

EAST TIMOR UPDATE

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Happy 1997 from ETAN

1997 marks ETAN's tenth anniversary.

The network has grown immensely in this time and has succeeded in several of its initial goals, especially in informing Canadians about the tragedy of East Timor and our government's role, and in getting the story into the newspapers.

We've also been able to move Canadian policy in some arenas. The challenge for the network now, in a year that the Prime Minister has declared Canada's Year of the Asia Pacific, is to ensure that human rights and the rights of small peoples like the Timorese are not lost in the rush for increased profits.

At the national office in Toronto, Li-Lien Mara Gibbons has been hired as national office coordinator, and is in the office on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

We owe thanks to Joao Santos Rolo for holding down our office all summer in very difficult circumstances.

Nobel for East Timor

East Timor won a huge victory when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to two men who, each in their own way, have embodied more than 20 years of Timorese resistance in the face of genocide that has now gone on for more than 21 years. Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and Timorese resistance spokesperson Jose Ramos Horta won the world's main award for their persistent refusal to surrender. Both are shining examples of resistance leader Xanana Gusmao's famous maxim "To resist is to Win."

"This was about to become a forgotten conflict, and we wanted to contribute to maintaining momentum...By awarding this prize, we hope to contribute to a

Francis Sejersted told reporters in Oslo.

"This is a recognition, not of me, but of all the people of Timor, for the Catholic Church which works in Timor, and for all those who work for peace and



Nobel Peace Prize winner, Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo

reconciliation between people," said Belo, 48, the first Catholic bishop ever to win the award, in a statement issued Oct. 11 in Rome by his order, the Salesians. "This prize is dedicated for democracy, openness and peace in East Timor, and in Indonesia and all around the world," he added.

Belo "has been the foremost representative of the people of East Timor. At the risk of his own life, he has tried to protect his people from infringements by those in power," according to the Nobel Committee. The Vatican welcomed the award with deepest satisfaction.

Belo's story is all the more impressive when it is considered that he is no fiery liberation theologian, but a conservative man who was appointed after the Vatican removed his outspoken predecessor in 1983, believing Belo would be more sympathetic to Indonesian rule. That proved a futile hope. In 1989, Belo wrote to the United Nations (which does

not recognize Indonesia's occupation of East Timor) to ask for a referendum on self-determination. "We are dying as a people and as a nation," he wrote. It took the UN five years to even acknowledge the letter.

Ramos Horta, 51, is the overseas representative for the Timorese resistance movement

(CNRM) and was the foreign minister in the short-lived Democratic Republic of East Timor in 1975. He has championed an innovative peace plan that envisions three phases of staged withdrawal of the thou-

sands of Indonesian troops in the territory, with United Nations supervision, culminating in a referendum.

Ramos Horta hopes the Nobel Prize will give the peace plan momentum in capitals like Ottawa. "I was very pleased to receive congratulations from the Canadian government but I hope that the Nobel Peace Prize award will encourage Canada to actively support the CNRM Peace Plan, and freeze any prospective Canadian arms deals with Indonesia. More intense efforts of support for a solution of the East Timor problem are needed. Hopefully Canada will be prepared to make this increased commitment."

New video exposes corporate complicity

The invasion of East Timor in 1975 marks one of the most tragic chapters of recent history. Human rights groups estimate that at least one third of the Timorese population has been killed since then.

The Canadian government and a number of prominent Canadian corporations are implicated in the horror of East Timor. Our foreign policy actively encourages business and cultural ties with Indonesia. This policy, in effect, endorses the genocide of more than 200,000 people at Indonesia's hands, the colonization of Timorese land, and the ransacking of this tiny island's rich resources.

Elaine Briere's new documentary *Bitter Paradise: The Sell-out of East Timor* tells the story of the indigenous people of East Timor and their dispossession,

while also serving as a powerful indictment of the silence - even outright complicity - of the hundreds of Canadian corporations involved in the Indonesian "investor's paradise."

Briere, a Vancouver photo-

journalist and co-founder of ETAN in 1987, was visiting East Timor shortly before it was invaded. The photos she took at that time are the last record of a peaceful country and its people.

Noted foreign policy critic Noam Chomsky is featured in *Bitter Paradise*. He quotes a Canadian diplomat who once described "The Canadian idea." "The Canadian idea," he says, "is to stand up for your ideals and find a way around them."

Bitter Paradise can be ordered from Elaine Briere at Snapshot Productions, 1657 East 55th Ave., Vancouver BC, V5P 1Z4. Cost is \$32, including GST and postage.

And remember - many of the same themes are covered in more depth in Sharon Scharfe's book *Complicity: East Timor and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Black Rose Books, 1996). It is available in bookstores or from ETAN.

Excerpts of a message from Jose Ramos Horta

Dear friends...The major turning point for the East Timor struggle came recently with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to our people through Bishop Belo and myself, marking the beginning of a new phase in our struggle. This prestigious distinction is meant as an expression of recognition of the legitimacy of our cause, and a reminder to the international community that steps need to be urgently taken to resolve the East Timor problem.

Our present challenge is to make the best use of this high mark of recognition to fulfill the hopes of the Nobel committee that the prize will assist the resolution

of the East Timor issue, bringing peace, freedom and justice to our people...I call on you to enter with renewed vigour into the new phase of our campaign for freedom, against oppression, and for the right of self-determination and independence for the people of East Timor which has just begun. I call upon governments to take note and start decisive action on the situation facing our people and our brothers and sisters in Indonesia...

Complicity continues...

Canadian investments in Indonesia have now hit \$9 billion according to Secretary of State (Asia Pacific) Raymond Chan. Canadian investments stood at \$3 billion when the Chrétien government took power; \$6 billion on the eve of the January 1996 Team Canada trade mission to Indonesia; and have now tripled since Chrétien's U-turn on human rights once he gained power.

Meanwhile, the new Canadian ambassador in Jakarta has thrown down the gauntlet to human rights advocates, saying that human rights should not be allowed to "dominate" the Canada-Indonesia relationship.

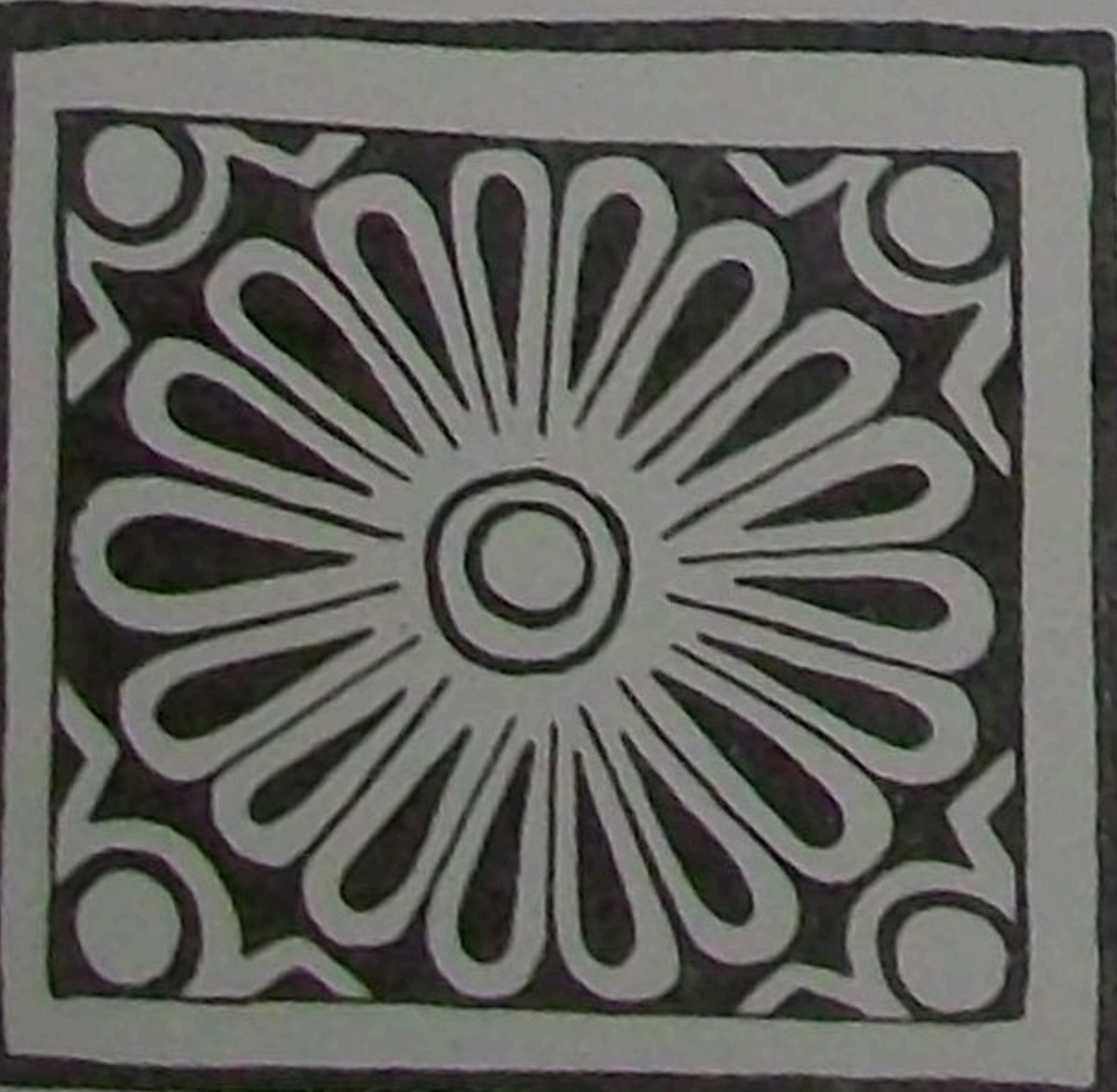
ETAN in Action

ETAN has been incredibly busy, but here are some highlights from recent months:

One thousand people took part in the first-ever East Timor Awareness Week in Vancouver, including 250 who marched on the Indonesian Consulate to lay 273 white carnations in memory of the 273 victims of the Santa Cruz massacre on November 12, 1991. The week also included a film night, benefit concert, talks by Bella Galhos, and much more. On Dec. 10 (Human Rights Day), a large group of students at Burnaby Central High School walked out of class to protest Canada's role in the East Timor genocide.

November 12 also saw a very successful lunch-hour rally of 200 people at the Indonesian Embassy in Ottawa, plus rallies and events in Toronto and elsewhere across Canada.

ETAN members met with Lloyd Axworthy's policy advisor on Asia, but we are still waiting for a reply to our February 1996 request to meet with Axworthy himself.



diplomatic solution to the conflict," Nobel Committee chair