



East Timor Update

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A new and brutal crackdown in Timor

The Indonesian military has launched a new and brutal crackdown on the people of East Timor. The purpose: to quell resistance as the fourth anniversary of the Dili massacre and the 20th anniversary of the invasion of East Timor approach. (On Dec. 7, 1975, the Indonesian armed forces invaded East Timor. One Timorese in three has died under this illegal occupation. On Nov. 12, 1991, Indonesian soldiers gunned down hundreds of unarmed East Timorese women, men and children at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the capital of East Timor.) Indonesian forces are also primping East Timor for the long-awaited visit of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights.

In the past weeks, it has been reported that hundreds of youths have been shipped to Indonesia against their will. Homes are being randomly searched, and the Indonesian army is provoking violent disputes with the people. These disputes are then reported as "gang warfare" by the press, using Indonesian police as sources.

Conditions are getting worse by the day. Amnesty International has just received reports that on Oct. 10, Indonesian riot police swept through Dili, firing randomly into the air and terrifying residents.

"They came here shouting, 'Come outside East Timorese dogs!' I saw with my own eyes as they forced their way into my neighbour's house and took away 14 youths," one resident said.

At least 120 East Timorese young people were arrested, several were pulled from homes and loaded into trucks. At least a dozen have been seriously injured. One youth was shot in the face by an Indonesian officer. At least two are already dead. To date, the Indonesian military has refused to identify the identities of those arrested.

Despite repeated claims by the Indonesian authorities that prisoners are not tortured, 20 years of the torture, disappearance and death of thousands of East Timorese prisoners leave us in fear for their safety.

We must demand that the Canadian government act. Please, as soon as possible, phone fax or write government officials to ask that the Canadian government

immediately:

- Contact Indonesian authorities and demand information about those who are being detained, and about those who were killed;
- Call for a United Nations inquiry into these arrests and killings;
- Publicly urge the Indonesian government to respect United Nations resolutions and withdraw troops from East Timor.

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Also phone and fax the Embassy or Consulate of Indonesia to ask them to:

- Provide details to the Red Cross about the identity and whereabouts of all those detained in Dili since Oct. 10;
- Contact authorities in East Timor and pass on our concern about the safety of those detained;
- Ensure that the Red Cross has access to those imprisoned;
- Respect the United Nations resolutions, and withdraw all troops from East Timor.

H.E. Parwoto, Ambassador
Embassy of Indonesia
287 MacLaren St.
Ottawa Ont., K2P 0L9
tel (613) 236-7403
fax (613) 563-2858

Consulate of Indonesia
tel (416) 360-4020
fax (416) 360-4295



Hundreds of demonstrators gathered at the Indonesian Embassy in Ottawa on July 17, East Timor "Integration" Day, to wave the flag of independent East Timor.

Indonesia tries to play religion card

Tensions in East Timor are flaring in a new and dangerous direction, with some officials in the Indonesian government attempting to turn the occupation into a religious question. By pitting East Timor's Catholic majority against Muslims, they hope to overturn the growing opposition to the occupation among ordinary Indonesians. Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim country, but its form of Islam has never been directed against other religions. Indonesian Muslim leaders have always preached tolerance. If the regime's attempt to play the religion card succeeds, however, that could change.

On Sept. 6, an Indonesian prison official insulted East Timor's Catholic Church, home to the bulk of the Timorese. Reports of his remarks sparked a spontaneous outpouring of anger on Sept. 8.

The main targets of Timorese anger were the Buginese, migrants from the Indonesian island of Sulawesi who dominate commerce. Dili's Komoro market, home to many of the Buginese, was burned to the ground. Markets in Maliana (near the border with West Timor) and Manatuto (east of Dili) were also destroyed.

A statement from the CNRM resistance movement explained the reasons behind this outpouring of anger:

"In addition to the brutality of the Indonesian occupation army since the 1975 invasion, and the repression and ongoing violation of human rights, a recent source of grievance for the East Timorese has been the strong colonization of the territory by Indonesian transmigrants, mostly Muslim small traders and farmers. With the support of the authorities, these newcomers increasingly displace the local population from economic activity and from their land, while actively trying to impose their faith. As a result, East Timorese are becoming economically marginalized in their own land. Now, even their basic religious beliefs are coming under attack, as illustrated by the prison official's remarks. Military attacks on the Catholic Church, seen as the strongest bastion of protection of the East Timorese people against Indonesian oppression, have increased in past months. Indonesian military support for current Islamization efforts have outraged the East Timorese, creating a new battle front. A deep religious conflict is being fostered as a new dimension of conflict in the territory. The latest violence illustrates its strength."

There are now as many as 180,000 Indonesians in East Timor, out of a total population of 830,000. The Buginese are particularly resented because they control the small marketplaces once dominated by ethnic Chinese (most of whom have fled since the invasion). Along with the army, the Buginese appear as the shock troops of Indonesianization.

On Sept. 11, Amnesty International reported that between 50 and 100 Timorese youths had been arrested. Amnesty stated that it was "concerned that those detained may be tortured during interrogation ... Unconfirmed reports allege that some may have already been tortured, including with electric shocks, and the use of razor blades and salt on the skin."

East Timor's Catholic Bishop, Carlos Ximenes Belo, blamed military authorities for the riots, saying they were due to the government's failure to address growing ethnic and religious tensions. Indonesia has been carrying on an Islamization campaign against the church for several years.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 • INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY FOR EAST TIMOR

TORONTO • Gather at City Hall Peace Garden, 2 p.m. Walk to Indonesian Consulate (Jarvis & Richmond) follows. (416) 531-5850.

OTTAWA • Gather at Minto Park (Gilmour & Elgin), 1 p.m. for walk to Indonesian Embassy and Parliament Hill. (613) 742-9141.

WINDSOR • Gather at Paul Martin Federal Building (Ouellette St.), 12-2 p.m. (519) 973-1116.

For information on other cities, call ETAN at (416) 531-5850.