

# East Timor Update

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## Death squads loosed on Timor

Gangs of hooded men in black have begun to terrorize the people of East Timor. The "ninja" gangs are implicated in attacks on civilians, abductions, and general intimidation. In early February, they were active mainly in the streets of Dili, the capital of East Timor. Later in the month, they transferred their reign of terror to the countryside and outlying towns. A Timorese member of the Indonesian parliament, Manuel Carrascalão, admitted that 5,000 farmers have fled their fields for fear of the ninjas, raising the danger of imminent famine.

According to military authorities, the ninjas are pro-independence activists. In reality, their attacks are directed against those Timorese who are working most actively for independence in Indonesian-occupied areas. It seems certain that the ninja death squads are armed and directed by military authorities. One ninja leader received personal support from Colonel Prabowo (the son-in-law of Indonesian President Suharto) after being arrested.

At the APEC summit last November in Jakarta, the Indo-

nesian capital, East Timorese seized the international spotlight with a series of high-profile demonstrations for human rights and self-determination, both in East Timor and in Jakarta. Since then, pro-independence demonstrations have been a fixture, despite the ruthless counter-attacks launched by Indonesian soldiers on unarmed crowds. Between ten and 20 civilians were murdered by soldiers in Baucau on New Year's Eve. Six may have been killed in Taibese, Dili, on Jan. 6.

Indonesia, and President Suharto personally, was embarrassed by the protests in a territory that

is supposed to be "integrated." This, the Timorese resistance believes, is the real reason for the ninja attacks.

International pressure is bringing much of this to light. In one recent incident, the army was forced to admit that it had killed six civilians in Liquiça, east of Dili, on Jan. 12. But "the Liquiça massacre is not an isolated event requiring particular attention," said the CNRM resistance umbrella. "It is merely another expression of the prevalent aggression and retaliation by (the armed forces) against the East Timorese population, which has always been per-

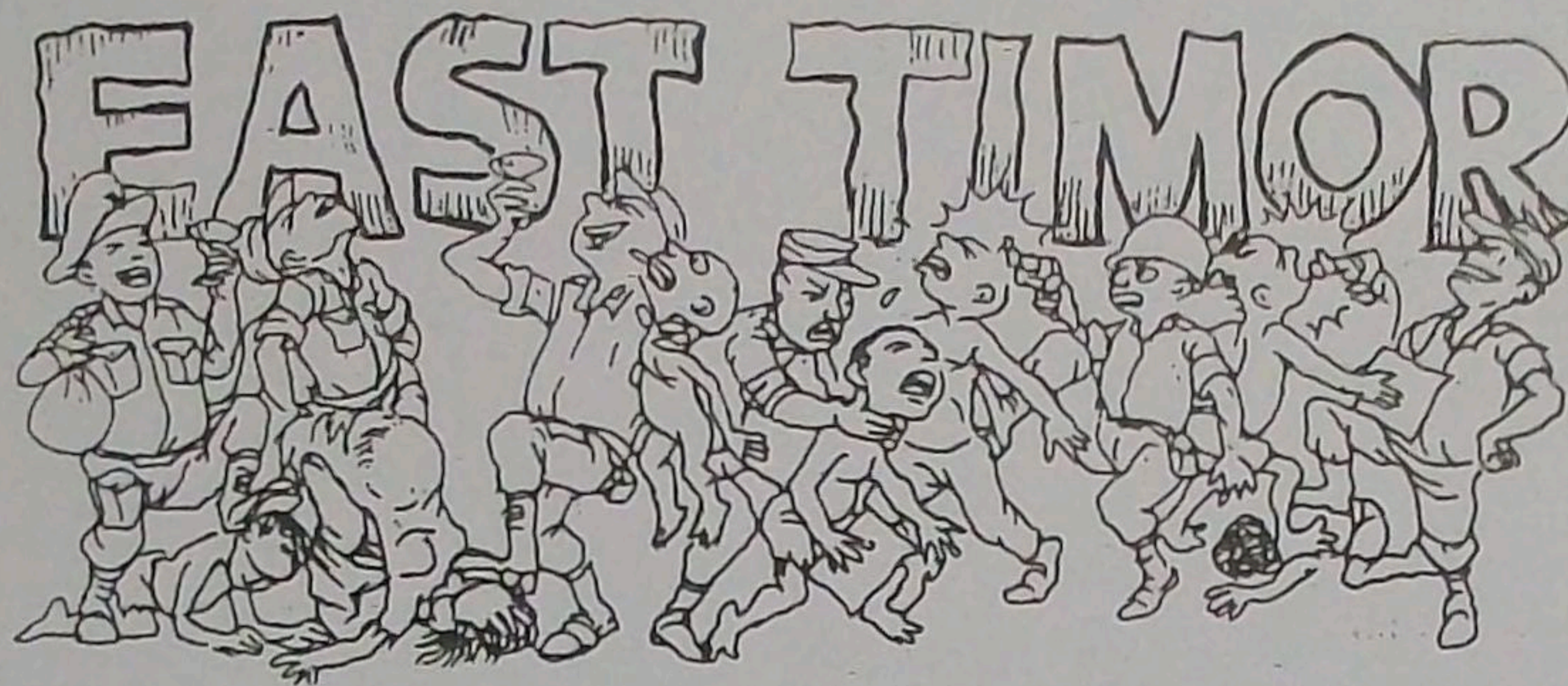
ceived by the occupying military forces as an enemy to be crushed.

"The continuously deteriorating situation in East Timor, and according to recent rumours, the possible total closure of the territory to foreigners, makes the presence of an impartial UN observer presence in East Timor a matter of extreme urgency," CNRM said.

Supporters are asked to write to the UN and their government asking for United Nations monitors to be sent in as a matter of urgency. Letters can be sent to:

André Ouellet, Minister of Foreign Affairs, House of Commons, Ottawa Ont. K1A 0A6, Fax 613-995-9926.

Please send copies to Opposition leader Lucien Bouchard at the same address (Fax 613-954-2121), to Svend Robinson MP (for Parliamentarians for East Timor, Fax 613-992-5501), to your own MP, and to ETAN. (We can also tell you who your MP is.)



Please also write to UN Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali (United Nations Plaza, New York NY, USA, Fax 212-963-4879) and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights José Ayala (UN Human Rights Centre, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, Fax 011-41-22-917-0092 or 011-41-22-917-1234). Again, copies to ETAN will help in lobbying.

### MPs speak out

On Feb. 27, Montreal MP Warren Allmand (Liberal—Notre Dame de Grace) read a statement in the House of Commons signed by more than 25 MPs representing four of the five parties in parliament. "1995 marks the 20th anniversary of the illegal occupation of East Timor by Indonesia," the statement said. "Rape, forced sterilization, forced labour, mass executions and torture are just some of the atrocities that General Suharto's regime has systematically perpetrated in East Timor."

The Parliamentarians for East Timor statement was signed, among others, by half the Bloc Québécois caucus, NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin and her entire caucus, both Conservative MPs, and several Liberals, including Allmand, Maria Minna, John English and Eugene Bellemare. The MPs asked the Canadian government to push for a strong resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights, now holding its annual meeting in Geneva.

## Women in East Timor

As in wars around the world, it is the women who have borne much of the suffering under Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor. Untold tens of thousands of women have been murdered, raped, sexually assaulted, tortured, kidnapped and forcibly sterilized since the Indonesian invasion in 1975.

There are many documented cases of women who have been forced to become local "wives" for the Indonesian military posted in East Timor. This has led to children being conceived through these imposed husbands. Other women have been raped by Indonesian soldiers in front of their families.

Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes, a former Bishop of Dili, recounts, "From 1975 the Bishop's residence was full of girls seeking refuge. In the Comarca prison were women who had all been raped and abused... We heard constantly of young girls being abused

by soldiers... They see a beautiful girl they want, then after they have used her they ignore what happens to her, like a child with a toy."

Many East Timorese women were raped and sexually assaulted while in custody, whether it was in the custody of the police or while being held in jail. Often such rapes result in pregnancy.

In East Timor the use of injections (Depo Provera) and Norplant is proportionately much greater than Indonesia. Condoms and the Pill are falling out of favour with the family planning agency (BKKBN) because the effect depends on the decision of the individual, whereas IUDs and implants which can only be inserted and removed by trained medical staff are considered effective. "Effective" is synonymous with "low user control".

The "informed consent", which is essential in any birth control program if it is not to be regarded as a human rights violation, is often not present, according to East Timorese nurses who

have observed East Timorese women being injected. The women are often not told that the injection they are being given is a contraceptive.

Given that over 200,000 East Timorese have been killed under Indonesian occupation, it is ludicrous for the Indonesian government to suggest there is an over-population problem in East Timor. In fact, the genocidal policies of Indonesia have been so effective that in 1989 the United Nations awarded the UN Population Award to President Suharto.

This March, East Timorese refugee Isabel Galhos will tour Canada to talk about the situation of women in East Timor, as ETAN's contribution to International Women's Day. She will speak in Winnipeg, Guelph, Ottawa (March 18, as part of ETAN's national conference), Montreal, Toronto (March 23), Windsor and other cities. (Events have already been held in B.C. and Calgary). For details, call ETAN at (416) 531-5850.

## ETAN National Conference

March 18-19, Ottawa

March 23

Isabel Galhos speaks on Women in East Timor, in Toronto (Location TBA • dates also planned in other cities)

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