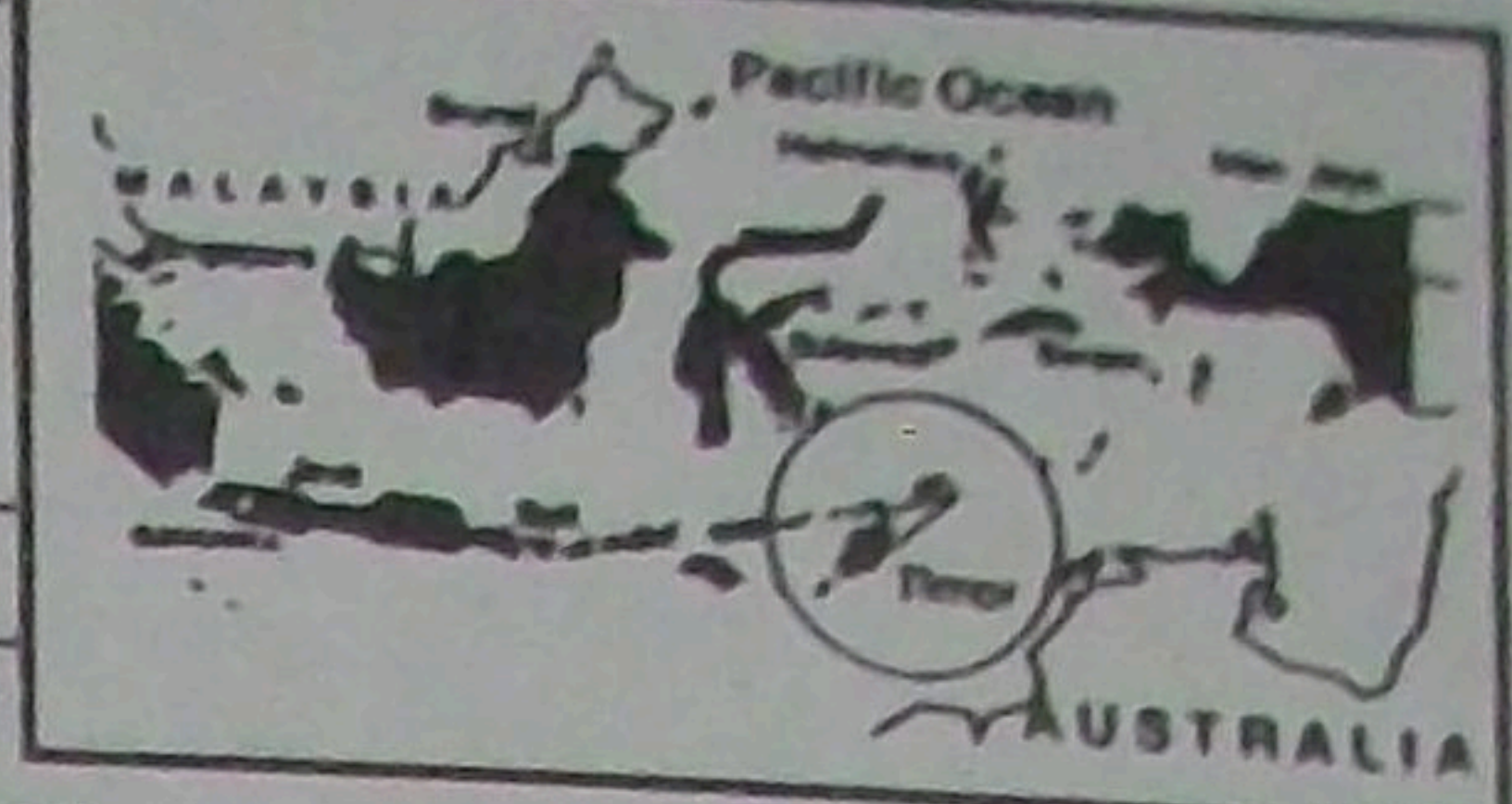


EAST TIMOR UPDATE

Number 8 — February 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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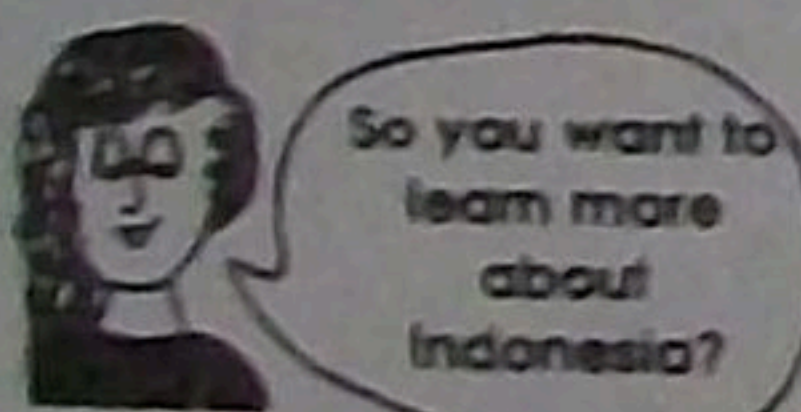
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THE
INDONESIA
KIT

An excellent new resource from ETAN! The Indonesia Kit, by Elaine Briere and Susan Gage, is designed for secondary students, college and university classes, and community groups. It's available for just \$7 (\$6 for 10 or more) from ETAN's national office in Vancouver.

Cruise, crosses highlight Timor actions

International outrage over killings in East Timor is growing fast, despite all the best efforts of Western governments, and Indonesia's lobbyists (led by US firm Hill and Knowlton, credited for fabricating evidence that encouraged the Gulf war), to bury the issue. Among the actions taken in solidarity with the people of East Timor since Indonesian soldiers massacred 200 pro-independence demonstrators last Nov. 12 in full view of Western journalists:

- A decommissioned car ferry set out from Portugal in mid-January with the aim of laying flowers at Santa Cruz cemetery, site of the massacre, next Feb. 27. The 28-year old Lusitania Expresso was brought out of retirement by a Portuguese student group, which has launched the Greenpeace-like "Peace in Timor" cruise to carry 100 activists, supporters and journalists to the former Portuguese Timor colony.

- Australia's Timorese refugee community, with support from most of the country's unions and human rights organizations, has maintained an unofficial East Timor Embassy outside the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra since November. Until the end of January, the front of the Indonesian embassy was adorned with 124 crosses, each bearing the name of a known victim of the Nov. 12 massacre. The crosses were removed by order of Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, who said the "dignity of the embassy was impaired" by the graphic reminder of killings in East Timor.

- The Free East Timor! coalition in Japan confronted U.S. President George Bush during his Asian trip over his inaction on East Timor, compared to his swift response over Kuwait, and forced the Japanese government to review its huge programme of economic aid to Indonesia.

- Videotaped scenes of the massacre were shown on a giant screen outside the European Community heads of government meeting in Maastricht, Netherlands, making the issue impossible to ignore. Portugal takes over the EC presidency this year, and has promised to put East at the top of the agenda.

- A dozen people from five states met in New York in January to found the East Timor Action Network/US, which plans to raise awareness, hold activist-oriented events and pressure the American government to help East Timor. They can be contacted at PO Box 1182, White Plains NY 10602, USA.

Guelph U. rethinks aid

The University of Guelph has agreed to an external review of its CIDA-funded aid programme on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. The Guelph programme, the largest of any Canadian university in



Indonesia, has long been under attack for supporting the Indonesian military regime. The review will be conducted by Meyer Brownstone of OXFAM Canada, Clovis Demers of the Canadian Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, and a third man yet to be named.

A group at Vancouver's Simon Fraser University, another school with major Indonesian contracts, has been formed to campaign for similar consideration of human rights questions.

Massacre survivor jailed

The show trials of some of the 37 Timorese survivors of the Nov. 12 massacre have begun. On 20 January, the first of those accused of "subversion," Filismina dos Santos Conceição, was found guilty of stealing military documents and smuggling them to the outside world. She was sentenced to seven years in prison after a one-day trial.

In a sinister twist, prosecutors are now trying to link East Timor Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo to the information-smuggling. Belo has received repeated death threats and harassment since he asked the United Nations to conduct a referendum on independence in East Timor with the words "we are dying as a people and as a nation." Supporters fear Indonesia is trying to force the Vatican to remove him.

Indonesia is also considering laying subversion charges against Father Ricardo, Vicar-General of the East Timor Diocese. More than 100 arrests were reported in the last week of January as the atmosphere in East Timor remained tense.

Journalists fired for reporting

Three journalists with the popular Indonesian weekly *Jakarta, Jakarta* have been fired after the magazine devoted much of its Jan. 4-10 issue to Timorese eyewitness accounts of the Nov. 12 massacre. The three are Seno Gumira

Ajidama, Executive Editor; Usep Hermawan, Domestic Editor; and JJ Waskito Trisnadi, Artistic Editor. The dismissals, which make a mockery of Indonesian claims to freedom of the press, were immediately condemned by the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists.

Among the testimonies published in *Jakarta, Jakarta*, a member of the regional assembly described the actions of a local army commander at the massacre: "He shot once into the air and the troops got down from the trucks. The soldiers ... immediately began to shoot at the demonstrators. They fired from a distance of about 10 metres. The shooting went on for about 5 minutes... [Then] the soldiers, who were fully dressed and carrying bayonets, got down.... Anyone who was still alive was stabbed with a knife."

Media watch

Canada should impose economic sanctions against Indonesia if its reduction of aid to Indonesia by two thirds has no effect, say three Canadian newspapers. "If Indonesia persists in its brutal treatment of the East Timorese," editorialized the *Calgary Herald*, "then Canada must be prepared to apply total economic sanctions to Indonesia ... Canada talks a good game when it comes to espousing human rights. In the case of Indonesia, it's time to put its money where its mouth is."

The *Montreal Gazette* called Canada's review of aid to Indonesia "long overdue" and added "it should also extend to Canada's commercial and trade relations with Indonesia." *Montreal's Le Devoir* agreed that the time had come to end "business as usual" with dictators such as Indonesia's General Suharto.

Dave Todd of *Southam News* (writing in the *Ottawa Citizen* and other papers) and *Toronto Star* columnist Bruce McLeod have recently published hard-hitting pieces about Canada's role in the East Timor genocide.

A package of Canadian media coverage of East Timor during 1991 will be available during February from ETAN Toronto. Please send \$10 to cover copying and postage.

Action of the Month

Write to PM Brian Mulroney and External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall, congratulating them on cutting aid to Indonesia by two thirds (\$30million) and urge them to maintain the aid cut until East Timor's right to self-determination is respected. House of Commons, Ottawa Ont., K1A 0A6 (postage free).