

# EAST TIMOR UPDATE

Number 16 — October 26, 1992

*In December 1975, just ten days after declaring its independence from Portugal, the tiny southeast Asian country of East Timor was invaded by its neighbour Indonesia. In the decade-and-a-half since, 250,000 people — over a third of the indigenous Timorese population — have been killed. Genocide and massive human rights violations — everything from rape to indiscriminate killings to forced abortions — go on to this day. But so does the struggle for freedom of the East Timorese people. It is largely the support of countries like Canada that allows Indonesia to maintain its occupation.*

*East Timor Update is a monthly news service edited in Toronto by the East Timor Alert Network. Reprinting is encouraged, but please credit East Timor Update. Contact the Network for more information:*

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## Action of the Month

ETAN and the Canadian Peace Alliance are working to publish an open letter to the government of Canada as an ad in *The Globe and Mail* on November 12, the anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre, protesting against Canada's lack of action on East Timor. We hope to have the letter signed by as many people and organizations in Canada as possible. To cover the cost of the ad, we are asking for a donation of \$50 from an individual or \$100 from a group.

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to "PC Conference, United Church of Canada", attention Nellie Peng, 1955 West 6th Ave., Suite #200, Vancouver BC, V6J 1M7 (write on the cheque: For East Timor Relief). Other donations can be sent to the Canadian Peace Alliance, 225 Bloor St W, Toronto, M5S 1Y6 (write on the cheque: For East Timor). For more information, contact ETAN/Toronto or the CPA, or call (416) 533-4154 or 588-2251.



## Canadian woman confronts Suharto

In a true David-and-Goliath confrontation, Canadian East Timor activist Li-hen Gibbons denied Indonesian President General Suharto a free day on the world stage. Suharto, ruler of Indonesia since coming to power in a military coup in 1965, was the keynote speaker at the United Nations opened its 1992-93 session in New York.

Gibbons, an activist with the East Timor Alert Network in Vancouver, unfurled a banner in the public gallery and shouted "Free East Timor!" while Suharto was speaking. The disruption focused press attention on Suharto's invasion of East Timor, but went unreported in Canada (except for reports in the Portuguese-Canadian press).

Gibbons' step brother Kamal Bumadhi was one of the hundreds of unarmed people gunned down by Indonesian soldiers last November 12 at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, East Timor.

### Peace talks on track

United Nations secretary-general Boutros Ghali has resumed his responsibility, under resolution 37/30 of 1982, to work for comprehensive peace talks on East Timor between all concerned parties. On September 27, the foreign ministers of Indonesia and Portugal (still internationally recognized as the administering power of East Timor) met at the UN, and the two will meet again on December 17. Talks had been on hold since October 1991, when Indonesia refused to allow an Australian journalist to accompany a Portuguese parliamentary delegation to East Timor. The delegation was cancelled, setting off a wave of unrest that culminated in the Santa Cruz massacre.

Solidarity groups are calling for representatives of the East Timorese people to be included in the talks process, as mandated by UN resolutions. Boutros Ghali has been asked to meet with resistance leader Xanana Gusmão and Dili Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo.

### Timor tour goes to Ontario, Québec universities

ETAN held successful East Timor forums in October at six universities in southern Ontario: McMaster, Windsor, Brock, Waterloo,

York and Toronto. Events have also been held at high schools in Windsor and Oakville. Students and supporters watched "Cold Blood," the film of the Santa Cruz massacre, and heard from East Timorese refugee Barnabé Barreto Soares and others. Upcoming tour stops include Queen's (Nov. 2), Guelph (Nov. 3), Concordia (Nov. 6), Carleton (Nov. 10) and Western (Nov. 18).

### More arrests in East Timor

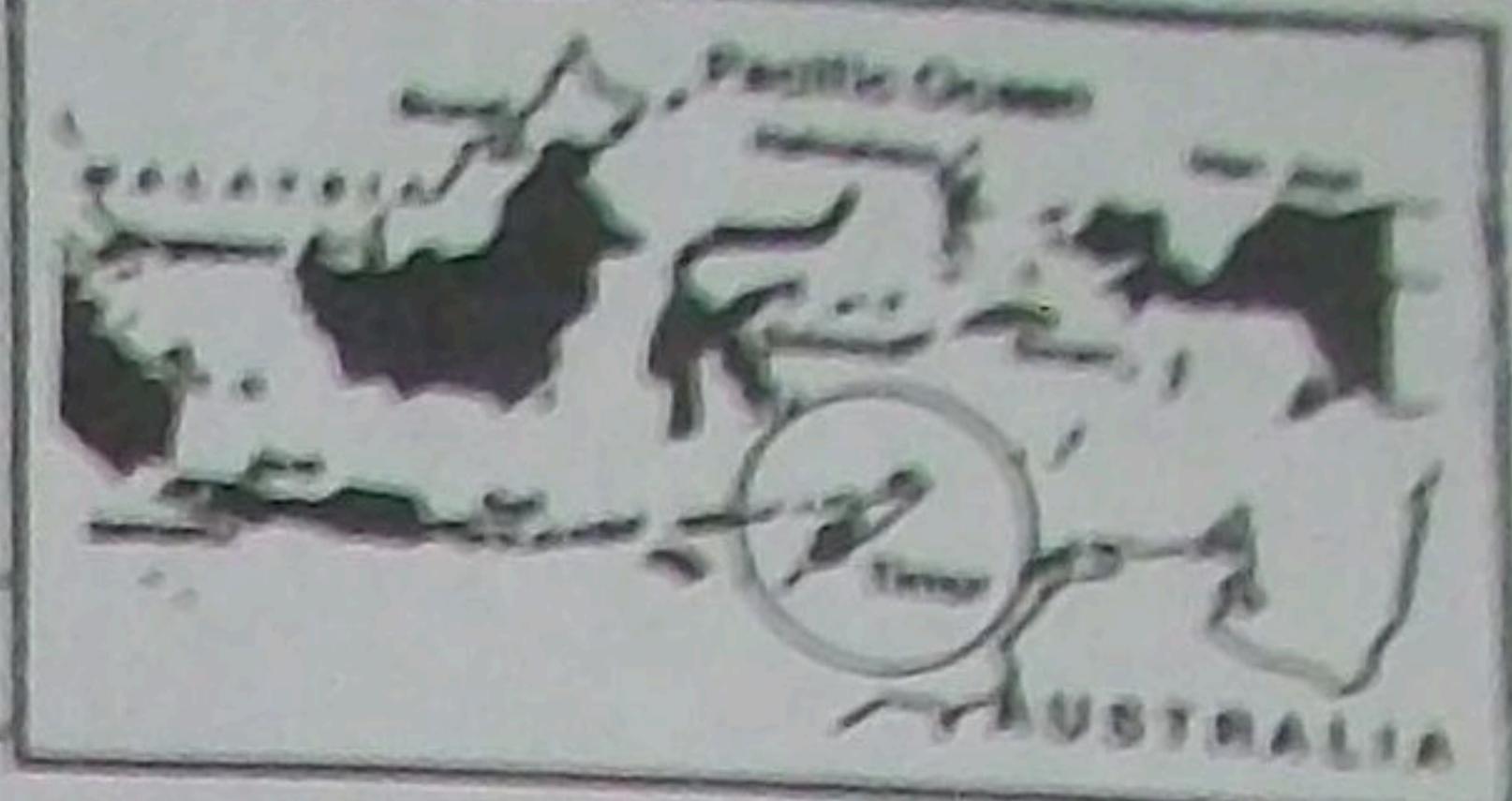
More than 100 Timorese were arrested in July, August and September, according to Timorese sources in Australia. The arrests, in Dili, Baucau and Viqueque, are said to be an effort to disrupt the communications network of the Timorese resistance.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian military is searching for eight Timorese independence activists in hiding in Indonesia. The eight witnessed the Santa Cruz massacre, and members of their families in East Timor have been arrested and interrogated. General Theo Syah, the Indonesian military commander of East Timor, has admitted that his forces are intimidating Timorese people in the weeks leading up to the massacre anniversary.

Tapai, the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign, reports that there are now at least 120 Timorese political prisoners being held in Indonesian jails, and probably many more. (There are a total of at least 600 political prisoners in Indonesia, the bulk of them East Timorese, West Papuan, or Muslim activists.)

The plight of Timorese prisoners was recently recognized by a U.S. human rights group including former President Jimmy Carter, which awarded the Reebok Human Rights Award to Fernando de Araújo, a Timorese student now serving a nine-year jail term for helping to organize a human rights demonstration in Jakarta. Before being jailed for subversion, he was chairman of the National Resistance of East Timorese Students; he has since been named an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience.

"Working in an environment of repression, intimidation and fear, de Araújo collects information on government human rights abuses, acting as an invaluable source of information for the international human rights groups," the award citation said. "He has



**November 12 • First anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre • An International Day of Action for the People of East Timor**

Protests will take place around the world on the first anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre (when Indonesian soldiers shot hundreds of Timorese civilians at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, East Timor) this November 12. In Canada, ETAN groups will be organizing commemorations at Indonesian consulates in Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa, at Guelph University, and in Montreal (times available from local contacts); and the Calgary Disarmament Coalition will demonstrate at Asamea Oil headquarters in Calgary.

### US ends military aid to Indonesia

A joint conference committee of the US Senate and House has voted to end all military aid to Indonesia in fiscal year 1993. The committee deleted \$2.3 million in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding for Indonesia from the Foreign Aid appropriations bill to protest human rights violations in East Timor. It also adopted notification and approval requirements on economic aid to Indonesia.

Charles Scheiner, coordinator of the East Timor Action Network/US, called the decision "a major victory for the people of East Timor. By resisting pressure from business interests and the Suharto and Bush administrations, Congress has sent a strong message that the ground rules have changed," Scheiner said. "This is the first time in 17 years that Congress has cut aid to Indonesia over East Timor. The American people and government have opened their eyes to Indonesian killings of the East Timorese people, 200,000 of whom have been killed since the invasion. Sanctions will continue and escalate until Indonesia stops violating East Timorese human rights and allows the people there to determine their own political future."

### Portuguese Canadian communities act for East Timor

East Timor activists in the Portuguese community in Toronto have formed the East Timor Alert Network/Toronto Portuguese Committee. The group includes members of the Portuguese Student Associations at York University and the University of Toronto, and other supporters in the community.

Portuguese communities in Vancouver, Montréal and Cambridge, Ont., are also actively working on East Timor. Portuguese and English-language petitions are available from your local ETAN contact.