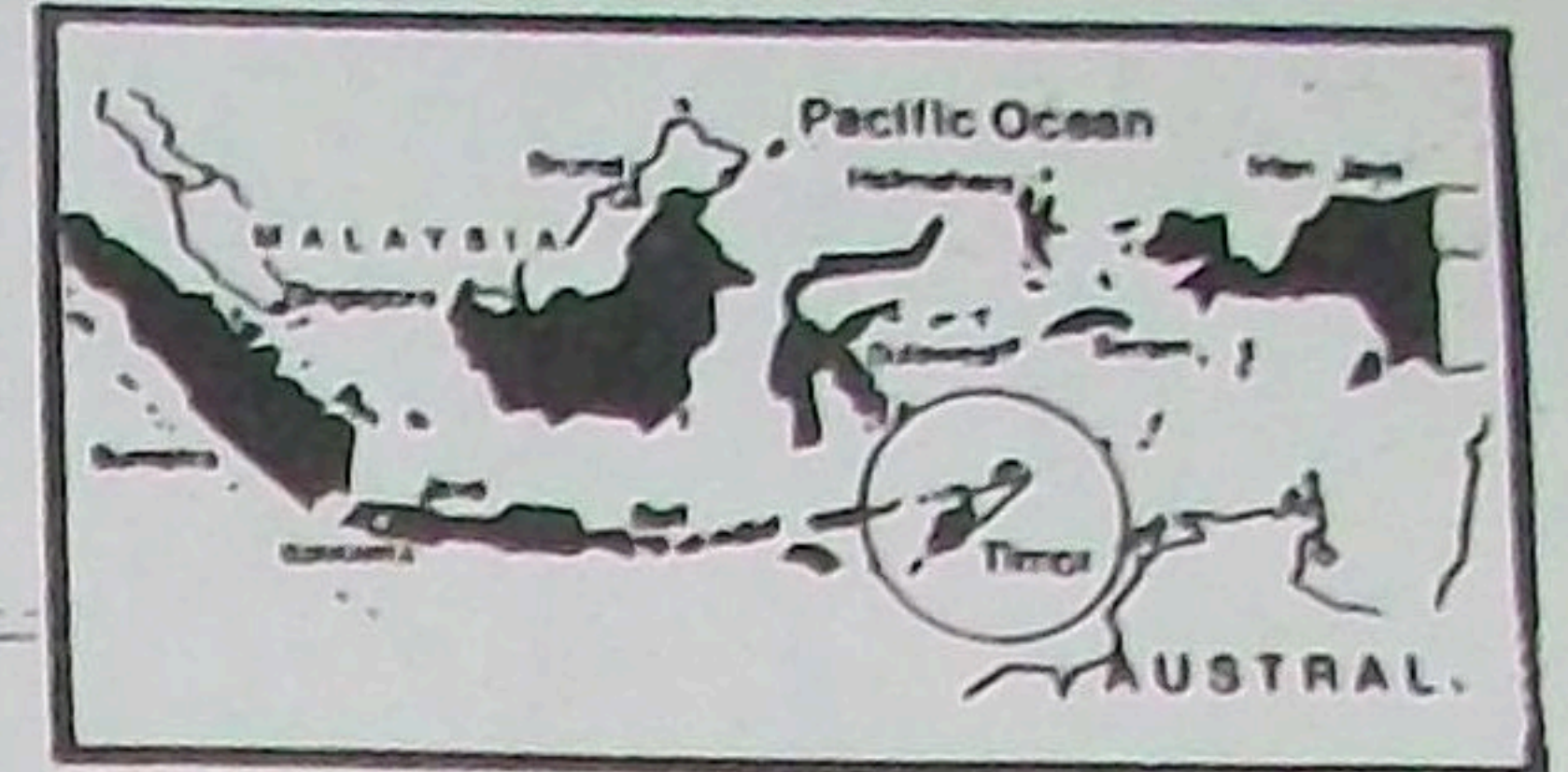


EAST TIMOR WAJAK



In December 1975, just ten days after declaring its independence from Portugal, the tiny country of East Timor was invaded by its neighbour Indonesia. In the decade-and-a-half since, an estimated 250,000 people — over a third of the population — have been killed. Genocide and massive human rights violations — including rape, forced abortions, torture, indiscriminate killings and mass executions — 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.

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UN chief speaks out on East Timor

A delegation of Parliamentarians for East Timor met United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar on March 25 to demand that the UN give the same consideration to East Timor, invaded and annexed by Indonesia in December 1975, as it has to Kuwait, invaded and annexed by Iraq in August 1990. "Recent events in the Gulf show that firm action can be taken against aggressors" a memo from Britain's Lord Avebury, leader of the delegation, said. "It is to be hoped that the principles established at a high cost in human lives and destruction of the environment in Kuwait will be applied equally to all other instances of the kind, including particularly East Timor."

Perez de Cuellar told the parliamentarians that, in his view, East Timor had the same rights to determine its own status as Namibia or the Western Sahara. Namibia became independent in 1990, while the UN hopes to resolve the situation of Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara this year.

"He said the people of East Timor had the same rights to self-determination that those other peoples have, that East Timor is just as important as those other struggles," said Australian parliamentarian Garrie Gibson. Members of parliament from Australia, Britain, the Netherlands, Japan and Portugal were part of the delegation.

The meeting was "open and promising," said Dutch MP Rob van Gijzel. Van Gijzel said Perez de Cuellar wants to be closely involved in a visit by Portuguese MPs to their former Timor colony, scheduled for June, and that the UN will try to bring about a ceasefire between Indonesian troops and pro-independence Fretilin guerrillas, at least for the duration of the visit.

The parliamentarians group called on the UN to enforce General Assembly Resolution 37/30 of 1982 and Security Council Resolution 389 of April 1976, as well as earlier resolutions calling on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor and allow self-determination and humanitarian aid to its people. (Canada abstained on these resolutions until 1980, but has voted against East Timor ever since.) Negotiations under the Secretary-General's auspices between Indonesia and Portugal must be expanded to include representatives of the East Timorese people themselves, the parliamentarians said.



EC criticizes East Timor human rights violations

The 12-country European Community intervened on behalf of East Timor at the United Nations Human Rights Commission hearings in February. The EC said it was "gravely concerned at the human rights situation prevailing in East Timor. Whilst access to certain districts continues to be prohibited, reports have reached us of arrests of short or long duration, mistreatment, torture and executions, whereas non-respect for the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression continues to be inflicted on the inhabitants of East Timor by the Indonesian forces."

Australian oil theft on

Despite a case launched by Portugal in the World Court against its illegal division of the oil riches of the Timor Gap with Indonesia, the government of Australia is pressing ahead with oil exploration in the seabed below the Gap. International law recognizes the Timor Gap as part of the territorial waters of East Timor.

Although the case is now before the court, Australian companies are being encouraged to start exploration. Prospective bidders for contract areas should start seismic surveys for oil immediately, said the Australian Energy Minister, Mr Griffiths.

Indonesian group wants E. Timor referendum

On January 14, on the eve of the Gulf war, a new Committee Against War in the Gulf made the first-ever public call in Indonesia for a referendum on independence for East Timor and Indonesian-occupied West Papua. A statement from the anti-war group read, in part: "So that such a crisis as the Gulf crisis, which in its essence stems from and is a rejection of human rights, is now repeated again, than other similar cases and problems should also be resolved. Such cases include: the case of the Palestinian people,

the East Timor people, the West Papuan people, the South African people, the Cambodian people, the Panamanian people, the Northern Ireland people, the Filipino people, and so on. These peoples should be allowed to resolve their situations through referendum."

Land seizures protested

At least 150 people of Manatuto, a town on the southern coast about 60 km from Dili, were chased by Indonesian soldiers because of a two-day religious march organized by the parish priest of nearby Hilimanu in June 1990. The march culminated in the lowering of Indonesian flags from military posts. It was called to protest the seizure of Hilimanu-area lands, which are rich in marble and sandalwood, by the wife and son-in-law of Indonesian president Suharto, Iba Tien Suharto and Prabowo.

Suharto's son-in-law Prabowo is the commander of the Indonesian 328th Battalion, which has executed many Timorese on his orders. In August 1990, reports just out say, Prabowo's soldiers threw two grenades into a group of Timorese farmworkers, causing several injuries. Events like this one contribute to what observers have described as a general atmosphere of terror in East Timor.

13-year old tortured

In the Indonesian-occupied areas of East Timor, especially Dili, teenagers and children have been waging a campaign called "Kapan Pulang," Indonesian for "when are you going home?" This campaign, in which Indonesian settlers and soldiers are asked "kapan pulang?" has been going on since early 1990. Its aim is to let them know that Timorese reject the Indonesian presence. In response, Indonesian soldiers have started to beat and arrest children. One case is that of José Ly, a 13-year old boy who was accused of using a telephone box to phone people and ask them, "kapan pulang?" He was arrested, tortured and held for four days and nights. His family had to pay a bribe of 20,000 rupiahs to get him out of jail.

East Timor Alert Network Resources

From BC address:

East Timor: A Chronology, by John Taylor \$30

West Papua: The Obliteration of a People, by Tapol \$15

From Toronto address:

East Timor and Kuwait backgrounder (NEW) \$1

Report on Torture in East Timor \$1

FUNU: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor, by Jos Ramos-Horta \$10

Also:

East Timor: Betrayed But Not Beaten, directed by Peter Monet (VHS, 32 mins) loan only

Free East Timor! buttons \$1

Other materials are also available.