



EAST TIMOR UPDATE

Number 30 — February 1, 1994

“To resist is to win”

Resistance leader Xanana smuggles message out from Indonesian prison

The following is excerpted from a rough, unofficial translation of an audiotape which was recorded by East Timor resistance leader Xanana Gusmão on December 7, 1993. It was smuggled out of Cipinang prison in Jakarta, where Xanana is serving a 20-year sentence. It is being released to the press by the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM), which Xanana founded in the 1980s as an umbrella for pro-independence groups.

The message paints a very different picture from the one Indonesia's ruling generals would like to give of an “integrated” East Timor. Instead, it shows that Xanana, East Timor's Nelson Mandela, has not been silenced by prison, and neither have the bulk of the people of East Timor.

Xanana has on many occasions offered to sit down with Indonesia and talk peace. CNRM overseas representative José Ramos Horta has issued a peace plan, which envisions a referendum on self-determination and eventually an independent East Timor which would be a country with no army.

For copies of the original audiotape (in Portuguese), please contact ETAN/Toronto.

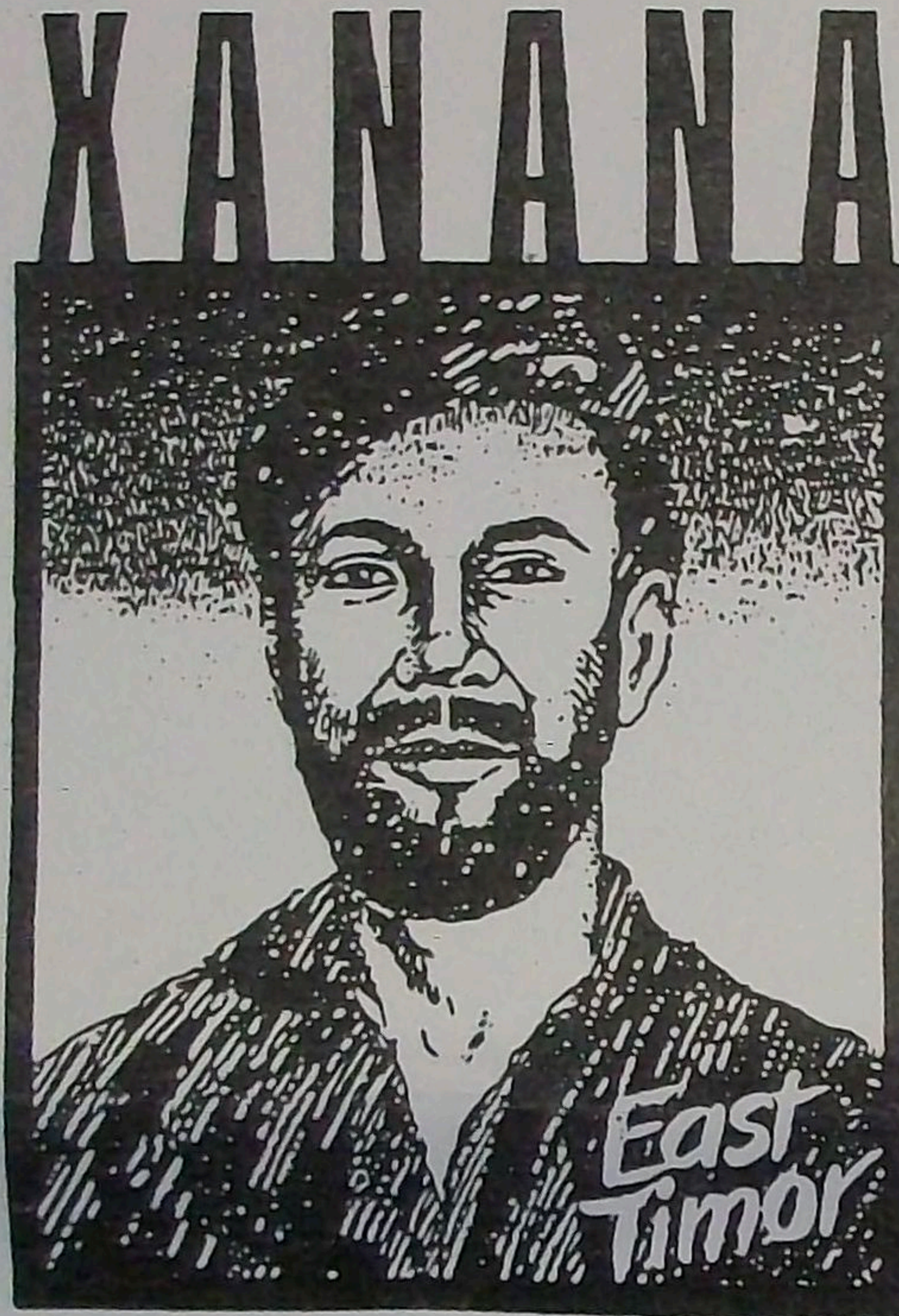
Today, December 7, 1993, we celebrate the 18th anniversary of the cowardly invasion of our beloved country, East Timor. We feel the weight of 18 years of the continued and brutal military occupation of our country, in the sweat of each day, in the blood of many compatriots which is being spilled as a consequence of the criminal repression of the Indonesian assassins. We feel the weight of eighteen years of our suffering which we endure in the face of the intelligence machinery. After eighteen years we feel the weight of conscience as the patriots we are and think how difficult it is to continue the struggle again and again. We feel the weight of 18 years on the Maubere (Timorese) soul under siege from uncertainty and with our most profound hopes always shaken, but we are always fed by the flame of liberty, the cry for peace, and the thirst for victory.

An especially difficult year, this last one. A year crowned once again by the unsustainable desire of the occupationists to make the Maubere Resistance be silent; A year of moral testing, a year of political hardship. Those who could not bear the violence of the storm, today they continue to have salt in their mouths; others who were shaken by the earthquake today continue to be disoriented; some gave up believing in themselves and perhaps are now ashamed of their smallness of spirit—the minority who prefer to choose the easy way, the life of capitulation.

Brothers and companheiros in the struggle, if we look into the past we see that in its history our resistance has endured many difficult phases and extremely delicate periods.

Since December 7, 1975, the first year of the war supplied the first images of the drama of our people. The population of the whole country was forced to abandon their houses, their work, their lands and endure the first epoch of famine.

From September 1977 to November 1978 was an extremely difficult period of survival in the mountain bases of support.



Intense bombardments of a people fiercely encircled by dozens of battalions and forced to march in circuits of starvation, disease and death bearing witness to their own extermination.

1979 marked the year of strategic defeat. The Honored Nicolau Lobato (leader of East Timor after the capture of the country's first president) was slain on the battlefield, dozens of the Fretilin (the Timorese governing party) Central Committee members were killed or assassinated, another large number of Fretilin Central Committee members surrendered, taking with them 90% of the guerrilla fighters and weapons.

1980, more than the first wave of massacre across the national territory ... 70% of the literate were practically exterminated while famine and disease reduced the population to skin and bones.

1981 was the second wave of massacre and the beginning of mass imprisonment on Atauro island. Also in 1981, months before the national reorganization, we lost 4 members of the Fretilin Central Committee, 3 companies of the (Timorese) Army, and many members and people as the result of Operation Once And For All, “Operasi Kikis,” where all of the male population was forcibly mobilized against the guerrilla resistance in the mountains.

In 1983 and 1984, the third wave of massacres surged again in the National territory.

In 1985 to 1990, there was not a single year that did not register destruction here and there, imprisonments, tortures and disappearances.

In 1991, the 12th of November (when Indonesian soldiers opened fire on an unarmed pro-independence demonstration, killing 273 people) showed once again the high price of the

dedication of the young Timorese people. The 12th of November was the testimony in blood of the Timorese leaders in the capital. In spite of everything the struggle continued and that sea of blood served to reinforce the patriotic conscience of our people and served to reinforce the spirit of responsibility and the spirit of combat of the cadres of the Clandestine Organization. The struggle is extremely difficult in a truly prolonged resistance. A small defenceless people in a piece of country. It costs so much, it is costing so much and is going to cost still more, a resistance that is always sustained by its own energies, a resistance that renews itself from its own ashes, a resistance that is always purified with its own blood, sweat and tears.

Leaders and cadres of the clandestine front, last year was a difficult year, a year of emotions, a year of speculation, a year of real trauma, moral, psychic and political. But in spite of everything, the sacred flag of liberation continues to fly from the peak of Ramelau and Matebian, from the peak of Kablake and Tanamam mountains. Now, let us go brothers and companheiros of the struggle, let us proceed on our march to victory! ... Victory is not an empty word, it is not a word of consolation, and it is not the anesthetic of the struggle. Victory is a concept - victory means Homeland. All of our willing sacrifices to keep our country. For our people victory means restitution of peace in our country and the restitution of liberty for our people. We are fighting because of that.

We resist in order to win, and we have to win, and we will win with whatever difficulties and at whatever cost....

The big propaganda of the enemy this year was that there is no one that is able to

conduct the struggle. They said that in the jungle there are only illiterates... I asked them if when Indonesia fought against the Dutch all Indonesian people knew politics, all people were masters....

It is not difficult to understand that all Indonesian politics is based upon the military, that they are considered the brains and the intellectuals of Indonesia. Retired generals are placed in Golkar (the governing party) and in the government; active generals are given places in the provinces and as district officials, sergeants in the hamlets and soldiers in the neighborhoods....

All of those who were born in 1975 are now 18 years old, and our children begin to fight in the womb of their mothers.... During these 18 years of war there have been many devastations, many cadres have disappeared, but new leaders emerge and the struggle continues. In these 18 years, there have been many battles and many valuable commanders have been killed. But new commanders emerge and the armed resistance continues....

From 1975 to 1993, there have been many defence ministers of Indonesia, many national commanders of ABRI (Indonesian armed forces), many army commanders in Dili, and hundreds of battalion and company commanders that have operated in the jungle. But from 1979 until this moment there have been only 50 guerrilla fighters, according to the propaganda of (the Indonesian government)....

I declared that I recognize that the military is defeated on the ground, but I did not say that the (resistance) is defeated. In other words, we recognize our incapacity to defeat the powerful (Indonesian army) by military means; strategically we were and are a small and weak army and unable to alter the military situation. Yet, until today the barrels of our weapons continue to sing the song of the liberation of our country. While we recognize our military incapacity, Jakarta has to recognize its political incapacity on the ground; on the ground of complex political struggle, on the ground of political actions and relations that develop in our country. While the occupiers of our country do not recognize this, our guerrilla fighters will not vacillate and are always ready to give their lives for the nation and for the people.

So, dear brothers and companheiros of the struggle, let everyone throw off the nightmare of this year, let everyone bring new energy from within themselves, and let us clarify ourselves and prepare our bodies for another year of the Resistance....

Fund for East Timorese political prisoners

ETAN can now get funds directly to some of the hundreds of East Timorese political prisoners in Indonesian jails, to help them pay for basic necessities. We are appealing for special donations for them, so that a small regular monthly amount can be guaranteed. If you can help, please send cheques with a note “for Timorese prisoners” to East Timor Alert Network, PO Box 562, Station P, Toronto M5S 2T1. (416) 531-5850.