



EAST TIMOR UPDATE

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Human rights violations continue

Recent press reports have focused on human rights violations in Indonesia, but there has been no let-up to the human rights abuses in East Timor.

• Amnesty International has reported: "Since November 1994, there have been increased, and sometimes violent, demonstrations against Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. The authorities have responded to the demonstrations with arbitrary detention, including the detention of peaceful protesters, beatings, torture and extrajudicial executions." (*AI urgent action, June 11*)

• One of the centres for these protests has been Baucau, the second-largest town in East Timor. On April 28, about 1,000 people protested in Baucau after Indonesian soldiers killed a young Timorese man. On June 10, another protest (this one against religious desecrations carried out by Indonesian soldiers) ended in bloodshed when police opened fire on the crowd. The shooting sparked rioting that lasted into the next day, with at least two reported dead and 165 arrested. The whereabouts of those detained is still unknown. The Timorese resistance movement CNRM said the incident was provoked by Indonesian military intelligence when a statue of the Virgin Mary in Baucau Church was desecrated by Indonesian security elements. "The latest wave of violence and arrest are only the tip of the iceberg. The human rights situation in East Timor has deteriorated seriously in the last two years," CNRM said. (*Reuter, April 28, June 10; AFP, June 11; East Timor Human Rights Centre, Aug. 5; CNRM report, June 15*)

• East Timor's Catholic Bishop, Carlos Ximenes Belo, in an interview with Indonesian reporters, has spoken out once again on the current situation of



Timorese torture victim being beaten with an iron bar. This photo was smuggled out and obtained by the East Timor Human Rights Centre in Australia.

his people: "There are army posts in every village," he said. "Anyone entering or leaving must first report to the army post. Young people who want to go to Dili must report to the security post, show their ID and other documents. It's like a state of war. I once said to the military commander: we recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of Indonesia's independence but it seems that the East Timorese are not allowed to enjoy that independence. They often behave very brutally and inhumanely."

On his prescription for change, Bishop Belo noted that he had called in 1989 for a referendum on self-determination. "The first thing is to end the state of war. This is extremely urgent. The military approach must end. Any conflicts must be resolved in a political way and that needs dialogue. We need dialogue which means listening to each other, but that never happens. The only dialogue allowed here requires us to accept integration, nothing else. It's all one-way." (*TAPOL #136, August - originally in Indonesian-language Tempo Interaktif, published on the Internet, July 24*)

• An entire village of 400 people fled into the mountains to escape reprisals after an Indonesian captain had his throat slit in July. Timorese sources said that soldiers stationed in nearby Dili appeared at a community fair and tried to rape a young Timorese woman, which resulted in a fight during which an Indonesian captain was decapitated. After the incident, up to 100 villagers were arrested and the remainder fled into the mountains. (*Lusa, July 30*)

• The Timorese resistance has finally been able to confirm the death one year ago of two main leaders of the non-violent clandestine resistance. Pedro Nunes, known as Sabalae, 39, Secretary of the CNRM Clandestine Resistance Civilian Front, was reported to have disappeared without trace on 1

June 1995, while on a trip in the interior. The National Council for Maubere Resistance (CNRM) has now confirmed that he was captured and killed along with his assistant, Remigio Levi da Costa Tilman, 21. Attempts at the time to trace the two men's whereabouts through the

International Red Cross led nowhere.

They were captured by the Indonesian military and held for one night at the army post in Tibar. There, they were tortured in an attempt to extract information. Remigio Levi da Costa was killed on the same night as he refused to provide any information to his captors.

Pedro Nunes was taken to Dili, then transferred to Jakarta, to the DEN-85 barracks of the army's special forces, Kopassus. There he was again subjected to torture which continued until he died at the hands of his captors. (*TAPOL Report, 10 June 1996, based on CNRM report, May 26*)

• There have been reports of young Timorese being forcibly injected with heroin to confuse them and make them compliant, according to Abel Guterres of the Australia-based East Timor Relief Association. He added that women are being raped on a mass scale in a bid to flood the East Timorese community with part-Indonesians. (*AAP, May 19*)

• The Indonesian government's Human Rights Commission (KOMNAS-HAM) has opened a regional office in Dili, the capital of East Timor. KOMNAS-HAM has received mixed reviews for its work in Indonesia, with some seeing it as a government effort to ward off criticisms from international organizations and others seeing it as a small step in the right direction, needing institutional support to do a better job. The Canadian Human Rights Commission has provided extensive technical support, for example.

In Dili, the KOMNAS-HAM office seems an equally mixed blessing. It received 100 complaints in one day when it opened in July, pointing to the need for a human rights presence. But it is no substitute for genuinely independent international monitoring. KOMNAS-HAM chief Baharuddin Lopa opened the Dili office by declaring: "We can say that alleged human rights abuses in East Timor have become a topic of discussions every month abroad but after we carefully observed, we found that some of the allegations were not true." Jailed Timorese resistance leader Xanana Gusmão, in a

prison interview conducted by Indonesian democrats, said he was disappointed with Lopa's remarks. "Komnas-HAM must be independent, it must not collaborate with the military," he said. "If it's not independent, I'm quite sure that the East Timorese will have far greater trust in the International Red Cross." (*AFP, July 11; AP, July 9; TAPOL #136, August*)

• The Indonesian armed forces claim there are just a small handful of guerrilla fighters remaining in East Timor — claims that are faithfully repeated by news agencies like Reuter. Armed forces actions tell a different story: continued military operations that victimize civilians above all. In June, for instance, Indonesian forces began an encirclement campaign to try to capture guerrillas on Mount Matebian. On June 4 two young people, Marcos Filipe (aged 12), and Sidonio Vaz (13), both from Dare Nafa, Quelicai, were seized by the Indonesians and forced to inform on the guerrillas, CNRM reports. "Because they provided no information, both youngsters were brutally beaten and kicked by soldiers, until they vomited blood ... Indonesian troops are destroying villagers food gardens and domestic animals they encounter, so as to prevent food supplies to the guerrillas. The impact of these acts of destruction on the already extremely impoverished and undernourished population is very severe."

Getting an accurate count on the number of resistance fighters is almost impossible. The resettlement camps established by the Indonesian army as a counter-insurgency tactic, for example, have become crucial to guerrilla survival. Many fighters even live in these camps, according to commander Konis Santana. "The guerrillas today survive thanks to the support they get from the people ... the bulk of the FALINTIL's [Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor, the military wing of the CNRM] logistic capacity comes from the people and, in some cases, the guerrillas live under the people's protection ... The survival of our guerrilla war is wholly dependent on strong popular support. Without that support, we are condemned to death," Konis said in a written report smuggled to Portugal. (*CNRM report, July 9; East Timor News (CDPM/Lisbon), June*)

• Manuel Soares, 25, born in Ermera, was murdered in cold blood on June 7 when he visited a police station in Jakarta with a friend. Police opened fire on the Timorese labourer without warning or explanation, according to a report from an Indonesian solidarity group. Soares came to Jakarta as part of a group of Timorese recruited by the Tiara Foundation which is run by President Suharto's oldest daughter, 'Mbak Tutut', with a promise of 450,000 rupiah a month. In fact, they got only 35,000 rupiah — well below a living wage. About 50 Timorese studying or working in Jakarta protested to demand a full investigation, but police responded that Soares was shot while "resisting arrest." (*SPRIM report, June 10; UPL, June 10*)



Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's minister for foreign affairs, was a prominent supporter of East Timor while in opposition. Please write him and your own MP to ask that Canada take an active role in supporting human rights and self-determination for East Timor. In particular, ask for

- an arms embargo against Indonesia
- an end to new trade and investment deals while East Timor is occupied
- Indonesian Ambassador Parwoto, who has tried to intimidate the family of East Timorese refugee Bella Galhos, to be expelled from Canada

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