

**“I am  
Timorese”**

**TESTIMONIES FROM EAST TIMOR**

# **“I am Timorese”**

**TESTIMONIES FROM EAST TIMOR**

Published on behalf of the European Christian Consultation on East Timor

Sponsored by:

A Paz é Possível em Timor-Leste, Portugal  
Action des Chrétiens pour l'Abolition de la Torture, International, Paris  
Association de Solidarité avec Timor Oriental, France  
Catholic Institute for International Relations, United Kingdom  
Christian Council of Churches, Portugal  
Christian Movement for Peace International, Brussels  
Commission Justice et Paix, Belgium  
Commission Justice et Paix, France  
Commission Justitia et Pax, Netherlands  
International Service for Human Rights, Geneva  
Kommissie Rechtvaardigheid en Vrede, Belgium  
Pax Christi International, Brussels



Catholic Institute for International Relations

# Contents

Introduction	1
Testimonies	
<i>André Faria</i>	3
<i>Ms X</i>	6
<i>Estevão Cabral</i>	10
<i>Carlos Barbosa</i>	13
<i>Antonino Tavares</i>	17
<i>José Guterres</i>	21
<i>Cristiano Costa</i>	28
<i>Anselmo Aparício</i>	30
<i>João Maria dos Reis</i>	34
<i>António Araújo</i>	37
Appendix:	
<i>Mgr Belo's letter to the United Nations</i>	40

First published 1990  
Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1  
7AF, UK, on behalf of the European Christian Consultation on East Timor.

UK © CIIR

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data:**

I am Timorese: testimonies from East Timor.  
1. Indonesia. Deprivation, history  
I. Catholic Institute for International Relations  
323.49095986

ISBN 1 85287 065 6

Cover design by Jan Brown Designs  
Printed in the UK by Russell Press Ltd, Gamble Street, Nottingham

# Introduction

East Timor was invaded by the Indonesian army on 7 December 1975. Until then, for 400 years, East Timor had been a neglected backwater in Portugal's colonial empire. Imperfectly colonised, it was politically and economically undeveloped. To the outside world, it was virtually unknown.

The people, many of whom lived on the edge of subsistence, numbered about 680,000 in 1975. They had long experience of repression. Numerous revolts against colonial rule had been brutally suppressed. In 1912 thousands died in a major uprising, and it is believed that up to 40,000 Timorese died during Japanese operations against Australian forces during the Second World War.

No-one, however, was prepared for the calvary that followed Indonesia's invasion in 1975. The ferocity of the Indonesian assault and the persistence of Timorese resistance have turned East Timor into the site of one of the 20th century's most cruel wars, and an extraordinary struggle for freedom.

The loss of life has been enormous. Up to 200,000 Timorese have died as a result of hostilities. Many thousands were killed or executed during the initial attack. The population, seeking refuge in the mountains, was then decimated in 1978-79 by famine and aerial bombardment. Since then the Indonesian military has used draconian methods to suppress the guerrilla resistance movement, and has continued to cause immense suffering to the civilian population.

Entire districts have been relocated and forcibly resettled in camps under military surveillance. In many areas food production has been dislocated or destroyed to suit military strategy. Torture, arbitrary arrests and killings have been commonplace. Freedom of movement and expression have been suppressed. For many years the territory has been almost completely isolated from the outside world.

The international community has recognised the serious character of the abuses that have occurred in East Timor. It remains on the agenda of the United Nations. Senior Western leaders from the United States and the European Community have criticised the Indonesian government on its record.



Nevertheless, little effective pressure has been brought to bear on Indonesia, and UN-sponsored talks between Indonesia and Portugal (internationally recognised as the administering authority) have continued since 1983 without producing results.

Such information as we possess suggests that East Timor's people remain deeply alienated from Indonesian rule, which they associate with violence, corruption, economic exploitation and racism. Recent statements by Mgr Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, leader of East Timor's Catholic church (the professed faith of the majority of East Timor's people) confirm a widespread desire for freedom and political rights [see *Appendix* page 40].

**I Am Timorese** brings together for the first time the stories of some of East Timor's refugees. We do not claim that these testimonies reflect the experience of all of Timor's people, nor that the experiences of this group are exceptional. There are, for example, few witnesses to what has happened in the countryside, where conditions are most harsh. Few women speak here. Most of those who have dared to speak out have been able to leave East Timor, are relatively educated and have spent much of the occupation living in the capital, Dili.

These stories are a vivid condemnation of Indonesia's record. People who have been humiliated, oppressed and silenced for more than ten years tell the truth as they have seen it. In their contempt for those who oppress them, as much as their sense of nationalism and pride, is revealed the deep source of Timorese resistance.

This international dispute is, ultimately, about the future of Timor's people, its communities and their way of life. We should listen to what they have to say.

## André Faria

André Faria is 51, married and the father of ten children. Born in Dili, he now lives in Portugal, having left East Timor in 1987 through arrangements agreed between Portugal and Indonesia.

He gave this testimony in Lisbon at the Fourth Christian Consultation on East Timor in January 1988.

On the night of 27 July 1977 I was at the home of the 'Provincial' Secretary, José dos Reis Araújo. Towards eight o'clock, Azis, an engineer with the Indonesian security police (Intel) came and ordered my arrest. I was taken to Intel headquarters in the Sang-Tai-Hoo Building. There I was accused by Commander Shihombing and Colonel Sinaga (at that time head of Intel) of having been in contact with Fretilin leaders in the bush.

Even before interrogation, I was brutally beaten. Afterwards, each question was systematically accompanied by punches, kicks, cigarette-burns. Each of my replies provoked new blows.

After the interrogation they hung me up, my body suspended like a sandbag, defenceless against the kicks and punches of my interrogators. They entertained themselves by putting out their cigarettes on my body, which they used like an ashtray. They scored my back all over with the point of a knife. With the same knife, Commander Shihombing cut off my moustache and forced me to swallow it. After a further session of blows by the same commander, I was taken to the bathroom where eight or nine prisoners were squatting, tied to the basin.

In addition to those in the bathroom with me, there were other prisoners in the bedrooms and in a recess. There were more than 40 of us altogether. Some are still living in Dili, where they are still watched; others have died because their wounds were not treated or because they were very old.

The next day I was untied by the same officer who had tied me up and taken to a shop where they held another prisoner of Chinese origin. They gave us nothing to eat all day. My companion Leong-Fu-Ye managed to bribe the officer and was released the following day. Later he fled to Australia.

At about eight o'clock in the evening on 28 July 1977, we were driven in two military trucks to Comarca prison in Caicoli district, Dili. Near the prison we saw two columns of soldiers from the military police, armed with pistols and truncheons. One by one we had to walk between them, being violently beaten and shoved from one side to the other by blows from their sticks and punches. Then they ordered us to undress down to our underpants, and they cut off our hair and removed our jewellery, money and other possessions. A few moments later I was taken away from the group by the Intel commandant and six military policemen. They put me with my back to the wall, stretched my arms out like a cross and began hitting me again.

I received so many blows to my head and other sensitive parts of my body that I still wonder how I managed to survive it all. Blood was trickling from my mouth, nose, ears, eyes and from my toes which had been crushed repeatedly under military boots. I couldn't do anything except call on the Lord Jesus.

Then the Intel Commander ordered me to open my mouth. Into it he rammed the end of the long stick with which they had beaten me. He told me to bite it hard and began to shake it as you would shake the branch of an orange tree to dislodge an orange. My head was spinning. He began to push and pull the stick hard and I had to bite on it with all my strength to prevent it piercing my throat. I don't know how I managed to endure it all.

They wanted me to denounce other people whose names they gave me. They tortured me until well into the night, and then led me to a cell. Even in the cell a military policeman saw my wedding ring and wanted to rip it off me by force, but I resisted, clenching my fist. The ring stayed on, but was twisted.

For three days we were woken at two o'clock by buckets of cold water which they threw on us in the cells. An hour later some policemen would burst into the cells, beat us, and make us go out into a yard where, feeble, wounded and bleeding, we were forced to crawl and do physical exercises until dawn. Those who were unable to crawl were brutally beaten. While we did these exercises they beat us, especially on the joints and on sensitive parts of the body. Our torturers used chair-legs, broken benches, sticks, lengths of bamboo and even stones.

This lasted three days and three nights, not counting the first day at Sang-Tai-Hoo. Three days and three nights during which I had nothing to eat or drink. Only later did they bring us a little food.

Some days afterwards Commander Shihombing appeared at the bars of our cell. He called me and said: 'If you hand over to me all the letters you have from Fretilin leaders, I'll free you today and give you a motorbike'.

I told him: 'I'm not a child. I've already said what I have to say, and I've told you that I have never received any letters from them'. Anyway, Shihombing and a Timorese nurse called António Calires, who was also a prisoner, had already been to my home and searched it throughout without finding anything.

In October, after Commander Shihombing was replaced by Captain Nyomen, I was again taken with other prisoners to the Intel Office at Sang-Tai-Koo for another interrogation at which I confirmed everything that I had already said.

At the end of November or the beginning of December, knowing that I was going to be freed, a corporal from the military police came to my cell accompanied by another prisoner who acted as his interpreter. 'If you give me 200,000 Rupiah,' he said, 'you will be freed in a few weeks'. I replied that I didn't have such a sum. He tried three more times but I refused because I didn't have that sort of money. He went to my home and put pressure on my wife to obtain the money before he understood that we didn't have what he was asking for, and gave up.

I was freed on 24 December, but for two months we former prisoners had to present ourselves every day to the military commander of the region (Koramil). Then, for a further six months we had to present ourselves once a week and then twice a month for another six-month period. Finally, until 2 January 1980, we had to go once a month.

After another Fretilin attack in Dili on 10 June 1980, all the former prisoners were again arrested. On 12 June I was freed once more with some companions.

## Ms X

Ms X is a widow with two children. She prefers to withhold her identity because members of her family still live in East Timor. Her husband was killed by the Indonesian army after being tortured. She now lives in Portugal.

She gave this statement in Lisbon to the Fourth Christian Consultation on East Timor in January 1988.

In February 1977, a military vehicle from regional military command [Koramil] arrived at my home with orders to arrest me. A few days before, my sister had been arrested by the intelligence police [Intel]. My youngest son was six months old at the time and I was breast-feeding him. The eldest was two years old. When they took me, they just pulled my youngest son from the breast as he suckled. He cried. My mother and my elder son came with me to the Koramil Headquarters, where there were four people already. The same night I was taken with four other prisoners to Intel headquarters in the Sang-Tai-Hoo building. There I was interrogated in the absence of Commander S by one of his subordinates. A Timorese called H, who had also been arrested because he was thought to be close to the liberation movement Fretilin, was the interpreter.

To frighten me, they had carefully arranged on the table various instruments of torture such as whips, clubs, truncheons, chair legs, electric wires, cigarettes, matches and the like.

They accused me of maintaining underground contact with my husband, which I denied because I hadn't been in contact with him. I didn't even know where he was.

Because the commander was away, they suspended the interrogation but kept me prisoner at Sang Tai-Hoo. Then they brought in my sister who arrived scarred all over by instruments of torture. Her skin was covered in dried blood, there were countless cigarette burns where the Indonesians had put out their cigarettes on her flesh as if she were an ash tray. They threatened me, saying 'if you don't tell the truth, you'll get the same treatment'.

On the following day, around 7 o'clock in the evening, I, my sister and another girl of my age called M were taken away to Comarca prison. There we were searched from head to toe and thrown into a dark cell with an iron door in which you could hardly stand up. There was no bunk, hardly any floor space, high metal bars on the walls and the iron door with its tiny hole in the middle. Before the three of us went into the cell, I had time to recognise other prisoners: Ilda Saldanha, Maria Pereira who died after her release, Maria Montalvão and Rosita, who died of tuberculosis after being maltreated.

We remained in that cell for a week during which they gave us one meal a day. At the end of the week, we were sent back to Sang-Tai-Hoo where more than 30 prisoners of both sexes were awaiting interrogation. I recognised many of them, like Maurício Pereira and his wife Lídia Mota, and Mimi Lebre, comrade César Mau Laca's mother.

As it was impossible to interrogate me that day, they took me home to take photos of me with my two children — pictures which the military then threw, with other propaganda, from helicopters or aircraft over territory held by the guerrillas. At least that's what they told me. Then I was interrogated again but, since they found nothing to blame me for, I was released from interrogation though kept in prison. In spite of all this, they let me in and out for a few days to go home to breast-feed my baby, and then return to Sang-Tai-Hoo.

In the end, to avoid my constant trips out, they decided to let me bring my baby with me to Sang Tai Hoo prison. After six days the child caught pneumonia because we had to sleep on the cold ground. They wanted to take him to hospital, but I wouldn't let them because I was afraid they would harm him and that he would die. I preferred to hand him over to my father, who was a nurse. After a month at Sang-Tai-Hoo, I was freed for lack of evidence.

My sister was only freed after the amnesty decreed by President Suharto, but she was arrested again a year later in March 1979 and was taken away with my uncle P who had been captured at the time of the amnesty. They were airlifted by helicopter to Baucau and then massacred.

I was not physically tortured but I saw many of my people being tortured. I saw prisoners being burned with cigarettes, beaten brutally all over their bodies with chair legs, clubs and whips. I saw prisoners with swollen toes, and with nails ripped off by the

weight of table legs or chair legs during interrogation. I saw prisoners with wounds all over them from the knives of their interrogators.

In January 1979, my husband was arrested and, after a day of interrogation and maltreatment, murdered. I was arrested also and taken to Intel for new questioning because they had found a photograph of me on my husband. They freed me in the end because my sister said that she had been the one to send the picture to the guerrillas.

Even now, my elderly father hasn't recovered from the constant harassment of our family, particularly against my mother, my sister and myself. In spite of his condition, my father was arrested several times for scribbling documents and making photocopies of them. In October 1986 he was seized by the secret police while he was making photocopies and taken to one of the red-beret prisons at Colmera in Dili. Then he was taken to a prison near the old museum, today under KODIM military command, and finally to Comarca where he was forced to do exercises and crawl on his knees while they kicked him.

I appeal to all who have a vision of peace in East Timor, our beloved martyred country, where the Indonesians continue to inflict worse and worse violence against our Timorese brothers and sisters. Only the lack of communication prevents this being known. Today you hear my voice, but I am just one of many who have suffered and who continue to suffer, and who want their cries to be heard.

It is truly distressing, painful and wearisome to have to speak again of my bitter suffering. Over and above the whole tragic experience of my family that I have described, I was a victim of the desires of a corrupt and murderous Indonesian major who raped me and harassed me continuously to satisfy his cravings. In 1979 in Sang-Tai-Hoo prison, my sister was brutally raped by the prison commander.

My suffering has been unbearable. I have wept bitterly, as so many of my people do still. If I weep no longer, it is because I have no more tears.

I hope that my testimony will help to defend our rights more effectively. I hope that the solidarity groups working with our people will increase their activities and search for viable solutions, in so far as they are possible, so that we may help to overcome the twelve-year-long suffering of our people. I hope

that our friends and the solidarity groups will make their governments understand that our people urgently need support. At the moment, they seem to be showing more interest in economic matters than the defence of our people's sacred rights.

I assure you that our resistance will not weaken as long as our people are willing to bear up under the repression of the invading forces and to die for our country. Although Indonesia is the greatest power in South East Asia, like all my people I believe that it will not last for ever. In the history of the world, there has never been an empire that has not been defeated. So I affirm with all confidence our hope that the Maubere people — the people of East Timor — will achieve their sacred objective: independence.



# Estevão Cabral

Estevão Cabral is 28 years old. He is a refugee living in Portugal. When East Timor was invaded, he was 15 years old.

He made the following statement in Lisbon to the Fourth Christian Consultation on East Timor in January 1988.

When the invasion happened I was 15 years old and living in Baucau, 135km east of Dili. Because of the invasion, I abandoned Baucau and went with the people into the mountains towards the areas controlled by Falintil, the East Timorese Liberation army. The Indonesian invaders regarded all students as communists and executed many of them.

Four years after the invasion I was captured at the same time as a number of other people and some patriots who were fooled by the so-called amnesty money. I was captured in March 1979 during the Hapus Bersih campaign, an encircle-and-annihilate operation run by the occupation troops. This operation began in August 1978 in the Ponta-Leste sector.

After our capture and surrender, various members of Falintil disappeared: Cândido Lai Kana, Januário Gaio and José Gaio. Cândido, Aquilino and Sidónio were taken to Laku-Dala, where troops from battalions 141, 512 and 126 killed them as they were defenceless. In October 1980, 384 skulls were discovered at Laku-Dala.

Other resistance leaders also disappeared in March 1979, such as Juvenal Inácio, political commissar of the Ponta-Leste sector, his aide Nolan Fonseca, the commanders Albino Gusmão and Tadeu Salamodo and other military leaders. The people were already suffering then from famine and disease brought on by the invasion and occupation. The occupation forces violently repressed those among the people whom they suspected of supporting the armed resistance.

In May 1979 the occupation troops accused me of supporting the guerrillas and on 12 May I was locked up in a building that had served as the administrative centre of Quelicai. They wanted me to give them information about the underground network and

so they burned me with cigarettes. During night-time interrogation they also used electric shocks. Finding nothing, they freed me after three days of interrogation having given me a brainwashing session — they said Fretilin was communist and had already lost the war. Before freeing me they insisted that I should say nothing about what had happened to me, otherwise I would be rearrested and tortured again.

On 19 May I was once more called for interrogation and accused of supplying information to the guerrillas. I denied it, reminding them that the area that I lived in was tightly controlled by battalion 141.

On 12 June they questioned me again and said that I had participated in a guerrilla group attack at Quelicai and that the leader of this group was my brother. I pointed out that at the time I was being forced to walk in front of battalion 141 and it would have been impossible for me to pass information to the guerrillas.

The interrogations were conducted by battalion 113 (composed of red-beret commandos). It was members of battalions 141, 126 and 512 — known as RTPXII, who had a *siliwangi* or tiger as a symbol — who carried out executions in cold blood. Luckily there were differences of opinion between them and that is how I escaped death. So I was freed and made to live in Dili from 23 October onwards.

It was difficult at the time to find work in Dili. Through friends, I found a labouring job for an Indonesian company called P.T. Kertani-Asa. I worked there until February 1980.

In March I registered at the São José college at Balide, Dili. The school council told me that the school operated under the protection of the diocese, that it was independent of any political bias and preserved the cultural identity of the East Timorese people. I was also told that the school qualifications were not recognised by the official education system. I registered all the same because I wanted to defend the cultural identity of my country. The school was systematically threatened by the occupying forces and by the security police, Intel. In June 1980 one of the teachers, Venâncio Gomes, who had trained in agronomy in Portugal, disappeared with five pupils. But the school is supported by parents and the local church and, despite the lack of equipment, resources and staff, it survives. The occupation forces try to get detailed information about both the teachers and the pupils.



Apart from the São José college, there is a Catholic scout troop, run by priests. The occupation forces said that it was a political association working with youth, especially Catholic youth. The Catholic scout troop is keen to defend its moral and cultural dignity; this has great importance in the battle that the Timorese are waging for their independence. Alongside the Catholic scouts there is an official scout movement, *Pramuka (Praja Menda Karana)*, which is organised by the occupation forces according to the principles of *Pancasila*, the official ideology of the Indonesian regime. Whereas the Catholic scouts survive thanks to the support of parents, scouts and friends, *Pramuka* receives subsidies from the occupation forces. When *Pramuka* camps are arranged the police put pressure on companies and employees, obliging them to give money.

The Indonesian occupation forces would like to get rid of the Catholic scout troop and the São José college, but dare not attack them openly because they are linked to the Catholic Church. So they put continual pressure on the teachers and students.

The general population needs a pass (*Surat Jalan*) to travel and is subject to numerous controls over movement. The occupation forces have also created core military groups within every community, called *Babinsa* and *Bimpolda*. The aim of the occupying forces is to control the entire population down to the tiniest village in East Timor through oppression.

East Timor's people are confronting this brutality and bloody repression under the Indonesian Occupation. We are experiencing cultural and physical genocide. Tell your people and your governments about what is taking place in East Timor against the wishes of its people, who desire to be free and independent.

I will finish by quoting these words by the Bishop of Setúbal speaking to the UN Committee on Decolonisation in 1987: 'We cannot ignore East Timor, nor pass over it in silence, nor negotiate it. East Timor is a people with their own history and future. No one has the right to block its path'.

## Carlos Barbosa

Carlos Barbosa is married with three children. Under the Portuguese colonial government he was a civil servant. Until he left East Timor for Portugal in 1987, he was the receptionist at the Hotel Turismo in Dili.

He was interviewed in 1988 by the Portuguese organisation A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste [Peace is Possible in East Timor].

When Dili was invaded some people stayed in town thinking that the Indonesians had come to re-establish order, but when they immediately started killing, people fled towards the mountains. The town was left practically deserted, all the houses were looted. Over the next few days they gathered together everyone who had stayed behind and forced them to load and drive lorries with goods and furniture from the abandoned homes. Then everything was loaded into boats and taken to Indonesia.

### Q. Did people resist, or were they too afraid?

Those who were armed continued to resist, that's why the Indonesians carried out more killings and violence. It took them at least a fortnight to get control of the town, which had a population of around 10,000 before the invasion. They did it by using large numbers of soldiers from at least 20 warships, not counting troops brought over by plane. During the following days they landed tanks and armoured cars.

Very few people stayed. They were mainly women and children who could not fight. Those who took up arms often went off by themselves. It was only later, when the whole town was under Indonesian control and things weren't getting any better, that families began to leave to join those who were in the hills.

I started work at the Hotel Turismo, which is where visiting foreigners stay. There are two other hotels but they serve oriental food so foreigners prefer the Turismo where conditions from that point of view are better. One of the other hotels is obviously under government control.

**Q. Does it take foreign guests?**

The government always sends foreigners there, but because it has no facilities and surveillance is tighter many people leave and come to the Turismo. Often government departments themselves ring to reserve rooms for clients and security staff. They ask us to put foreign visitors in interior rooms or rooms that are easier to watch and from which it is more difficult to contact people. The government often pays the bills.

**Q. The government pays?**

Often. When I was a receptionist there, some visitors paid for their rooms, for example the New Zealand and Australian embassies did so in January/February 1987, but protocol and security officials said they had paid in order to get reimbursed by the government. Meals and travelling expenses are paid for by the government.

**Q. Didn't visitors express surprise?**

They know very well that the Indonesians want to be nice to them.

**Q. Did visitors go round on their own or were they accompanied by Indonesians?**

While I was there, protocol officials were always in contact with Security by telephone. Besides that, when foreigners were at the hotel, protocol staff answered the phone. They took their orders from Security — what they could say, what they couldn't say. 'You can't go to that place — choose another.' 'It's impossible to go to that spot by car, the road has been cut off by the rains — you'll have to go by helicopter.' People they really trusted were allowed to travel by car, but only to areas where they were really in control of the situation. To get to the eastern sector, where the resistance is strongest, they nearly always went by helicopter.

**Q. What could they visit?**

Probably houses the Indonesians were building. I don't really know because I never accompanied them, I only heard the conversations in the hotel. There were official cars for taking foreign visitors ... The people knew there were foreign visitors about when certain roads were closed.

**Q. Who closed the roads?**

The government did — the police closed roads leading to the military cemetery and military zones. People living in these areas can use the roads in spite of the no-entry signs, but when foreigners arrive their driver knows he must not go down them and, if the visitors insist, the driver shows them the sign.

**Q. Are all visits accompanied by Indonesians?**

Every one. But often they also use Timorese who are working for Indonesia.

**Q. And these Timorese don't try to show them the banned areas?**

They are always accompanied by Indonesians. Everything they say is overheard, it's impossible to speak. The Indonesians make sure that foreigners don't take taxis, they always have cars available for them. Even if they want to walk, they ask where they are going ... I saw some who wanted to go out by the back door of the hotel, but rooms were reserved for Security on this side too. In that regard, the security people were very effective.

**Q. Was Security run by the military?**

Yes, but by soldiers out of uniform, in civilian dress — though you could see two revolvers under their shirts and the radio that enabled them to keep in touch with their Control. When visitors were at the hotel and no reservation was made for Security, you knew the military trusted them completely.

Visits of journalists were extremely rare while I was there. During the last elections in April 1987, they brought over a Portuguese woman, the Governor's sister. She was allowed to move around as she wished. There was also a member of the Canadian Embassy. He went off for a bit — they sent several cars to look for him straight away. We would never talk about the situation because you don't know who is for and who is against them. Often they told us what to say if visitors asked us questions. So, for example, if they asked us what the chances were of visiting this or that area, we spoke of the rains and of the bad state of the roads — we always had to reply as they had taught us.

**Q. Were these foreign visits long or short?**

Very short. Most people arrived one day and left the next, they

stayed three days at the most. Every day before ten o'clock at night we had to send off a list of the people who had come into the hotel. We had to send it to the 'Commandos', the police and Intel. If they didn't receive the list they came to fetch it themselves.

**Q. Every night?**

Every night whether there were visits or not. Even when the guests were locals we had to report. Indonesians had to take their passes directly to Intel HQ.

**Q. Were things changed around for foreign visits?**

At the beginning all the houses were searched before foreigners arrived. Lately, at least in the capital, searches are not so frequent and are not linked to visits. The aim is to see whether we have received any weapons from the guerrillas.

**Q. Which areas are the Indonesians most willing to show off?**

Maliana and Suai, which are near to the border and where they have sent people from their own provinces who have their own crops (what they call 'transmigration'). They have total control over these areas. In 1976, after creating a Provisional Government, they invited people from the U.N. and the diplomatic corps just when almost all the population was in the mountains. Those of us who were left were forced to take part in the reception ceremony, along with soldiers dressed as civilians. We had to shout 'Long Live Integration'. Some Timorese who knew English were forced to interpret. A few days beforehand the Indonesians had distributed instructions on what should be said.

**Q. Can visitors take pictures?**

When the Indonesians authorise filming they block all the roads and channel the traffic down one street — that way they can show there has been progress. But no tape recorders are allowed. Besides, the people aren't willing to talk, they're afraid.

*[This interview has been edited slightly for publication.]*

## Antonino Tavares

Antonino Tavares is a nurse, married with children. From 1979 until 1987 he worked for Catholic Relief Services (a US development agency) and UNICEF. He is therefore one of the few refugees to have been able to travel in East Timor during these years.

He was interviewed by A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste in 1988.

When we were invaded in 1975-1976 most people fled into the hills. When they were forced to surrender in 1979 they had many symptoms of malnutrition and disease. So the civil authorities and the Catholic Church itself called in Catholic Relief Services (CRS) of the USA.

Besides bringing in food and clothes like the International Red Cross, which had been authorised that year to re-enter East Timor, CRS started a para-medical group in December. I was then working at Dili hospital and was invited to join this group while it lasted, until March 1981. We set ourselves up at Lala where, according to some reports, about 40 people a day were dying from hunger and disease. After a month I set off with two other nurses to Quelicai, a large town built on dry barren ground where the population had more than doubled with the arrival of neighbouring communities. The people were unable to leave the town to farm, and were living in conditions worse than animals.

**Q. Is the situation more difficult in the countryside than in the towns?**

It was also very difficult in the towns but, even so, it is easier to manage. The main problem in the rural camps is famine. The areas where people are allowed to go are very restricted, whether they are growing crops or harvesting. Most families can only use 100-200 square metres of ground, which is clearly insufficient to feed a family through the whole year. They have to fall back on collecting wild fruit, roots and leaves, also in insufficient quantities because the army forbids them to go far from the camp.

International organisations have set up several projects — like the water supply projects on which I worked for UNICEF. Money, for example, gets to a doctor ...

**Q. Timorese?**

No, an Indonesian doctor. He gets in touch with the 'trinity' — that's what we call the three authorities that control everything from the Province to the tiniest village. The 'trinity' is composed of the military commander, the chief of police and the civilian government.

**Q. All Indonesian?**

Sometimes the civil official is Timorese, but the soldiers have the power. The 'trinity' calls the people together for collective labour — which they call *gotong-royong* or 'voluntary work' — and, while the people work unpaid, the doctor and the others keep the money for themselves. Sometimes the people refuse to work, but then there are reprisals.

**Q. Do the international organisations know about this?**

I don't think so. One day an Indonesian who was doing the accounts of a project put down expenses that were ten times too high. I had all the bills and pointed this out to him, saying there might be a check and that it would put Indonesia in a bad light. He replied that the money came from abroad and that it would not matter in the least. On one occasion, UNICEF did complain because the Indonesians were claiming expenses for changing their car tyres six or seven times a year. It was all too obvious!

Whenever I went into a house to talk to Timorese people I knew that at least two soldiers would be nearby, looking innocent enough, but who had come to see what we said. As soon as I left, they'd ask about our conversation. In addition, I had to write a report of the conversation that would be sent to the Indonesian military. Once I wrote a report which I sent to officials at Ermera, to an Indonesian who was quite understanding. He called me in and asked me to change it because it was going to be sent to the military the next day and the people mentioned might be arrested and shot.

**Q. Do the people accept being given aid?**

You notice their suspicion when you meet them because

humanitarian organisations are identified with the Indonesians and the people are constantly at odds with the armed forces ...

**Q. You mean the civilians or the guerrillas?**

Both — civilians and guerrillas.

**Q. Are there contacts between them?**

The people usually find a way.

People know their living conditions are very bad and that development projects are important, but they also know the money will never get to them, but will stay in the hands of those in charge. What's more, they're overloaded with all sorts of tasks from which they get no benefit: building roads which they're not allowed to go on, working for the armed forces, labouring on large Indonesian plantations. All work which is unpaid, completely without compensation. The international organisations did try to set up mini-projects — for example, rearing small animals like rabbits, ducks and fish — but the military come and help themselves to whatever they want. Sometimes they say they'll pay, but then the unit is relieved by another and the one that made the promise is no longer there. As these situations repeat themselves, people end up preferring to stay as they are rather than to work endlessly for nothing.

As for East Timor's health service, at the end of their studies young Indonesian doctors do two years' service in East Timor before they rejoin the health service of their own country. Most of the nurses are also Indonesian. Some come for a while, others settle for good. Nurses of Timorese nationality don't find posts in their speciality in the Indonesian public services. There are many medical and paramedical personnel in East Timor at the moment but there are large areas without help. The foreign staff seem to regard their period of duty in Timor as holiday-time, after which they return home with their NIP (public service number) and an 'honourable mention' from the Governor of East Timor. They refuse to take out of the way postings for security reasons — either because these places are dominated by the resistance or for other reasons. But they agree to go if the International Red Cross or UNICEF gives them an honorarium on top of their monthly salary.

**Q. Are there enough medicines?**

The Indonesians take the best. A large amount is diverted into



private commerce. There are no medicines in the hospital and doctors send their patients out to buy them in the shops where they have been diverted. They all gain — the doctor who sells the medicines to the shop keeper and the shop keeper who sells them at a profit. As the people can scarcely afford to buy them, mortality, especially child mortality, is very high. Many deaths are due either to lack of food or medicines. One day I was visiting someone from a well-to-do family at Balibó (near the border). I had had tooth-ache, and asked to be treated at the local health-centre. The person in charge showed me the medicine cupboards, completely empty. What would he have done in an emergency? What's more, in Dili, for example, when a sick Timorese needs an operation he has to pay a backhander of 150,000 Rupiah — that's part of the bargain between the doctor and the nurse. Without it the patient has to wait for his operation indefinitely.

*[This interview has been slightly edited for publication.]*

## José Guterres

José Guterres is 27 years old and single. When East Timor was invaded in December 1975 he was 13 years old. He fled to the mountains with his family. Captured by the Indonesian army in 1980, he was sent to Dili prison, then placed in exile on the small island of Ataúro which lies offshore from Dili. Freed in 1984, he worked for the Indonesian Red Cross from 1985 until 1987, which brought him into contact with staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In 1987 he arrived in Portugal under the family reunion programme.

He was interviewed in 1988 by A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste.

When we arrived in Ataúro there was nothing — we had to cut trees and grasses to build our huts. For food, the army commander gave us one tin of corn a week. I was dying of hunger. I became ill but there was no medical assistance. If we asked the military about this, they just said 'No problem, Fretilin can die'. Every day we had to do forced labour which they called voluntary (*gotong royong*), but in our case it was forced. They made us build roads which no one would use, they made us build pigsties to raise pigs that they wouldn't eat — they are Muslims — but sold. When I was late for work they beat me.

The local people who weren't prisoners needed a pass to get around and to obtain this pass they had to give some of their produce to the army. In 1982 the International Red Cross was authorised to enter Ataúro and the material situation improved. Foreign visitors were sometimes brought over in military helicopters, but we couldn't speak to them.

In July 1984 I was taken back to Dili. In 1985 I started working with the Indonesian Red Cross, where I was part of a team in the 'Tracing and Mailing Service'. The service was started by the International Red Cross in an effort to restore contact between family members separated by the war and, if possible, reunite them. When normal communication isn't possible, the Red Cross offers its service, particularly to those who are in prison. To



ensure its independence, the service cannot be carried out by Indonesians because they are there as an occupying force. The International Red Cross has therefore arranged that the work is done by Timorese, attached for this purpose to the Indonesian Red Cross.

In fact, the conditions in which we work make it anything but independent. We worked under the control of the 'Operasi team', an Indonesian organisation run by a retired officer. We had to prepare reports on all our contacts for the armed forces. The mail was all inspected and censored by the military command at points along its route, from sender to the recipient. On all the trips we made for the International Red Cross, we were accompanied by secret service agents [from Intel].

**Q. What is the health situation? Can the Red Cross provide basic services?**

The Red Cross helps prisoners and deportees but not ordinary people.

**Q. And children and mothers, do they get help?**

I think that's UNICEF's job. The UNICEF team doesn't work with us, they are all Indonesians, they have Timorese to help them because Timorese can work more easily with the people. But they don't hold positions of responsibility: these posts are held by Indonesians. Like the Training & Mailing Service team, UNICEF is also attached to the 'Operasi team'.

**Q. Does the Red Cross have access to the prisons?**

Initially the International Red Cross had access to Ataúro. Also to Purgoa, which is another deportation camp that the Indonesians built so they could transfer some of the Ataúro deportees when international public opinion began to show concern about Ataúro and demand that the deportees be freed. These two camps were emptied in 1987.

But there were other camps which the ICRC didn't know about. In 1986 some deportees from Aileu managed to contact the ICRC and told them of the existence of camps in Aileu. The ICRC went to see and was able to ascertain that they were indeed concentration camps ...

**Q. So there are camps that the Red Cross discovers by accident?**

That's right. Despite the existence of agreements between the Indonesian government and the ICRC, the military do all they can to block or control Red Cross work. Most of the ICRC's projects are in fact run by Indonesians who have no independence from their government. Just one ICRC nurse lives permanently in Dili and she has limited freedom. She has to obtain a pass from the secret service (Kopscam) to get out of Dili, just like everybody else. I've seen secret service agents accompany Red Cross delegates in the same helicopter on several occasions. The deportation camps at Aileu were only discovered because Aileu is near Dili and because the ICRC nurse who was told of their existence took a Red Cross jeep one Sunday morning without a pass. She had luck on her side too, because the military check-points were relaxed and didn't ask to see her pass. Once she was there, the army couldn't deny the evidence.

On another occasion I was on a trip to Same with a Red Cross official and we were talking with the town governor, a Timorese picked by the Indonesians, when he asked us: 'So when can the prisoners from Lacluta come back? I hope they can spend Christmas with their families.' Surprised, the nurse asked him if there was a prison camp there. The governor realised his mistake but it was too late.

**Q. So it isn't possible to give the exact number of prisoners?**

No, because the Indonesians have prisons everywhere. For example, wherever there's a chief of police, he has a prison. The Red Berets have a prison. The military police have their prison, an infantry unit has its prison, artillery units, the District Command, the secret services — they all have them.

**Q. Are those in prison members of the resistance and their families?**

Not only them. There are civilians, suspects, drunks. People are arrested on the slightest pretext.

**Q. But the International Red Cross lists the number of prisoners in its reports.**

No — only the number of prisoners that it has been able to visit

under the terms of its agreements with the Indonesian Government. In fact, the International Red Cross can only visit Cipinang prison in Jakarta and two prisons in Dili (Comarca and Becora). Indonesia benefits from its relations with the International Red Cross because those who don't know the situation assume that the number of prisoners is limited to those to whom the ICRC refers, whereas the ICRC is only able to meet a minority.

It's the same thing when an ICRC report says that deportees have returned to their villages. First of all, those who haven't been able to return aren't mentioned, and then the villages where they go are usually resettlement villages (under military control). That kind of detention is modified but not always for the better.

**Q. What are these resettlement villages?**

Before the war people lived spread out over the mountains, growing crops and leading a normal life. With the Indonesian occupation and the guerrilla resistance, the Indonesians built resettlement villages to gather in all this scattered population. In such villages, they can control all movement in and out, control numbers, and prevent people from providing information to the resistance. The result is that the people in these resettlement villages die of hunger because their fields are reduced to kitchen gardens. The area is too small and they have to work the same ground all the time and it becomes exhausted.

Sometimes, there's not even time to attend to the crops because there's too much forced labour. For example, the elderly must stand guard every day — 30 days a month. The young and the strong only stand guard for 15 days a month, but that's because the Indonesians put them to do other kinds of work. Cleaning the camps, unloading military lorries, checking the roads, taking part in military operations. All these things make life in the villages more difficult. Life is utterly under military control.

At school everything is taught in Indonesian and the children have to know how to speak it because it is the official language. They are forced to learn the Indonesian national anthem and the five principles of the *Pancasila*. You have to know the principles of the *Pancasila* by heart just to get a travel pass, for example.

The first of these principles says that everybody has to profess one of the officially recognised religions. Well, the Timorese had their own traditional religions but, since these are not officially recognised, they say we do not have a religion and if we don't

have a religion we're communists and they want to kill the communists.

So Timorese who followed an unrecognised religion were forced to abandon it and join another. The Indonesians are now building mosques all over the place. They begin by building a mosque, and then they try to attract people. They take advantage of the bad living conditions and offer certain benefits to those who convert to Islam.

**Q. Even so, haven't most Timorese been attracted to the Catholic Church?**

Yes, but why? Because people have to choose a religion, and since they are forced to choose they prefer Catholicism. That's why the number of Catholics has increased.

Those who go to Dili for a few days have the impression that everything's normal. It's only an impression. If they stayed two months they would begin to get a truer picture. They'd see the tanks, the soldiers, the roads that are closed when foreigners visit. They'd see that foreigners are always accompanied by Indonesians, and that they only speak to the governor, to Indonesians and to a few Timorese who collaborate with the Indonesians.

**Q. Do many Timorese collaborate with the Indonesians?**

There isn't a lot of choice. To do my work I had to pretend to collaborate with them and say bad things about the resistance.

**Excerpts from José Guterres's statement to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights, 1987:**

Over a period of 12 years I was personally present at a large number of arbitrary executions, imprisonments and torture that showed a systematic disregard for the most elementary civil and political rights of the Timorese people.

In 1978-79 the Indonesian armed forces organised a major offensive against the Timorese resistance and the civilian population. Some of my family were with me in the forest. We were all in the same area and incendiary bombs were dropped on us. I succeeded in escaping, but my brother was killed in a skirmish. One of my sisters disappeared during an intense bombardment and neither I nor my family ever saw her again.

In 1980 I was arrested by the Indonesian military and subjected to interrogation and torture. Each Indonesian soldier used his own methods of torture to force me into confessing my 'crimes'. I was beaten with rifle butts and sticks. I was tied hand and-foot and hung up by the feet. My head was then plunged into a tank of water. After about two minutes I was hoisted up and interrogated. They repeated the procedure until I confessed. As soon as, suffocating, I agreed to talk, they asked me questions and the torture began again.

I was trussed up and two small crocodile-like creatures (*buaya kecil*) were attached to my body. When they pulled the animals' tails they scratched and bit me, sinking their claws and teeth into my flesh. All the while they continued asking me questions.

I saw my friends being tortured. I saw them subjected to electric shocks, beaten with iron bars and sticks, their toes placed under table legs while soldiers and officers sat on top. I saw them burned with cigarettes on the ears and sexual organs. They were also kicked in the chest.

Later I was taken to the Island of Ataúro with my friends. I remained there for four years.

We couldn't talk to the foreign visitors who were brought over in military helicopters. During the visit of an

Australian delegation, myself and a friend from prison were brutally beaten and threatened with death because we dared to speak to them. The same thing happened when some Portuguese journalists visited Ataúro. After their departure four of my companions were tortured and sent to Comarca prison.

There are many other prisons, in Dili, Aileu and in other parts of the territory, each containing small groups of prisoners. I personally went inside one of these prisons without the military's knowledge, and I saw six prisoners with swollen faces and other signs of having been badly treated.

I am extremely concerned about the fate of my friends who are still in East Timor. I have seen and have myself been a victim of the most brutal human rights violations, which are due to the Indonesian government's efforts to consolidate its colonial domination over East Timor. I believe that until the true wishes of the people of East Timor are respected, their suffering will continue.

*[This statement and the preceding interview have been edited for publication.]*

# Cristiano Costa

Cristiano Costa left East Timor in December 1987. He is one of very few Timorese to have succeeded in fleeing the territory secretly, via Java.

This is an extract from his testimony to the UN Human Rights Commission in 1988.

The Indonesian forces invaded the town of Dili on 7 December 1975 and three days later they occupied my home town, Baucau. That day I saw Indonesian parachutists torture and kill Timorese people they had captured. Others were sent to the prisons in Baucau — the Flamboyant, previously a hotel, and the RTP, an old army base that belonged to a company of the Portuguese army. I was 15 years old at the time. In this atmosphere of terror I fled to the hills, to the areas controlled by the Timorese resistance.

In 1979 one of my brothers was killed by Indonesian soldiers and I was captured by the Indonesian forces at Ostiko, near Baucau. I was detained at the Baucau military base until 1980.

In 1981 I was forced by the military to take part in the Indonesian military operation named *Operasi Pagar-Kikis I*, which was directed by Colonel Sahala Rajaguguh and which mobilised 40 Indonesian battalions and the civilian population of East Timor. During this operation I saw Indonesian forces unscrupulously and pitilessly massacre women, children, old people and invalids at Aitana near Lacluta.

In April 1982, in preparation for the first elections imposed on East Timor by the Indonesian Government, the military arrested a large number of people in the eastern zone. I belonged to a group of 324 people who were arrested and taken to the area of Taci-Tolu, near Dili. We were freed after three months.

In 1983, after the cease-fire between the guerrillas and the Indonesian military forces, there was a new wave of massacres and arrests of those in occupied towns throughout the territory who were suspected of being sympathetic to Fretilin. I will refer only to the known massacre at Kraras where a group of more than 2,000 people was almost entirely wiped out.

It was after these events that I was arrested again on 28 October 1983 in Baucau, suspected of having worked with Fretilin. I was interrogated and tortured. For 2 weeks — at Baucau and then in Dili — I suffered electric shocks, blows and burns. They broke my teeth. I can still remember the name of the Indonesian officer at Baucau who was in charge of torture and interrogation: Captain A. Haryanto.

On 2 September I was tied up with 20 other prisoners — among them another of my brothers — and they sent us to Comarca prison in Dili. Other colleagues in Baucau were also arrested, such as Adolfo Fraga, António Espírito Santo, Benjamim Guterres, Isidoro Ximenes and Carlos Alves. They later disappeared.

In the Comarca prison in Dili we were not allowed visits from our families, and we got neither proper food, nor medical assistance. Conditions only improved on the eve of visits by the International Red Cross or foreign visitors, but, after their departure, the bad conditions started again ...

Timorese prisoners who were not political but common law detainees had privileges and were in better health than us. They were chosen for interviews and to be filmed. When the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, and the Governor of Timor, Engineer Mário Carrascalão, visited the prison on 4 September 1984, it was these common law prisoners who were interviewed and filmed.

Many political prisoners were forced to sign false confessions that were then used to mount a phony trial. Two Indonesian lawyers from Kupang were designated by the tribunal to act as defense for the accused, but they had no contact with the prisoners. In fact these lawyers were working with the prosecution and the judge to work out penalties and mete out sentences that had been determined by the military.

I and 49 others refused to sign these false confessions and we were therefore never sentenced. On 27 April 1985, after 20 months imprisonment, those who had refused to collaborate in those trials were freed. We were thereafter obliged to present ourselves every week at the Indonesian military command.

Later, after I returned to Baucau, I saw a number of people arrested by the Indonesian military on 17 October 1987, in reprisal for the guerrilla attacks at Laisoro-Lai (Quelicaí) and at Seical (Baucau). Those most under suspicion were sent to Dili and kept in the Red Beret Prisons there.



# Anselmo Aparício

Anselmo Aparício is 25 years old. Before he left East Timor in 1988, he studied as a seminarian.

This is part of his testimony before the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights in 1988.

I am Timorese. I left Timor this year. I had to abandon my country and my parents. I felt I could no longer bear to live there. Our people are being decimated while the world remains silent.

I was 12 years old when the Indonesian army invaded East Timor: first Dili, the capital, and then my home town, Baucau. From the very first days of the invasion I witnessed numerous abuses of basic human rights by the Indonesian military. With regard to human rights, my own case is not special. As a student at the Roman Catholic seminary in Dili, I was even protected to a certain extent. But in East Timor grave violations are part of our daily life. I cannot report everything I have seen and lived through because it would take too long.

The great majority of Baucau's population fled to the mountains at the time of the invasion and there they were pursued and bombarded by aircraft, heavy artillery and other military means until they were forced to surrender.

When I was 15 years old, the Indonesian armed forces launched a huge offensive against the resistance, killing and capturing many Timorese civilians who had taken refuge in the mountains. Three of my cousins were captured and used as porters by the army. Later, two of them, Júlio and Acácio, were executed by the soldiers. One of my relations, Adelino, had to lay out a large amount of money to avoid execution. Another, Agostinho Pinto, was executed with his wife at Ainaro.

When I was 16, I was at the club in Baucau with an Italian missionary sister, helping two injured men from Quelicai, when some soldiers became suspicious that the men were guerrillas, simply because they were well-built. They were stoned to death in front of me and some nuns by Indonesian soldiers from battalions 315 and 731.

I have been present at the arrest of numerous Timorese including my friend Cristiano Costa. They were all tortured during interrogation ...

In 1979, when a foreign delegation came to Baucau, the Indonesian armour was removed for hiding at Nu-Bere. As a porter [TBO] for the ARMED-7 battalion, I had to cut down many banana plants belonging to the people of Nu-Bere to camouflage these tanks.

In 1981 all eligible Timorese between the ages of 12 and 55 were mobilised by the Indonesian military for an operation against the resistance called *Operasi Sapu Bersih*. My closest relations did not escape this forced mobilisation. I was lucky enough not to go because I had just started at the seminary. My relations were forced to act as shields to protect the Indonesian army.

In 1982 during the school holidays I obtained a military pass — the *Surat Jalan* required by all Timorese for travel — which authorised me to visit my family in Baucau. Having fallen ill during the journey I stopped on the way at Manatuto. Because I didn't present my pass fast enough to the soldiers I was arrested and brutally beaten by an Indonesian sergeant from the military command of Manatuto district. I was only released after the intervention of a missionary.

In 1978 I had already been beaten in front of my mother by members of the marine rifle regiment for defending my Catholic faith. I was 15 at the time.

During the 1982 Indonesian general elections one of my fellow seminarians and myself were taken away during the night by secret service agents. We were interrogated and threatened because we hadn't voted. On the day before the elections I had seen Indonesian soldiers giving orders to Timorese people forcing them to vote for Golkar, the strongest Indonesian party.

In 1983 I was given permission to visit some of my relations who were detained in Comarca prison in Dili. There I saw prisoners with signs of maltreatment and torture. Among them in particular I recognised Caetano Guterres, David Dias Ximenes, Sergeant Januário Ximenes, Francisco Carvalho, Agapito and others who are now detained in Cipinang central prison in Jakarta.

Some of my companions, João Mau Leça, Espírito Santo, António Isidoro, Pedro from Tirilolo, Norberto from Dare, Tunilo from Dili and Benjamin Guterres from Venilale, have quite



simply disappeared after having been arrested by the Indonesian military.

In the same year, 1983, my college was visited by a crew from Portuguese television. The crew was all the time surrounded by Indonesian secret agents taking note of our attempts to enter into contact with them. On my return to the seminary I was insulted and threatened by these agents. During this visit, army equipment from the town of Dili was hidden so that it would not be filmed by the television crew. In fact, during the rare visits of foreign journalists and delegations, they always close roads leading to Indonesian barracks and to the military cemetery.

On 24 May 1987 I was forced by members of the Indonesian military police to stare into the sun, to do exercises and to jump up and down. They plunged me into a tub full of human and animal excrement. All this because I accidentally passed the military cemetery, a route I took every day to get to school, at a time when it was out of bounds because they were burying Indonesian soldiers who had been killed in combat against the resistance. Other Timorese, including some taxi drivers, were similarly harassed at the same time.

In December 1987 one of my friends, Domingos Castro, an ex-teacher, was taken away by the Indonesian police. Since then he is believed to have disappeared.

In January 1988 I travelled again between Dili and Baucau, having obtained a pass from the Indonesian command. On my arrival at the military check-point at Metinaro, still on the outskirts of Dili, I was kicked and hit with rifle-butts because I didn't salute the soldiers at this post. As I started to protest, they threatened to hang me; a Timorese soldier who was there signalled to me that they were serious.

During my last months in Dili I taught at St. Joseph's College, a diocesan school and the only one that teaches Portuguese. This college is the target of constant persecution by the Indonesian secret services, which accuse it of politicking against the government. The pupils and teachers are closely watched by secret agents, and some of them have been arrested and disappeared.

During December 1987 and January 1988 one of my own pupils was arrested and others, even the priests Leão da Costa and Cunha, were accused of having distributed anti-Indonesian leaflets in the capital and were interrogated.

Arnaldo Araújo, the first governor of East Timor appointed by the Indonesian occupation, was buried on the day I left Dili. Barely two months ago, in June, João Martins, who formerly headed the Indonesian social services and education departments, died. In 1986 both of them were under suspicion and had been arrested and interrogated by the occupying forces. In recent years João Martins had been a teacher at St. Joseph's College. He died during a party to which he had been invited, curiously, by the Indonesian authorities. His death, like that of Arnaldo Araújo, is attributed to poisoning. We think that there are links between the suspicious deaths of well-known Timorese personalities and the unexplained accidents that have caused the deaths of Timorese students in Indonesia.

I grew up in an environment where human rights are not respected, where terror reigns, where the Indonesian military presence imposes total submission. Having grown up in this environment I came to believe that the power of arms was sovereign everywhere. It was with surprise and satisfaction that I came to realize after I left occupied East Timor that freedom of expression, association, movement, that cultural freedom, even the freedom to protest, do exist. Why then don't my people enjoy the rights that other people enjoy?

My experience makes me fear reprisals against my family because of my testimony, and I therefore ask you to use every means you can to protect those of my family who have stayed in Timor and to promote the fundamental rights of the Timorese people.

# João Maria dos Reis

João Maria dos Reis is a former civil servant of the Portuguese colonial administration who, until his departure from East Timor in October 1988, worked in the Indonesian Government's Department of Information.

This is a statement he made before the UN Human Rights Commission, Geneva, in February 1989.

Considering the general situation in East Timor since my country was invaded by the Indonesian army, I recognise that I was in a relatively privileged position: firstly, because I stayed in Dili and gave myself up immediately to the invading forces, whereas the majority of my contemporaries escaped and fought in the mountains; secondly, because I joined the Indonesian civil service.

Despite this, I chose to leave my country because I did not feel at ease under foreign occupation and wanted to escape the persecution from which no Timorese is ever safe. I also wanted to leave in order to bear witness before world opinion to the suffering of our people, who are oppressed and tortured because they continue to demand their freedom and fight for their right to independence.

I have seen the Indonesian military commit innumerable violations of human rights. Since I am unable to refer to them all here I will mention those which affected me most directly.

Firstly, the day after Indonesian troops arrived in Dili, I went with some fellow Timorese to report to the invading forces' headquarters. On the way we were stopped by an army unit which, on recognising one of us in a photograph of a Fretilin demonstration, took him off to Sota beach and gunned him down with bursts from automatic weapons.

Three days later, on 11 December, I was arrested. They tortured me with electric shocks: they tied my thumbs together, and put wires between them that were attached either to the electricity supply or to the batteries of manually operated telephones.

On 8 October 1976 I was rearrested, taken to the temporary prison at Sang-Tai-Hoo building and tortured again, simply because they couldn't get an 8 mm film projector which they had found in my house to work. They made me start it, then they showed pornographic films, forcing three prisoners — a young girl and two older women — to watch. They raped and sexually abused them throughout the day.

In 1978 my brother-in-law Juvenal Inácio, a Fretilin member, was captured and taken to Dili. The Deputy Chief of the Secret Service, a Lieutenant Colonel Bambang, allowed Juvenal's wife and two daughters to visit him. On the third visit, however, they were told they could not see him because he was being interrogated by the Defence Minister, General Yusuf. The following day they were told that Juvenal had been taken away and since then he has disappeared.

On 13 December 1980 I was arrested and tortured for the third time, falsely accused of having taken part in the attack and destruction of Dili's television station. They tortured me with electric shocks and burned me with cigarettes because I would not confess to something I had not done and because I refused to accuse falsely the Mayor of Dili, Mário Sanches da Costa, and the Deputy Governor of East Timor, Francisco Lopes da Cruz, both of whom had been appointed to these positions by the occupiers.

In order to be brief, I will move on to a recent case. On 9 July 1988 three students from Cribas, one of whom was my cousin Domingos Alves, were forced by the Red Berets to go into the bush to try to contact the resistance. They took with them a document that was supposed to justify their presence in case they were intercepted by an Indonesian battalion. On the first day they were found by battalion 125 which, ignoring the document, separated Domingos from the other two and proceeded to torture him with a knife. When they heard his screams, the other two tried to escape. One was shot, but the other managed to reach the village and informed Domingos' relatives. Domingos' father protested to the Red Berets, but he was only given permission to go and look for his son three days later. He found only the corpse; the head had been severed from the body and the sexual organs cut off and stuffed into his mouth. When he returned to the village he was given orders not to say anything. An Indonesian reported all this to me, and later I confirmed it with relatives.

I would also like to speak a little about freedom of movement and visits to East Timor. I began to plan my departure from East

Timor in 1984, when my sister and her two children managed to leave under the protection of the International Red Cross to be reunited with my relatives in Australia. As she was the wife of Juvenal Inácio (about whose 'disappearance' I have already spoken), I had to pay 2,500,000 Rupiah (US\$1,500) to obtain a document stating that she was not involved in subversive activities.

Little by little I began to gain the confidence of the Secret Service and in 1986 was invited to request permission to visit my family in Australia. I was the first Timorese to obtain permission to visit relatives abroad. My departure for Australia must have been useful propaganda for Indonesia, but my wife and a friend had to sign a document accepting responsibility in case I did not return.

In 1988 I managed to get permission for my wife and five children to visit relatives in Australia. This time I had to sign the declaration of responsibility in case of their non-return. I could not leave my neighbourhood without permission but, claiming it was necessary for reasons connected with my work, I managed to get a permit. I travelled to Kupang in Indonesian Timor and from there to Jakarta. There I managed to buy (for 9 million Rupiah) an authorisation from the Secret Service (BNIS) to leave Indonesia, as well as passports for me and my sister-in-law. Our relations, including my wife, only learned of our escape once we were out of Indonesia.

I would also like to mention the visits of foreigners to East Timor, organised by the Secret Service and by the Department of Information where I was working. This department is headed by a Timorese, but 95 per cent of the officials come from Indonesia. They choose which places are to be visited, as well as which people may speak to the visitors. The crowds may only shout out 'Long live Indonesia' and 'We want integration'.

I appeal to you ... to study carefully the situation of generalised repression that has afflicted East Timor for over 13 years.

## António Maria Araújo

António Araújo trained and worked as a nurse during the Portuguese colonial period. He left East Timor in 1989.

Below is his statement to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, August 1989.

My presence here is another contribution to the Timorese effort to break the barrier of silence that has isolated East Timor and our tragedy for fourteen years.

Should I look back and describe how the Indonesian army came, in their words, to liberate us? Should I describe the circumstances in which the Indonesians say we chose to join East Timor with Indonesia?

Others before me have already done so, here and before the Commission. If I do so, very briefly, it is because we hope that by multiplying our testimonies we can make clear the nature of Indonesia's interference in our country.

I was a nurse in 1975. Three weeks after the invasion I was asked to report to the radiology department of the civil hospital in Dili, which was then occupied by the military. The patients, Timorese civilians, had been moved and lumped together in some rooms in a health centre away from the hospital.

I worked in the military hospital until November 1976. During those 11 months, I was summoned for interrogation three times, and on each occasion was beaten. The third time I was tortured by a Red Beret doctor, who gave me electric shocks in the old house of Joachim Babo at Calmero.

On 8 November 1976 I was again arrested by Captain Tarigan. I was taken to the Military Police Command, then to the Comarca prison, where I remained for 29 months.

I witnessed indescribable horrors there. Many forms of physical and mental torture were practised and the torturers competed with each other in their zeal. I can recall one pause for a poor meal of rice and water in the middle of torture, during which our executioners, proud of their inventiveness, boasted of their deeds and were praised by the commanding officer as he noted down their discoveries.

When I came out of prison I was appointed head of the health services department. But in June 1980, when some Timorese attacked the radio and television receivers and ammunition stores in Dili, I was once again arrested with many others and imprisoned for 43 days at Mes Korem. I was again beaten by a captain named Zamirad. I witnessed scenes of sadism which demonstrate how low men can fall when they act without moral justification, as in the invasion of my country.

I will not describe here the torture, sexual abuse and sodomy, but they remain fixed forever in my memory and that of many of my fellow citizens. Even if there were no other causes, this experience would explain why, when the Indonesians require us to address them in certain terms, such as *bapak* meaning 'father', our real sentiments are very different.

Expelled from public service after my release from prison, I worked in the office of St Joseph's College, which is the only school in the diocese that has been able to keep a certain independence with regard to Indonesia. As a nurse, I had been a member of the Portuguese colonial government's civil service. In 1979 I signed the International Red Cross list to leave Timor, which I finally did only this year, after ten years of waiting.

The arrests and tortures continue. You have already heard about the wave of arrests in October and November 1988, before and after the visit to Dili of the Indonesian president.

East Timor's opening, from 1 January 1989, an event that was promised and given wide publicity, has had little effect. Some tourists may come in but representatives of humanitarian organisations such as Amnesty International may not. For the Timorese, freedom of movement remains restricted: Timorese from Dili who wish to travel to Manatuto, 50 kilometres from Dili on Timor's main road to Baucau, cannot do so if they don't have *Surat Jalan* [passes]. In April, a group of officials from the Education Department were not only prevented from travelling to Baucau but were physically beaten.

Each new visit to East Timor is preceded by new arrests. This is happening right now, before the Pope's visit. Colonel Bimo, Head of the Secret Service in East Timor's Operational Command, has affirmed that 'the arrests are made for the Pope's security'. The local Catholic bishop says that the aim is rather to eliminate 'undesirables' and to create 'a climate of fear'.

The Catholic Church is itself a victim of the repression. Priests are called to go to the Military Command to explain their

sermons. The Catholic scout troop of which I was a leader was forbidden to use its insignia when our Bishop was consecrated. Some of those who were arrested in October and November were released on condition that they spy on the priests and parish staff. This means that, to avoid being accused of refusing to collaborate, they must make accusations — inventing them if they can find nothing — against the people they have been ordered to watch.

This is what I am able to tell you in the short time I have to speak. In the name of justice and the principles which guide this Commission, independent of the interests of governments or political regimes or ideological bias, I implore you to consider the generalised repression which has lasted for 14 years in East Timor and shows every sign of continuing.

Your indifference or your silence will contribute to the physical, cultural and moral destruction of a small people which is struggling for its right to liberty and independence.



# Appendix

## Mgr Belo's Letter to the United Nations

Dili 6 February 1989

His Excellency Sr. Dr. Javier Pérez de Cuellar  
Secretary General of the United Nations  
New York  
USA

Your Excellency,

First allow me to give you my sincere and respectful greetings.

I am taking the liberty of writing to your Excellency to draw to your attention the fact that the process of decolonisation of Portuguese Timor has still not been resolved by the United Nations, and it is important that this should not be forgotten. For our part, we, the people of East Timor, think that we must be consulted on the future of our land. That is why I am writing, as a leader of the Catholic Church and as a citizen of Timor, to ask you, as Secretary General, to start in Timor the most normal and democratic process of decolonisation, i.e. the holding of a referendum. The people of Timor must be allowed to express their views on their future through a plebiscite. Hitherto the people have not been consulted. Others speak in the name of the people. Indonesia says that the people of East Timor have already chosen integration, but the people of Timor themselves have never said this. Portugal wants the problem to be solved over time; meanwhile our people and nation are dying.

You are a democrat and a friend of human rights. Therefore act to show your respect, Your Excellency, for the spirit and letter of the United Nations Charter, which grants to all the peoples of this planet the right to choose their own destiny, freely, consciously and responsibly. Your Excellency, the most democratic means of ascertaining the supreme wish of the Timorese people is to hold a referendum promoted by the United Nations for the people of East Timor.

Sr. Pérez de Cuellar, I thank you for all your sympathy with the people of Timor and conclude by expressing once again my best wishes.

With admiration and respect, I remain,

+Dom Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo SDB  
Titular Bishop of Lorium  
Apostolic Administrator of Dili

It became known that Bishop Belo had written to Sr. Pérez de Cuellar in April 1989. His initiative was quickly criticised by Indonesian military and civilian officials, who described it as the expression of a personal opinion, without any representative character.

Among East Timor's people, however, the letter was very widely appreciated. Its forthright appeal to fundamental principles and his strictly non-partisan stance appear to have commended it to the great majority of the population. Mgr Belo himself was at pains subsequently to emphasise that the document did not take sides and was neither for nor against independence, integration with Indonesia, or association with Portugal. His intention had been simple, to state very clearly that it was the right of East Timor's people to be consulted about their political future. No other course would solve the territory's tragic conflict.

In an international response, the President of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of Japan, Bishop Aloisius Soma, wrote to the Asian churches inviting them to support the stand taken by Bishop Belo. Over 1,300 Christians in Asia did so, including 118 Asian bishops and 5 cardinals.

These statements of support were presented by Bishop Soma to the United Nations in August 1989. But at the beginning of 1990 Bishop Belo had received no reply to his letter.



## Further reading on East Timor

**CISSET News Bulletin** in English available from Christians in Solidarity with East Timor, PO Box 1046, Fitzroy Nth 3068, Australia.

**East Timor News** A monthly bulletin in the English language with reports from East Timor, analyses of news coverage of East Timor in the Portuguese press and details of events concerning East Timor in the international arena. Rua Pinheiro Chagas 77-2esq, 1,000 Lisboa, Portugal.

**Em Timor-Leste, a Paz é Possível** Bi-monthly bulletin in Portuguese and French. Regular reports on East Timor, with good access to church sources. Rua de Campolide, 215 4-DC, 1,000 Lisboa, Portugal.

**The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor 1974-1989: A Chronology** by John Taylor. A unique chronology of events in East Timor as recorded in the international press. An essential tool for those interested in developments in the territory. Published in 1990, £14.99. Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1 7AF, UK.

**Tapol Bulletin** Bi-monthly English-language bulletin of the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign. Regularly carries articles providing detailed coverage of events in East Timor, particularly as they relate to Indonesian politics. Available from 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Croydon, Surrey CR4 8HW, UK.

**Timor Informations** Bulletin in French with excellent updates of the conflict, particularly useful in the areas of national and international diplomacy. Association de Solidarité avec Timor Oriental, BP 235, 07, 75327 Paris, Cedex 07, France.

**Timor Link** English-language quarterly bulletin with detailed coverage of news from and about East Timor. Good access to church sources in East Timor and Indonesia. Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1 7AF, UK.

# "I am Timorese"

TESTIMONIES FROM EAST TIMOR

'We are not asking for permission to speak, we want recognition of our right to be heard.'

In 1975 silence was imposed upon the people of East Timor when their country was invaded and occupied by Indonesia. Since then, up to 200,000 have died in a 'small war' that has gone virtually unreported. Ninety per cent of the territory's 650,000 people have been forcibly uprooted from their homes.

Enforced silence is a profound form of oppression. **I Am Timorese** gives the people of East Timor an opportunity to tell their extraordinary stories to the outside world.

ISBN 1 85287 065 6

Price **£2.00**



Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields,  
London N1 7AF, UK