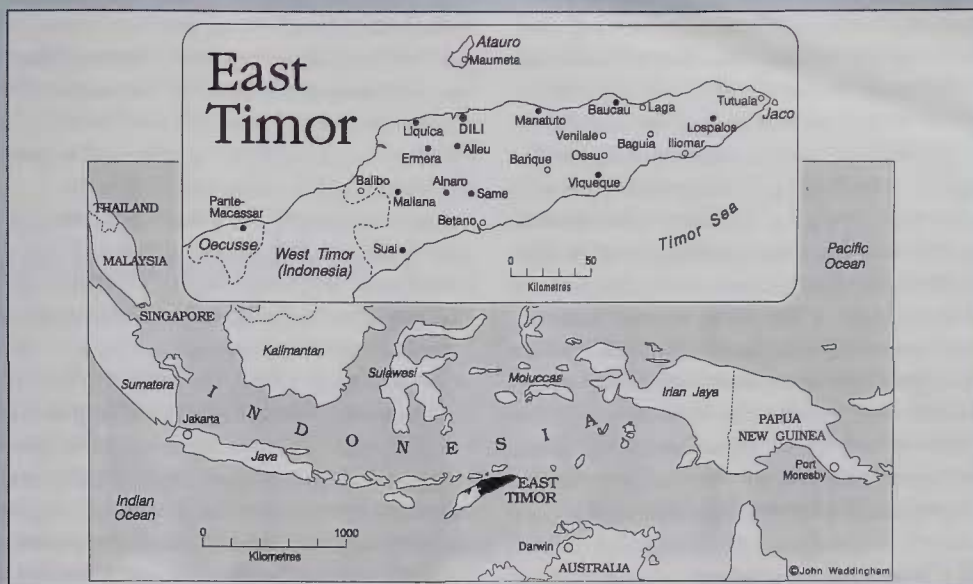
Serious human rights violations continue in East Timor, according to Amnesty International's latest report on the territory.

AI's February 1996 report notes that: 'Despite signs of increased sensitivity on the part of the Indonesian government to national and international pressure for an improvement in the human rights situation in Indonesia and East Timor, serious human rights violations continued throughout 1995.' More than 200 political prisoners, many of them Amnesty International prisoners of conscience, are imprisoned in Indonesia and East Timor. Many had unfair trials. In East Timor alone, AI reported at least five disappearances, 13 extrajudicial killings, hundreds of arbitrary detentions and frequent torture and ill-treatment in 1995.

Every year since 1992, the UN Commission on Human Rights has censured Indonesia. With the exception of 1993, when a strong condemnatory resolution was passed, Indonesia has agreed to consensus statements, which it is committed to implement. But implementation has been patchy: extremely slow in some areas, and non-existent in others. According to AI, 'the 1995 statement also called on the government to implement the recommendations of the special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in his December 1994 report.' The Indonesian government has failed to implement the recommendations of these statements with the exception of allowing a visit to East Timor by the special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in July 1994.

One of the few recommendations made at the UN Commission for Human Rights (CHR) on which the Indonesian government has acted is the formation of a National Human Rights Commission. The Indonesian government frequently cites this as evidence of its commitment to improvement. True, the Komisi Nasional Hak Asazi Manusia (Komnas HAM) has surpassed the initial expectations of international human rights organisations. It has shown more independence than was expected but, in the judgement of human rights groups, it still has some way to go.

The Indonesian government has not granted Komnas HAM sufficient powers for it to operate properly or to exercise independence according to international standards agreed at the United Nations. Nor does it have legal status in Indonesian law. The AI report says Komnas HAM is inconsistent in the cases it takes up, and has failed to investigate cases of extrajudicial execution, disappearance and torture. The conditions necessary to undertake full and impartial inquiries are often lacking, and military intervention and intimidation are real problems.



EAST TIMOR: Time for change

Timor, area 7,400 square miles, is one of the easternmost islands of the Indonesian archipelago and lies 300 miles north of Australia, its nearest neighbour. The western part of the island, formerly a Dutch colony, belongs to Indonesia, whereas East Timor was for more than 400 years a Portuguese colony.

In 1974 Portugal decolonised East Timor, whose newly formed political parties began discussing options for the future – federation with Portugal, independence, or integration with Indonesia. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) initially favoured the first option but then joined a coalition with the nationalist liberation movement, Fretilin, to demand independence. A small third party, Apodeti, was used as a vehicle for Indonesian propaganda in favour of integration.

On 11 August 1975 the UDT staged a coup to pre-empt Indonesian threats to intervene if Fretilin came to power. In the ensuing civil war, 1,500 people lost their lives. By September 1975, however, Fretilin was in control of virtually all of Portuguese Timor, following the defection of Timorese colonial troops to the liberation movement's side.

Indonesia, like the United States, was worried by the proximity of an independent state with radical policies and continued to threaten East Timor, despite previous assurances that Jakarta would respect the right of the East Timorese to independence. In September 1975 Indonesia closed West Timor to journalists and on 7 December it launched a full-scale invasion of East Timor with the knowledge of the United States and the encouragement of Australia. East Timor was proclaimed the '27th province' of Indonesia.

The invasion and annexation of East Timor has been brutal: up to 200,000 people, a third of the population, have died as a result of Indonesian rule. But the majority of Timorese have not accepted subjugation: Indonesia has been unable to eliminate the desire of the East Timorese for self-determi-

nation and an armed resistance movement still remains in the hills.

Although the invasion has been condemned by successive UN resolutions, the international community has done little or nothing to implement them, given the major economic and geopolitical interests of the United States, Japan and particularly Australia in the region. Indonesia's crucial strategic location and regional status – it has the world's fifth largest population, and large reserves of oil and other natural resources – have all encouraged the world to downplay East Timor's agony.

In recent years, however, several events have combined to break East Timor's isolation and bring its continued occupation to international attention. In 1989 the Pope visited the territory and in 1991 the planned visit of a parliamentary delegation from Portugal, still considered the administering authority of East Timor by the UN, created huge expectations of change. To great disappointment in East Timor, the delegation was forced in October 1991 to call off its visit.

On 12 November 1991 Indonesian troops shot and killed up to 300 East Timorese civilians during a funeral procession held at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the East Timorese capital, for a victim of repression. Witnessed by foreign journalists, the Santa Cruz massacre provided indisputable evidence of Indonesian atrocities.

The Santa Cruz massacre has forced governments around the world to criticise Indonesia's brutality, injecting new impetus into diplomatic efforts to bring about a solution to East Timor's suffering. Since 1983 the UN Secretary-General has been entrusted with the achievement of a settlement to the dispute; and with the post-Cold War era providing a new international climate for negotiations, Indonesia faces increased pressure to reach a solution with Portugal and the East Timorese under the auspices of the UN.

Resources to fund forensic work are inadequate.

It was reported in 1995 that Komnas HAM is to open a branch in Dili. The office was expected to begin work in March 1996. Bishop Carlos Belo has welcomed this, as has Amnesty International. However, in AI's view it would not fulfil the need, identified by UN Special Rapporteur Bacre Waly N'Diaye, for an independent human rights commission which would represent East Timorese civil society.

Komnas HAM in Dili must include a strong representation of East Timorese who will be able to resist government pressure and intimidation, and work independently. According to the Indonesian authorities, the office is authorised only to accept complaints, make observations and report to headquarters in Jakarta. ■

UN Commissioner recommends UN presence

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited East Timor from 4 to 8 December 1995. After his visit, High Com-

missioner Jose Ayala Lasso said that human rights violations in East Timor were 'very grave'. The *Jakarta Post* of 14 December reported that he had recommended that a UN representative should be posted to Dili. The Indonesian authorities rejected this, preferring to have a UN representative stationed in Jakarta.

Lasso also urged the Jakarta government to establish a legal basis for the National Commission on Human Rights. The government pledged access to NGOs to carry out their own enquiries inside Indonesia.

On 26 October 1994 the Indonesian government signed a Memorandum of Intent with the UN high commissioner, agreeing to 'cooperate in the development and implementation of coherent and comprehensive national programmes for the promotion and protection of human rights in Indonesia'. Lasso was due to discuss with the Indonesian government the steps it might take to implement some of the provisions in that document. The commissioner's role is to support and strengthen the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. ■

EU-Asia Summit

The leaders of the EU states and 10 Asian nations – the seven members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan, South Korea and China – met in Bangkok on 1-2 March 1996. Human rights activists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from Asia and Europe came to Bangkok to raise the human rights and labour issues marginalised in the inter-governmental conference.

EU objectives for the first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) were to break down stereotyped images of Europeans as arrogant former colonialists and to forge relationships of equality with economically powerful Asian states. 'We must create the climate of partnership,' said European Commission President Jacques Santer.

European countries fear they will be left behind in the race to advance trade and investment with the fastest growing economies in the world. ASEM is a response to initiatives such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum promoted by the United States and Australia. EU trade with Asia now accounts for 23 per cent of its external trade, but its trade and investment levels in the region lag far behind those of the United States and Japan.

A new confidence was evident on the Asian side. From the start, the Asian states made it clear the discussion would be limited mainly to economic affairs. Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas warned the European Union against raising human rights issues. 'For the first dialogue to be successful, controversial and non-relevant issues should not be brought up,' he stated. 'I can think of at least 10 issues to seriously embarrass the Europeans, but we're not considering raising them.' Some EU governments had already backed this position, particularly the French: Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette had visited Jakarta before the summit in an effort to boost French business ties with Indonesia.

Political questions such as democracy, human rights and environmental issues were also on the agenda: some Asian countries expressed the desire to discuss security issues, including a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and reform of the United Nations.

Nevertheless, Alatas's warning was largely heeded by the European Union, whose new Asia policy document is clearly dominated by the free trade agenda.

The NGO conference

East Timor was high on the list of concerns at the non-governmental conference. The Thai government had acquiesced to Indonesia's demands to ban East Timorese representative José Ramos Horta from entering the country during the conference. If it was an attempt to

Recent human rights violations

Large numbers of plain-clothes military patrolled the streets of Dili during the UN high commissioner's visit. The East Timor Centre for Human Rights, in Melbourne, recorded several arrests, disappearances and cases of mistreatment at this time.

• **November 1995:** Nine East Timorese civilians detained and severely mistreated by Indonesian intelligence forces (SGI) in Leohat, Soibada, Manatutu district. The nine were apparently beaten with iron bars and given electric shocks.
(*East Timor Centre for Human Rights Report*, 1 December 1995)

• **Australian aid worker Robert Kingham** reported that Red Cross vehicles were shot at and stoned in November 1995. This was confirmed by a Swiss official working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Jakarta. The ICRC has noted a deterioration in the situation in East Timor in recent months. Kingham volunteered in East Timor during 1995, but returned home after harassment.
(*Report, Wilson da Silva, Melbourne, Australia*, 27 November 1995)

• **20 November 1995:** About 20 Timorese attempting to leave East Timor by boat to seek asylum in Australia were arrested at Viqueque. All but two were later released.
(*Amnesty International*)

• **December 1995:** Five East Timorese were arrested after preparing a message for the visit of the UN Human Rights High Commissioner.

• **4 December 1995:** East Timorese social worker Martinho Pereira was arrested by

military intelligence officials in Surabaya. He had just arrived from Dili, and was travelling to Jakarta to rejoin his wife and family after a short visit to East Timor. Little was known about Pereira's whereabouts for some days. He was released from military custody on 5 January 1996. He had been denied access to a lawyer. The authorities believed he had been involved in occupations of foreign embassies.
(*Amnesty International*)

• **30 January 1996:** During a riot at Becora Prison, riot police used teargas and shots were fired. One prisoner was killed and up to 40 people, including prison guards, were wounded. Five political prisoners and three criminals escaped.

• **February 1996:** Utilia Filipe Ximenes Alves, niece of Bishop Carlos Belo, was arrested in Tanjung Priok. She was returning to Java from Dili by ship. It appears that the military expected her to claim asylum in a foreign embassy.

• **Threats to Ramos Horta:** José Ramos Horta, representative of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) has been the victim of threats by electronic mail (e-mail). The CNRM suspects the Indonesian military are behind the messages. The Indonesian armed forces have recently set up their own conference on the Internet, having realised how much the international solidarity movement depends on e-mail to convey information at high speed. The messages arrived from a mysterious 'Sparrow Unit' who announced that their primary goal is 'to kill José Ramos Horta'.
(*CNRM Press Release*)

prevent discussion, it failed. The NGO conference called for self-determination for East Timor, the release of imprisoned resistance leader Xanana Gusmão, and a UN presence in East Timor, to be followed by demilitarisation. It also denounced Ramos Horta's exclusion from the proceedings.

The activists, led by Asians holding very different views on human rights from those of their governments, appealed to them not to avoid social problems and human rights. Opening the NGO conference, Thai activist Sulak Sivaraksa affirmed that 'these rights are harmonious with the ethical systems of all world cultures and cannot be undermined by the opportunism of authoritarian governments, almost all of which claim to be democratic.'

The NGOs presented the ASEM meeting with proposals for:

- broad democratic participation in decision-making including the full participation of women,
- cooperation between Asia and Europe on human rights education,
- the development of human rights protection mechanisms, and
- an end to conventional arms sales and production.

The NGOs called for the comprehensive decolonisation of the Asia Pacific region: 'The EU should take responsibility for French decolonisation of French Polynesia; ASEAN for the immediate withdrawal of Indonesia from East Timor.' ■

Portugal asks for Xanana's release

Portuguese premier Antonio Guterres came to the EU-Asia summit under severe domestic pressure to raise the issue of East Timor. Taking President Suharto aside informally for 20 minutes after the heads of state dinner, Guterres offered Indonesia a step towards normalising diplomatic relations with Portugal. In return for the release of Xanana Gusmão, Portuguese interest sections would be established at friendly embassies in Jakarta. Indonesia would be invited to do likewise in Lisbon.

The proposal received wide coverage in the Bangkok media. Since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, official contact between the two countries has been confined to bilateral meetings under UN auspices between their foreign ministers. The Indonesian leader, who had not expected talks with the Portuguese government at the summit, did not reject the proposal out of hand. Some Indonesian diplomats even welcomed it as a positive step.

José Ramos Horta, the East Timorese resistance leader banned from entering Thailand, expressed surprise at the move. He felt that it could create 'a very important dynamic in the negotiation process', but pointed out that in all likelihood Xanana would be released only on condition that he lived in exile, which he would not accept.

The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT)

welcomed the Portuguese initiative, but its president, João Carrascalao, noted that Xanana's imprisonment was illegal. He said that Portugal should be careful about offering concessions – a view shared by opposition parties in Portugal. ■

Portugal-Indonesia talks

The seventh round of talks between the Portuguese and Indonesian foreign ministers under the auspices of the United Nations secretary general took place in London on 16 January 1996.

It was the first session of talks for Portugal's Socialist foreign minister Jaime Gama. He appears keen to regain the initiative for Portugal in what has been a protracted process. High on his agenda was a request to visit resistance leader Xanana Gusmão, currently serving a 20-year sentence for subversion in Cipinang prison in Jakarta. According to Gama, 'there can be no solution to the problem of Timor without the Timorese themselves being involved'. He recognises Xanana, among others, as an 'undisputed representative of the people of East Timor'.

The positions of the two governments remain diametrically opposed. The talks have so far concentrated mainly on finding common ground on which confidence between the two parties can be built. They have not directly addressed the fundamental question of East Timor's political status.

Proposals to improve bilateral diplomatic ties have been under discussion for some time. The Portuguese have been unwilling to discuss this without concrete concessions from the Indonesian government, particularly the participation of Xanana in talks and his release from prison. The Indonesian foreign minister refers to Xanana as a 'common prisoner'.

Gama's request to fly to Jakarta to meet Xanana received no clear reply. It appears that the Indonesian government might link the request to the restoration of diplomatic relations.

The final, rather brief, communiqué of the ministerial meeting recognised the importance of the visit to Jakarta and East Timor by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in December 1995.

After the meeting, Indonesia's foreign minister Ali Alatas, told a press conference that the talks had dealt with substantive issues. He indicated that these could lead towards a 'possible framework for a solution' but would not be drawn on further details of the seven-hour meeting. He denounced the western media's depiction of East Timor, saying that while it is not paradise, 'it's far from hell'.

A further meeting between the two ministers is scheduled for 29 June in Geneva. ■

European Union position

EU foreign ministers have decided to take a firmer stance against abuses of human rights in East Timor. On 29 January 1996 they approved a common position committing the European Union to encourage the Indonesian government

to improve the situation in the former Portuguese colony. The Union will also support the UN resolution on East Timor, and the UN secretary general's efforts to obtain a just and internationally acceptable solution.

Formal adoption of the common position was delayed pending the resolution of the hostage crisis in West Papua, where members of the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM – Free Papua Movement), have been holding 13 British, Dutch and Indonesian hostages for more than two months. A further reason for delaying its publication was the EU-Asia summit in Bangkok at the beginning of March (see p4); Indonesia was one of the participants.

The common position carries more political weight than the numerous resolutions passed by the European Parliament, or previous statements issued by the European Commission. It is supposed to provide a guideline for positions adopted by the European Union in international organisations.

The adoption of the common position follows the first reference to East Timor in European Council documents at the EU summit in Madrid in December 1995. ■

Clinton and Suharto

Under pressure from 28 US senators, President Bill Clinton raised the issue of human rights with President Suharto when the two met at the White House on 27 October 1995. They were meeting to plan for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference held in Osaka, Japan, in November. Both governments are committed to pushing through the goals of free trade and investment agreed at the November 1994 APEC summit in Bogor, Indonesia. Some newspapers, notably the Jakarta *Suara Pembaruan*, reported that the two presidents had also discussed the sale of American F-16 fighter jets to Indonesia. ■

New ambassador to Australia

The Indonesian government has named a substitute for Herman Mantiri, whose appointment as ambassador to Australia was rejected by the Australian public because of his involvement in human rights abuses in East Timor. The new ambassador is Wiryono Sastrohandoyo, previously ambassador to France. Before the French appointment he directed the political affairs section of the Indonesian foreign ministry in Jakarta.

According to *The Australian* of 7 December 1995, Sastrohandoyo is known for defending Indonesia's human rights record abroad. He has been a strong advocate of the 'Asian' concept of communal, as opposed to individual, human rights. He also played a leading role in mediating the conflict in the Philippines between the Muslim Moro National Liberation Front and the Philippine government. ■

Murder inquiry

The Australian government has at last launched an inquiry into the killing of six Western journalists during Indonesia's covert invasion of East Timor in 1975. Hugh Dowson, of the British Coalition for East Timor, reports on new evidence of Indonesian responsibility for the deaths.

The investigation, headed by Tom Sherman, former head of the National Crime Authority, started work in February and is expected to report in May. It was established by the Labour government, which was replaced by a Liberal/National coalition after elections in March. The new foreign minister, Alexander Downer, supports the inquiry, at least in public.

Five journalists working for Australian television were killed on 16 October 1975 in Balibo, East Timor; the sixth was killed in Dili on 8 December 1975. Two of the five killed at Balibo were British. Neither the Australian nor the British government made any protest at the time, thereby signalling to Indonesia that the invasion could proceed.

The Indonesian government continues to assert that it had no military forces in East Timor until mid-1976. In November 1995 a foreign ministry representative, Gaffar Fadyil, dismissed the possibility that the Sherman inquiry might prove otherwise – 'It has nothing to do with us as it happened before Indonesia was there,' he said.

As new evidence about the Balibo killings began to emerge in October 1995, Australia's foreign minister Gareth Evans stated that his government was anxious to discover the truth about them. He said only the lack of hard data had prevented this.

New evidence

The Sherman inquiry resulted from several factors:

- revelations by East Timorese *luirai* (traditional leader) Guilherme Gonçalves that he had helped fabricate evidence to cover up the Balibo incident;
- a newspaper interview with retired Indonesian General Dading Kalbuadi;
- the publication in Britain and Australia, on the 20th anniversary of the Balibo killings, of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group (PHRG) report *Timor: the Balibo Incident in Perspective*;
- subsequent interviews with East Timorese who had assisted in the Indonesian attack on Balibo;
- pressure from Australian politicians, notably the Democratic party;
- pressure from the East Timorese exile community and from Shirley Shackleton, widow of one of the journalists.

Two letters signed by Gonçalves, who served Indonesia as governor of East Timor, were a key part of the 1976 report on Balibo by Alan Taylor, Australian ambassador to Indonesia.



The monument in Jakarta to the five journalists killed in Balibo. It is not known if their remains are buried here.

Dading Kalbuadi, then a colonel, had commanded Indonesia's covert operation in East Timor from August to December 1975. On the 20th anniversary of the attack on Balibo, he revealed parts of his 'operational plan to deceive' to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He had ordered his forces to rev up their noisy Soviet-made PT-76 tanks to fool Balibo's very few Fretilin defenders into expecting a frontal assault. Dading's men, led by Colonel Mohammed Yunus Yosfiah, attacked Balibo from the rear. Dading says the journalists died in the ensuing battle.

However, there was no battle, so Dading's account leaves out a great deal, including his role in the macabre photography session after the newsmen were executed. Their bullet-ridden bodies, newly clad in Portuguese army uniforms, were photographed behind machine guns for propaganda purposes.

Despite the evasions, Dading's confirmation of covert action in Balibo and his identification of Yunus are important. Yunus commanded the army units which killed Fretilin President Nicolau Lobato in 1978. According to the *Independent on Sunday* (5 November 1995), he studied for a year at the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, in 1989. Today, Major General Yunus is in charge of weapons training in Bandung.

After the full-scale invasion of 7 December

Call for British enquiry

Early Day Motion (EDM) 204 in the British House of Commons, calls for a British inquiry into Balibo. The EDM, 'Killings in East Timor, 16th October, 1975', has six co-sponsors: Roger Berry (Labour), David Nicholson (Conservative), Don Foster (Lib Dem), John Hume (SDLP), Revd Martin Smythe (Ulster Unionist) and Dafydd Wigley (Plaid Cymru). If you live in the UK and your MP is a backbencher, please write to him or her and ask them to sign it.

- Hugh Dowson, at 1 Oakley, Claverton Down, Bath, BA2 6DS, would be interested to see any replies.

1975, Dading was promoted to Brigadier-General and became East Timor's first Indonesian military administrator.

PHRG report

The PHRG report was written by James Dunn, a leading authority on East Timor. The report was launched at the Palace of Westminster by Dunn, Maureen Tolfree (sister of Brian Peters, one of the dead journalists), Dr Roger Berry (Mrs Tolfree's MP) and Lord Avebury, chair of the PHRG. Almost ignored in the UK, the report received widespread publicity in Portugal and Australia, where pressure for an inquiry mounted. *The Australian* and other newspapers highlighted Dunn's longstanding claim that the Australian government knew what had happened at Balibo within 12 hours of the Indonesian attack. Australian intelligence officials confirmed they had seen the intercepted Indonesian military radio signals, thus supporting Dunn's allegation. ■

INTERNATIONAL ROUND-UP

UNITED STATES

Accountability bill

On 7 December, Democratic Party representatives Patrick Kennedy and Rita Lowey introduced the East Timor Human Rights Accountability Act. The bill is designed to prohibit US military and economic aid programmes to the Indonesian government unless the president certifies to Congress that the aid will not be used 'to violate human rights in East Timor or to support the occupation of East Timor by Indonesia'. The bill, thought unlikely to pass, has provided an opportunity for Congress to discuss East Timor.

Human rights report

The US State Department report on Indonesia for 1995 accuses the regime of serious human rights abuses, saying that the number of extrajudicial killings, disappearances and cases of torture has increased. It draws attention to harsh repression of dissidents in East Timor, Aceh and Irian Jaya. It laments the lack of progress in accounting for the dead and missing of the 1991 Santa Cruz Massacre, and the 'unjustifiably high' level of troops in East Timor, where conditions have worsened over the course of the past year.

AUSTRALIA

New government

Paul Keating's Labour government was voted out of office at the beginning of March after 13 years. The new government is a conservative-liberal-national coalition led by Prime Minister John Howard. Despite promises of a tougher stand on human rights in the region, few Australians expect a sharp change in overall policy.

Australia and Indonesia signed a security treaty on 18 December 1995, after joint military exercises conducted in Australia. The treaty binds the two countries to regular ministerial consultation on security issues and obliges each government to assist the other in case of national threat.

BRITAIN

Parliamentary delegation meets Portuguese minister

A delegation from Parliamentarians for East Timor and the British Coalition for East Timor, led by Lord Avebury, Lord Brentford and Ann Clwyd MP, met Portuguese foreign minister Jaime Gama in January 1996. Gama was in London for the seventh round of ministerial talks with Indonesia, and the delegation urged him to move to the substantive issues such as self-determination for East Timor.

They urged the inclusion of leading East Timorese, such as Xanana Gusmão, in the intra-East Timorese talks. They also called for demilitarisation and a permanent UN presence in the territory. The delegation sought a meeting with Indonesia's foreign minister, Ali Alatas, but this was refused.

Peace activists disarm Hawk

Three women peace activists broke into a military hangar at a British Aerospace (BAe) site in Warton, Lancashire, on 29 January and used household hammers to disarm a Hawk trainer jet bound for Indonesia. Having failed to alert security, Lotta Kronlid, Joanna Wilson and Andrea Needham telephoned the UK's Press Association from the hangar. They are now on remand in Risley prison, Warrington, on charges of illegal entry and criminal damage.

Inspired by the biblical injunction to 'beat swords into ploughshares' the women have founded a group called Seeds of Hope - East Timor Ploughshares. They say that BAe has contravened the Genocide Act by selling Hawks to Indonesia, which uses them against the East Timorese. A fourth member of the group, Angie Zelter, stated her intention to mount a follow-up action a few days later. She, too, has been arrested.

In December 1995 the British government granted an export licence for the sale to Indonesia of 24 Hawk jets worth £500 million. More than 250 British people lobbied parliament on 7 December 1995 to protest against arms sales to Indonesia. ■

provoked riots among Christians and Muslims in several towns in East Timor. His colleague, Zakarias Sake, was sentenced to four years on similar charges on 16 January 1996.

Bishop Belo receives freedom award

The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Montreal, Canada, gave the 1995 John Humphrey freedom award to Bishop Carlos Belo. The bishop received a cheque for \$30,000 for human rights work.

New seminary

The Apostolic Nuncio in Jakarta, Monsignor Pietro Sambi, inaugurated a new seminary, Our Lady of Fatima, in Balide village, near Dili, on 3 February. Bishops from Melbourne, Atambua, Kupang and Flores, as well as Bishop Carlos Belo of Dili, attended the ceremony.

A group of Portuguese clergy, led by Bishop Januario Ferreira, secretary to the Portuguese Catholic Bishops' Conference had been invited, but arrived late owing to bureaucratic delays in obtaining visas. Bishop Ferreira was the first Portuguese bishop to say mass in Dili since the Indonesian invasion.

After the inauguration, some 20 Timorese youths shouted anti-Indonesian slogans in Tetum and unfurled banners. Three of them were subsequently arrested and interrogated by police.

Bishop Belo invited Bishop Noburo Soma, former bishop of Nagoya, to attend the inauguration, but the invitation never arrived. The Japanese bishop had previously tried to visit Dili in order to lead prayers at Santa Cruz cemetery on 12 November 1995. The Indonesian authorities prevented him from entering East Timor (see left). Bishop Soma suspects that his invitation to the seminary was intercepted.

The seminary will house 150 and is located near Santa Cruz cemetery. It was built with financial assistance from the Portuguese and Indonesian governments, as well as Christian communities in Australia, Germany, Japan, Holland, Belgium and the UK. President Suharto's daughter is also believed to have contributed. The seminary is expected to train lay leaders as well as priests.

Visit of Cardinal Etchegaray

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, visited East Timor with the council's secretary, Mgr Diarmuid Martin, from 25 to 27 February 1996. His mission was pastoral, aimed primarily at meeting diocesan members working with the Dili diocesan justice and peace commission. The Cardinal also met East Timor's Governor Osorio Soares and the military commander, Mahidin Simbolon.

At a mass in the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Dili on 25 February, the Cardinal

CHURCH

Inter-religious forum

Following the riots in East Timor last September, which Indonesia attributed to religious tensions, the Indonesian authorities have created an 'Inter-Religious Communication and Consultation Forum'. It is designed to bring together representatives of the five religions (Protestant, Catholic, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist) permitted by Indonesia's state ideology, *Pancasila*. The forum's founding document was to be signed in front of the Indonesian minister of religion, Tarmizi Taher, and the Apostolic Nuncio in Jakarta, Monsignor Pietro Sambi, on 24 October 1995. East Timor's Bishop Carlos Belo designated the diocesan chancellor, Fr Domingos Sequeira, to sign in his absence.

Pressure on the Pope

On 26 October 1995 Indonesia's minister for religious affairs, Tarmizi Taher, accompanied by journalists and camera crew, and representatives of the Indonesian Council of Ulama, the Communion of Churches, and the Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference, visited the Vatican. It is believed that a request was made to the Pope to integrate Dili diocese into the Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

The Vatican is known to be considering its options in relation to the diocese of Dili, which is too large to be manageable. But any decision

to divide the diocese into two or even three will be sensitive. Since September 1995, the Indonesian government appears to have been trying to reduce the influence of Dili's bishop, Carlos Belo. It has accused him of religious bigotry and orchestrated anti-Belo riots in Jogjakarta.

Given the bishop's strong stand against human rights abuses in East Timor, any move by the Vatican which appears to weaken him will be unpopular with the East Timorese.

Authorities prevent peace pilgrimage

An international peace pilgrimage was prevented from entering Dili on 9 November 1995. The party of 15 was led by the retired bishop of Nagoya, Aloysius Nobuo Soma, and organised by the Asia Pacific Coalition on East Timor. It included Namibian and Irish parliamentarians, American human rights activists, and a church leader from New Zealand.

The party had intended to lay a wreath in Santa Cruz cemetery and pray for the victims of the massacre on 12 November 1991. Bishop Soma protested against the attitude of the Indonesian government.

Prison sentence for provocation

On 22 November Sanusi Abubakar, a Javanese civil servant and former prison officer at Maliana prison, was sentenced to four years and 10 months in prison for insulting Catholicism. It was his action in mid-September 1995 which

conveyed Pope John Paul II's greetings and his prayers that the East Timorese would be able to build mutual respect. Cardinal Etchegaray's address focused on the theme of his visit: 'Justice and peace are two matters but are closely related to each other. There can be no justice without peace and no peace without justice,' he said. He emphasised the importance of the younger generation for the future of the church, saying that the Pope 'always puts hope on the young generation'. He lauded the work of Bishop Belo: 'Bishop Belo is a good shepherd and guide for you.'

The cardinal's visit inspired a sense of solidarity among the local clergy. One of them said: 'This visit by Cardinal Etchegaray was a real comfort, in the way in which he represented the attention of the Universal Church to the suffering of the East Timorese people, to the bishop, the priests and the religious. We felt also that all the people working for justice and peace, the justice and peace commissions of all the world, as well as all the other organisations such as Caritas, were joined with us.'

'The big embrace extended to Monsignor Belo by the Cardinal on Sunday afternoon in the Cathedral was historic for us, because it was a huge sign of recognition, on the part of the church, of the work and the growing risks of our own lives in seeking to raise our heads in this martyred country.'

The cardinal would not be drawn on political questions from journalists, saying that the Vatican is neutral on these. Travelling home via Jakarta, Cardinal Etchegaray made a courtesy call on President Suharto and also met religious affairs minister Tarmizi Taher. He also met members of the National Human Rights Commission. ■

Who rules in East Timor?

An enormous new statue of Christ the King is supposed to symbolise the Indonesian authorities' recognition of East Timor's Christian identity. Father Pat Smythe, parish priest in Bentham, North Yorkshire, questions their intentions.

Visitors to East Timor cannot miss the huge statue of Christ the King, nearing completion on the headland overlooking Fatukama Bay, 6 km east of Dili. It is clearly visible from far away and from every approach to the capital city.

The project was begun in 1994 by Garuda Airlines and Indonesian authorities in East Timor 'to symbolise Jakarta's desire to recognise East Timor's Christian character'.

Governor of East Timor, Abilio Jose Osorio Soares, says the statue is 'a source of pride for local people, especially for Christians'. He has announced that funds to complete it are lacking. The Provincial Administration has therefore decreed that a proportion of Christian civil servants' salaries will be deducted for a year. Furthermore, each district governor in the province must donate 100 rupiah towards construction, which has already cost 1 billion rupiah (US\$400,284). It is expected to cost double that amount by the time it is completed.

The project could come to symbolise the desire of the Indonesian government to acknowledge the importance of the Christian faith of the Timorese, and the important role of the local church in any peaceful development of the country. If the presence of the statue represents and evokes a genuine spirit of dialogue between Jakarta and the Maubere, this would be good news indeed.

However, the intention of the project must be questioned. Its very dimensions are significant. It stands 17 metres high, recalling East Timor's annexation by Indonesia on 17 July 1976. It is placed on a 10-metre-high pedestal, making an overall height of 27 metres, thus reflecting East Timor's current status as the '27th province' of the Indonesian Republic. The whole structure rests on a plinth of five stepped layers, reminiscent of the five foundational principles of *Pancasila*, the Indonesian state philosophy. The inauguration of the statue by President Suharto is scheduled for the 20th anniversary of the formal 'integration' of East Timor – 17 July.

Symbol of peace

When the corner stone was laid two years ago, in the presence of Governor Soares, only 200 Timorese turned up. By contrast, 10,000 people had turned out a month earlier for the inauguration by Bishop Belo of a much smaller statue of Christ in the mountain region of Matebian.

There is no doubt that the statue of 'Kristus Raja' will dominate the local scene, but will the spirit of Christ reign there?

In the Roman Catholic liturgy for the feast of Christ the King there is a prayer for the growth of 'a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love, and peace'. If the occasion on 17 July is to bear fruit in good relations between Indonesian and Timorese peoples, these sentiments should be embraced by all participants. They should also be expressed in practical action. This would show true respect for the cultural and religious identity of the East Timorese, their aspirations to control their own lives and benefit fully from their national resources, and their desire for self-determination. ■

NEW PUBLICATION

Partners in Repression: The Reality of British Aid to Indonesia by Paul Barber
Tapol. November 1995. Pamphlet, 47pp, price £3.

Paul Barber exposes the hypocrisy of an aid programme which contradicts the British government's stated criteria for development aid: reducing poverty and promoting democracy, good governance and human rights. This trenchant analysis demonstrates how in reality, British commercial interests take precedence.

Barber sets out recent aid commitments pledged by donor governments and explains the functions of the Aid and Trade Provision (ATP), the part of the British Overseas Development Administration's budget that helps British companies win contracts in developing countries.

In recent years, Indonesia has been the third largest recipient of ATP funding after China and Malaysia. Like the Pergau Dam in Malaysia, found to be uneconomic when an NGO prosecuted the government in 1994 (see *Timor Link* 29, p6; *Timor Link* 31, p6), many ATP projects are of doubtful benefit. Paul Barber

discusses a number of examples.

British technical cooperation with Indonesia includes personnel training – for example, for the Indonesian National Police. Some individuals trained in Britain have gone on to command in areas where severe human rights abuses have been committed.

British aid has also been used to fund the Indonesian transmigration programme. This has been used in East Timor to dilute, Indonesianise and divide the local population.

Barber's report highlights the failure of the aid programme to Indonesia to promote democratic processes, reduce corruption, and promote human rights and the rule of law. It emerges that the government's foremost concern is to secure arms contracts.

Indonesia is no longer among the 20 poorest countries in the world. And yet the government is still prepared to place it among its chief aid recipients, despite the 12 per cent cut in the aid budget announced in 1995.

This booklet should serve as a basis for campaigning by the growing numbers of people in Britain concerned about the abuse of aid. ■

• The report is available from Tapol, 111 Northwood Rd, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

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