

EAST TIMOR UPDATE

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Pressure mounts over East Timor's Xanana

World outrage grows over Timor, but West keeps bankrolling Indonesia

Stung by an unprecedented level of international criticism, Indonesia's President Suharto marked his country's Independence Day in July by reducing the jail term of Xanana Gusmão, the leader East Timor's pro-independence movement CNRM.

Suharto "granted clemency" by reducing Xanana's jail term from life to 20 years, according to Indonesian government statements. However, the reduction was dismissed by East Timor supporters as an almost meaningless gesture. A 20-year sentence in Indonesia is the equivalent to a life sentence in the West because of differing parole rules.

"Xanana must be released immediately and unconditionally," said CNRM overseas representative José Ramos Horta. "We will step up our campaign for his release and for comprehensive sanctions against Indonesia." Supporters of East Timor's seventeen-year resistance to Indonesian military occupation pointed out that Xanana is unlikely to last 20 years in prison because of his poor health since he was captured by Indonesian soldiers last November.

On August 12, Xanana was moved out of East Timor to Kedungpane Prison in Mijen, Semarang, without his family being informed. The move means he is even further removed from outside scrutiny.

UN, US blast Indonesia over Timor rights record

International criticism of Indonesia's brutal regime in East Timor continued to grow in August with the passage of a strongly-worded resolution by the United Nations Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and

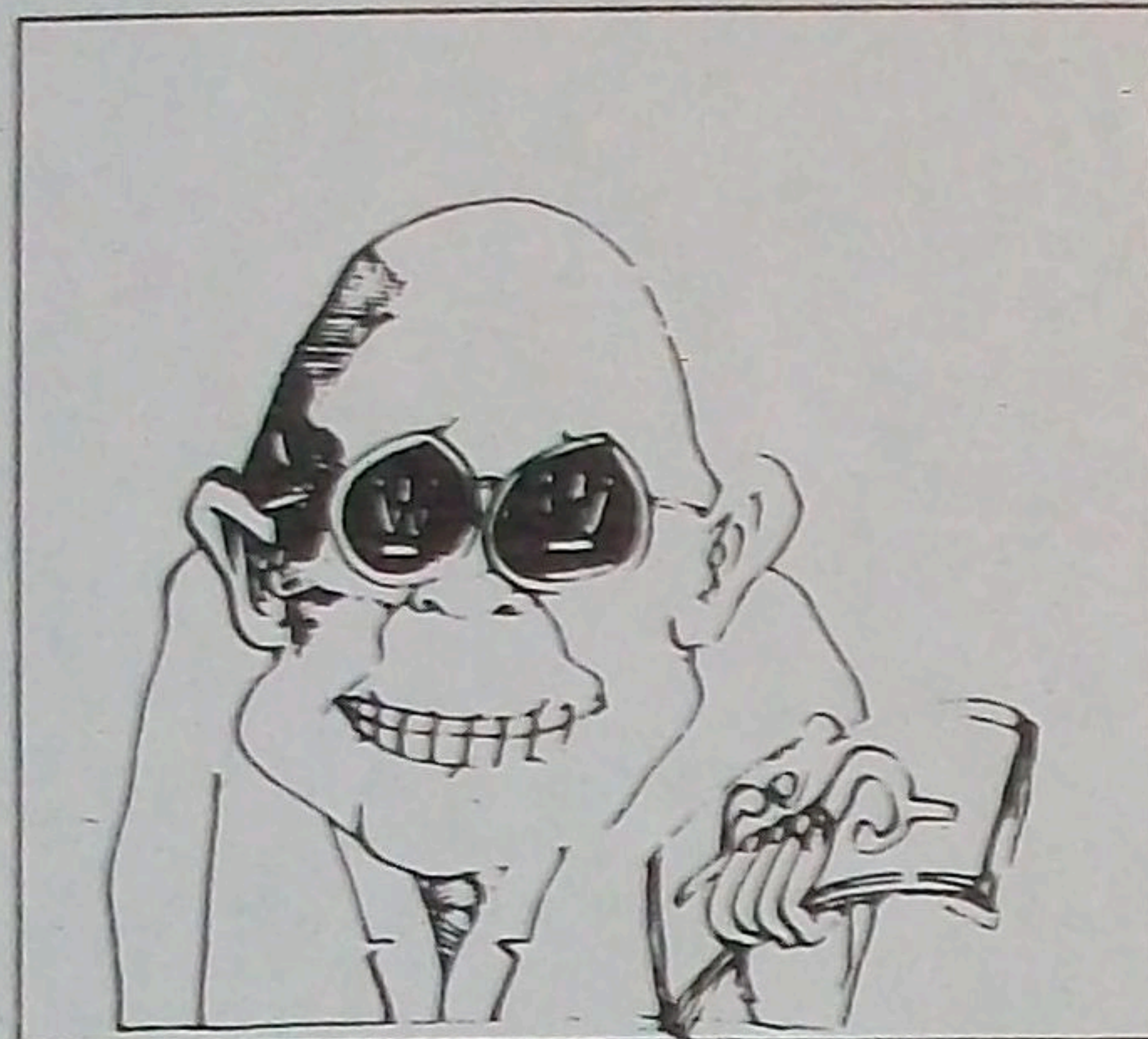
Protection of Minorities. The resolution comes just before UN secretary general Boutros Boutros Ghali is to mediate a third round of talks between the foreign ministers of Indonesia and Portugal

(the former colonial ruler of East Timor which the UN still recognizes as the administering power).

The sub-commission resolution, passed by 12 votes to 10, accuses Indonesia of violating the Geneva Convention on treatment of prisoners during wartime and urges implementation of past UN resolutions on human rights in East Timor.

The United States also continues to inch away from its formerly solid support for the Indonesian dictatorship. President Bill Clinton raised East Timor with President Suharto at a meeting in Tokyo in July, presenting a letter signed by 43 senators that condemned "the tragic situation" in East Timor and supporting self-determination for the territory. Clinton told his Indonesian counterpart that he agreed with the Senate letter.

Finally, the U.S. Congress forced the cancellation of a sale of U.S.-built military jets from Jordan to Indonesia. The Indonesian armed forces are expected to seek replacement jets from Britain, since



Congress may soon ban the sale of military equipment to Indonesia.

... but cash keeps flowing

Despite strong words on human rights, Western governments continued their policy of

giving massive financial support to the Indonesian regime at the annual donor consortium meeting in Paris in July. The Consultative Group on Indonesia authorized \$4.94 billion in aid for 1993-94. The major donors are Japan, the United States, France, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Indonesia refuses to accept aid from the Netherlands and Belgium, which have attempted to link aid to human rights.

Canada attended the CGI meeting as an observer, but accepted recommendations from the East Timor Alert Network and other groups that it not give any aid through the consortium. However, Indonesia remains number two among recipients of Canadian aid money, receiving more than \$40 million annually.

NDP MP speaks out for Timor at UN hearings

New Democrat MP Dan Heap was one of many deputants to the annual UN

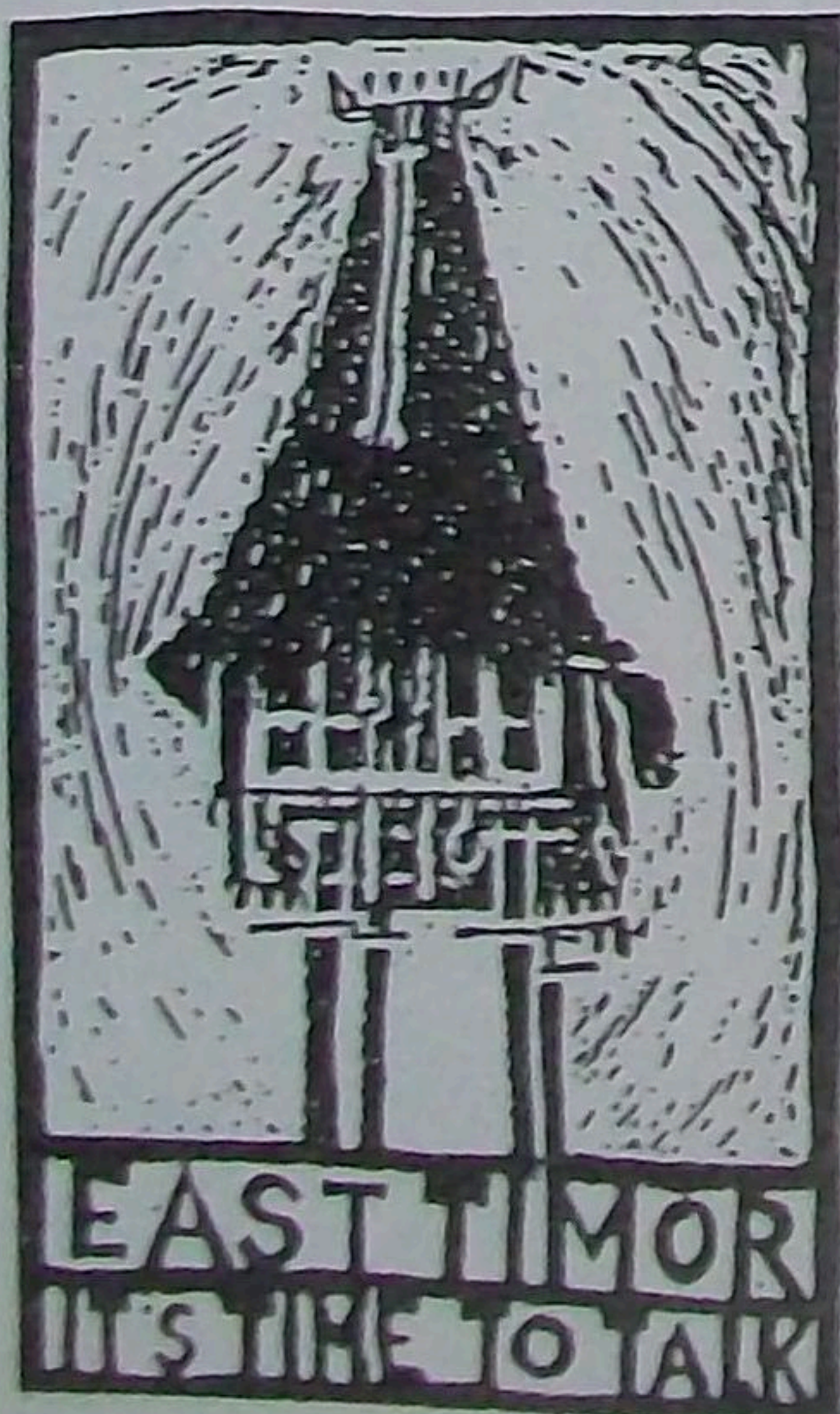
Decolonization hearings in New York in August. He spoke on behalf of the all-party group Canadians Parliamentarians for East Timor. PET has previously been represented by David Kilgour, Ray Funk, and Beryl Gaffney.

Heap, who this year tried to introduce a private member's bill that would have ended Canadian aid to Indonesia, blasted Indonesia's rule over East Timor, saying the solution could be implementing East Timor Bishop Carlos Belo's call for a referendum on independence.

"East Timor is still a colony; all that has been changed is the name of the foreign ruler," Heap said. "The colonialism being practiced by Indonesia's military-dominated regime is even more brutal than the Portuguese colonial regime that ruled East Timor before 1975."

Folk singer makes splash

East Timorese folk singer Agio Pereira performed this summer at the Vancouver and Winnipeg Folk Festivals, with a side trip to Toronto. Pereira is head of the East Timor Relief Association and has produced several recordings in English, Portuguese and Tétun (the main language of East Timor). His tape "I'm still fighting" is available from ETAN/Toronto (PO Box 562, Station P, Toronto M5S 2T1) for \$12.



Prime Minister Kim Campbell is expected to call a national election for this October. The campaign provides an opportunity to help change Canadian policy on East Timor.

Canadian government policy has been to accept the Indonesian occupation of East Timor as a "fait accompli," not worth risking our economic links with Indonesia over. Canadian governments (both Liberal and Conservative) have even voted against UN resolutions calling for self-determination. Former External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall said Canada will continue to vote against "anti-Indonesian" resolutions because it provides the "best way" to "encourage" Indonesia to respect human rights.

No party has a policy on East Timor, although individual MPs from all parties are members of Parliamentarians for East Timor. The East Timor Alert Network will therefore be raising East Timor with local candidates.

ETAN/Vancouver has already begun an intensive campaign to pressure Prime Minister

Campbell and other BC MPs. Other ETAN groups will also try to get pre-election commitments to support East Timor's struggle for self-determination.

Please ask candidates in your riding what they will do, in Parliament and within their own party, to help stop the bloodshed in East Timor. Some sample questions:

- 1) Do you support a United Nations-sponsored referendum on the question of independence for East Timor?
- 2) Would you as a member of parliament help impose an arms embargo on Indonesia?
- 3) Would you as a member of parliament call for a cutoff of bilateral aid to Indonesia and work for the cutoff of multilateral aid, as a way to force Indonesia to end its occupation of East Timor?
- 4) Would you support human rights and democratic development in East Timor by joining the all-party Parliamentarians for East Timor?

For more information and ideas, contact ETAN/Vancouver, 104-2120 West 44th, Vancouver BC, V6M 2G2, (604) 264-9973.