

1977



# FRETILIN RETAKE TWO TOWNS

COVILHAS, April 12 (UPI) — FRETILIN forces have retaken two towns in the north of Timor, the rebels announced today. The towns are Covilhas and Maucada, which are about 100 miles from the capital, Dili.

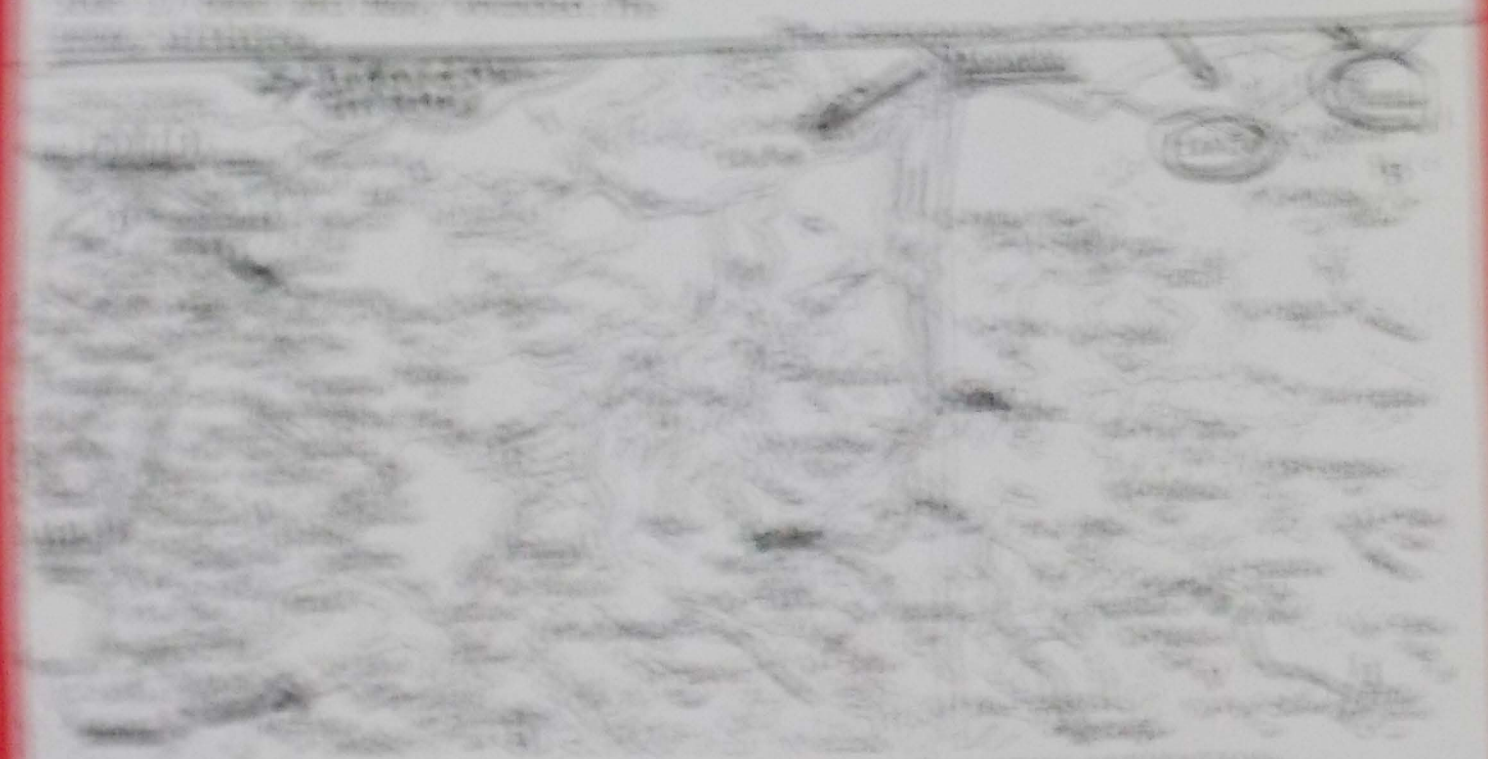
FRETILIN also announced that it had retaken the towns of Maucada and Covilhas on March 12, after a three-day battle. The rebels said they had killed 100 soldiers.

They also said they had killed 100 soldiers and 100 civilians. The rebels said they had killed 100 soldiers and 100 civilians. The rebels said they had killed 100 soldiers and 100 civilians.

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THE TOWN OF COVILHAS WAS RETAKEN BY FRETILIN FORCES.

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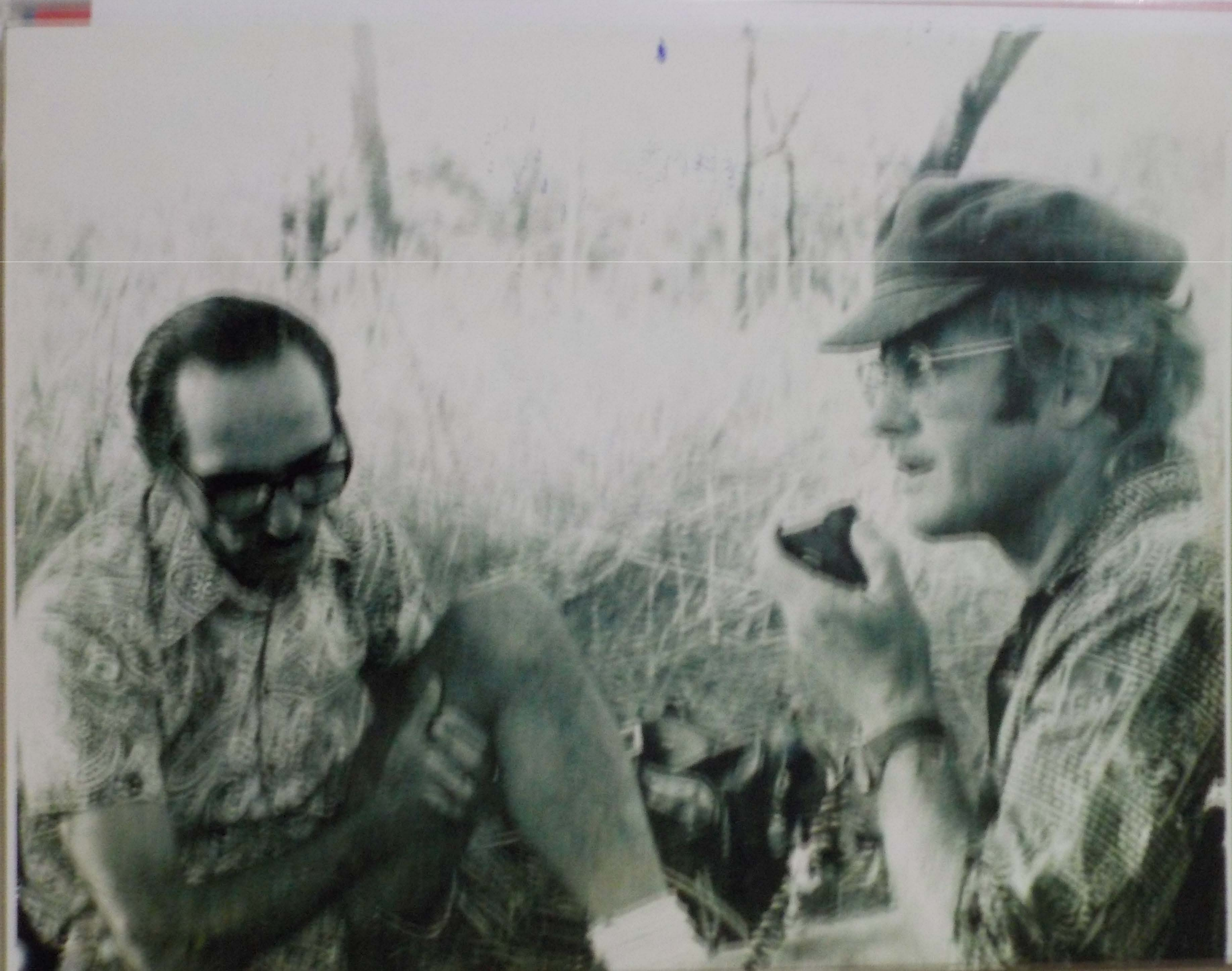
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1977 Darwin, Australia: Laurence Pigeon & Rob Wesley/Smith, Pacific Mammals  
(Photo Brian Manning)





# OFFENSIVE FAILS

East Timor News  
No. 3 March 28,  
1977

**အထွေထွေ အချက်:** မြန်မာ အစိုးရက အာရှတိုက်တွင် အာဏာကို အကျိုးပြုနေသော အချက်များကို အကျဉ်းချုပ် ဖော်ပြသည်။

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# INSIDE OCCUPIED

## DILI

East Timor  
News  
No. 3  
March 29,  
1977

General Wicak, commander of Indonesian forces in East Timor, was quoted as saying "Indonesian forces in East Timor are not engaged in a military operation, but in a political operation."

General Wicak told visiting Indonesian officials in the last part of the article, a former leader of the Timor Revolutionary Front (FRETILIN) who is now in the United States, that it would take at least 10 years to achieve "peace" in East Timor.

The article is one of the 1977 East Timor News, which is a weekly publication in East Timor. It is a publication of the Indonesian government.

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While he was in Dili, the article said that a former leader of the Timor Revolutionary Front (FRETILIN) who is now in the United States, that it would take at least 10 years to achieve "peace" in East Timor.

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No. 2 March 24, 1977



# EAST TIMOR NEWS

BULLETIN OF THE EAST TIMOR NEWS AGENCY

CONTACT ADDRESS FOR EAST TIMOR  
NEWS AGENCY: 205 CARLISLE STREET,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2009

ADDRESS OF CORRESPONDENTS:  
TIMOR: 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004,  
1005 CARLISLE STREET,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2009

ADDRESS OF EAST TIMOR NEWS AGENCY:  
1001, 1002, 1003, 1004,  
1005 CARLISLE STREET,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2009

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## MEMBERSHIP

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# ACTION FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT

ORGANISED BY THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH OF PEACE AND THE AFRICAN STUDENT CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

The following report, prepared for Action for World Development, gives a detailed account of the attempts made to reunite East Timorese families separated by a civil war in, and an Indonesian Government invasion of East Timor in 1975.

The report can be summarised as follows:

## SUMMARY

East Timorese in Australia have sought, since 1976, to be reunited in Australia, with their family members still in East Timor.

Despite an urgent deadline for nominations of people to come to Australia (April 22nd, 1977), still no reunions have occurred.

People in East Timor who were nominated to come from East Timor, heard nothing about the process of family reunions from Indonesian officials until February 1978. Now, they have been asked, among other things, to sign blank sheets of paper which they fear will be used to prevent their exit from East Timor. Most believe the Indonesian Government will not permit them to leave East Timor.

There is considerable evidence that the Indonesian Government has been "stalling" the process of family reunions. Recent information from Indonesian Government sources implies that East Timorese in Australia will go back to East Timor rather than Timorese coming to Australia - a thought rejected by almost all Timorese involved.

The most recent statement from the Australian Government gives no grounds for optimism that the process of family reunification will actually take place.

After reading this report, one is, I believe, entitled to ask the following questions:

1. Is the Indonesian Government honestly prepared to allow East Timorese to freely leave East Timor?
2. Given that the Australian Government actually announced its de facto recognition of Indonesia's incorporation; that it is no longer pursuing requests to the Indonesian Government to allow I.C.R.C. (International Red Cross) into East Timor (Hansard, Senate, 9/10th June 1978, p. 2801); and regards "the future progress of family reunion (as an) important ingredient in a practical contribution to the peace of the area", (Andrew Peacock's January 20th, 1977 statement announcing Australian de facto recognition of Indonesian control of East Timor), how much longer is the Australian Government prepared to wait, without criticism, for the Indonesian Government to allow people to leave East Timor?



3. Given that a situation of war persists in East Timor, will the Australian Government consider people wishing to leave East Timor as refugees and facilitate their passage from East Timor?
4. Given the inaction of the Indonesian Government, and indeed, reports of questionable activity by Indonesian authorities in Dili in relation to family reunion nominees, will the Australian Government push for a neutral body to process the family reunions - e.g., U.N.H.C.R. or I.C.R.C.?

Either the Australian Government has been playing games with the lives of these refugee people, or the Indonesian Government has been feeding the Australian Government misleading information. Whichever the case, the situation must change, and the Australian people deserve an explanation immediately, regarding the reasons why our Government has acted or not acted as it has, whichever the case may be. More importantly though, the Australian Government must now act to ensure that the people in East Timor who wish to be reunited with their families who have settled in Australia, are able to do so. If the Indonesian Government is at fault for obstructing this humanitarian process, then Australia must call for assistance from the appropriate international organizations, e.g. the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and/or the International Red Cross.

After three years of separation from their families, the Timorese cannot be expected to accept vague statements like those issued in the past by Australian and Indonesian Immigration officials.

*William J. Armstrong*  
National Co-ordinator



# EAST TIMOR: REFUGEES AND FAMILY REUNION

## RELATÓRIO KONA BA REFUGIADOS SIRA NOSI TIMOR DIA PORTUGAL

Iha relatóriu makmenen sira 1990. Berek mak mena heko iha kondisaun ne ebe lori sira ba depresion. Sei haka oportunidade atu helan servisu mabe sira nunka heko o kela.

## KONKLUSAUN haka rona relatóriu ne sira seluk kona ba afluosoun iha Timor

relatóriu kona ba afluosoun baxi baxi Indonesia ba Timor. pasese kerek sei ona kimen baxi ba ne ebe baxi dielun unan iha munda sira douroun



# CONTENTS:

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR .....	1
THE ORIGINS OF EAST TIMORESE REFUGEES .....	1
FAMILY REUNIFICATION .....	
-THE CONTEXT .....	2
-FIRST ATTEMPTS AT REUNIFICATION .....	3
-AUSTRALIAN/INDONESIAN NEGOTIATIONS ON REUNIONS .....	3
-MAY 1977 - MAY 1978: NO PROGRESS .....	5
-RECENT DEVELOPMENTS .....	6
SOURCES AND FOOTNOTES .....	9
APPENDICES .....	
1. MAP OF EAST TIMOR .....	12
2. RECENT LETTER FROM EAST TIMOR .....	13
3. AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY ON EAST TIMORESE ENTRY INTO AUSTRALIA .....	14

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# THE CURRENT SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR

The war continues in East Timor. Frequent radio messages from SUHARTO in East Timor continue to describe a war of armed resistance to the presence of Indonesian troops in East Timor (1). The content of these messages is broadly confirmed by an increasing stream of letters and reports coming from East Timorese and Indonesian individuals and organizations (2). These sources, many of them not pro-SUHARTO, describe widespread food and medical shortages, brutal treatment at the hands of Indonesian military personnel, limited Indonesian control of East Timor and continued armed resistance to the Indonesian military presence.

(Appendix 2 of this report is a typical example of recent letters from East Timor.)

## EAST TIMOR'S ISOLATION :

Since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on December 7, 1975, East Timor has been effectively closed to independent observers (3). International relief agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (I.C.R.C.) have not been permitted by the Indonesian government to resume activities in the territory (4). (I.C.R.C. and various Australian aid agencies moved freely in East Timor during the brief period of SUHARTO administration - September to December 1975. They left East Timor just prior to the Indonesian invasion after failing to receive assurances of safety for aid personnel from the Indonesian government (5).

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## THE ORIGINS OF TIMORESE REFUGEES

The UNT-led coup-attempt in Dili on August 10-11, 1975 and the ensuing month-long civil war in the country saw considerable numbers of people leave East Timor (6):-

TO AUSTRALIA - 2,581 people were evacuated to Australia during August/November, 1975. The majority of these people left East Timor when the civil war was at its height. Some numbers of these people were Portuguese officials and their families and they went on to Portugal.

1850 East Timorese decided to remain in Australia and almost all of them now have permanent residence status. They live in various parts of Australia - in particular, Sydney, Darwin, Melbourne and Perth (7).

TO WEST (INDONESIAN) TIMOR - some 20,000 people crossed the border at a number of points, passing into West Timor during the civil war. They were housed in makeshift camps at various places along the border. A large number of these people were located near Atambua, the major administrative centre for the border area of West Timor (8).

In mid-1976, considerable numbers of these people were transported across the border into Indonesian-controlled areas of East Timor - in particular, Bobonaro and Balibo; some people were taken to Dili, including some former UNT leaders who were to become part of the Indonesian-created "Provincial government." (9). Some people went to Dili with the promise from Indonesian officials that they would be the first to be permitted to leave East Timor (10). In mid-1977, there were still some 3,000 refugees at one border point (11).

TO PORTUGAL: - In 1976, 1392 of the refugees in West Timor were flown to Portugal during September/October. This followed "unofficial" negotiations between Indonesian and Portuguese officials in mid-1976. Many of these people had earlier attempted to get permission to go to Australia but had failed. Intimidation and rumours of mistreatment by Indonesian authorities caused large numbers of people to either withdraw their application to leave West Timor or make no application



at all. Those who were flown to Portugal, were only able to do so after being issued with Portuguese passports by the Dutch ambassador to Indonesia who acted as intermediary (Portugal broke off diplomatic relations with Indonesia after the 1975 invasion of East Timor) (12).

OTHER: - During the 1975 civil war, unknown numbers of people, in particular, those of Chinese origin, reached other countries such as Macao and Taiwan via Indonesia.

COMMENT: A general feature of the movement of these people from East Timor in 1975 and 1976 is that it occurred in a time of confusion and conflict. It resulted, in many cases, in the spreading of single families to such varied places as Portugal, Australia, East Timor, Macao and Taiwan.

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## FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION

Almost since they arrived in Australia, East Timorese here have sought to be re-united with members of their families still in East Timor or those now in Portugal, Macao, Taiwan and elsewhere.

This report covers the issue of family reunion between people in Australia and East Timor.

### THE CONTEXT:

Any consideration of the problem of family reunification must take the following points into consideration:-

- WAR CONTINUES IN EAST TIMOR - see previous page on the current situation in East Timor. The situation in East Timor is not 'settled' or 'back to normal' as recent reports from Indonesian government sources would suggest (13).

- PEOPLE IN EAST TIMOR ADVISE THEIR RELATIVES 'NEVER TO RETURN' TO TIMOR

- Below are some excerpts from recent letters sent from East Timor. Many such letters have been received by Timorese outside East Timor.

1. "Tell my son that for nothing on this earth should he return to Timor. As soon as I possibly can, I shall leave here; but I would rather die without seeing him again than to know that he had returned to this hell." (14)

2. "...Like myself and ... (names) ..., we prefer to suffer here alone, all our lives, and separated from our relatives, rather than take from them the happy prosperity they are having in Australia." (15)

- FEW PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA WISH TO RETURN TO EAST TIMOR - Of the 1850

Timorese in Australia, there may be fewer than 10 who wish to return to East Timor and almost all of them are aged people. (16) A report in the Indonesian Embassy Newsletter (Canberra) that 2,500 Timorese in Australia wish to return 'to Indonesia' is completely false. (17)

- CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WANT TO LEAVE EAST TIMOR - There are no official figures on how many people wish to leave East Timor but the following information provides some clues:-

- East Timorese in Australia have nominated 2,668 people they would like to be permitted to leave East Timor.



- A senior Portuguese official reported that an important Indonesian General (Benny Murdani) informed him in January 1977 that 7,000 Timorese would be permitted to leave East Timor that year. (18)
- In late 1976, an Indonesian Church report claimed that as many as 20,000 people had registered to leave East Timor. (19)

Whatever the figure is now, it is certain that considerable numbers of people wish to leave East Timor.

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## FIRST ATTEMPTS AT RE-UNIFICATION

According to one source, in late 1975/early 1976, some Timorese in Australia were issued with authority forms from the Australian Immigration Department which would permit family members in Timor to come to Australia without being subject to normal migration requirements.

These authority forms were valid until June 1976. They were sent by the Timorese in Australia to their relatives in Atambua (West Timor) and Dili who then presented them to Indonesian officials. In Atambua, after failing to get any response from Indonesian authorities, some Timorese attempted to contact the Australian embassy in Jakarta by mail or to get to Jakarta and present themselves. These attempts failed.

In Australia, hearing of the failures at the Timor end, Timorese here attempted to have the June 30 deadline extended. They were not able to achieve this. (20)

## AUSTRALIAN/INDONESIAN NEGOTIATIONS ON RE-UNIFICATION

OCTOBER 1976: Whilst Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser was in Jakarta in October, 1976, the issue of separated Timorese families was discussed. The 21-point communique on the Jakarta talks included a vague reference to family reunification:-

The Prime Minister noted that another aspect of the human suffering caused by the conflict had been the plight of the refugees who had gone to Australia without their families. The President and the Prime Minister agreed that officials of their two countries would be meeting to resolve the problems of these refugees. (21)

Following this statement, the issue of separated families was discussed between Australian and Indonesian officials on at least eleven occasions in the period 7 November 1976 to 29 March, 1977. (22)

### MARCH 30, 1977 - MacKellar Statement on Family Reunification

Below is the complete text of Australia's Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs' statement on family reunification. The 'in principle' agreement between the Australian and Indonesian governments, eligibility criteria for entry to Australia and the short time given to Timorese in Australia to nominate relatives they wish to bring to Australia are marked:-

(Text reproduced on next page)



## REUNION OF EAST TIMORESE FAMILIES

## Ministerial Statement

Mr MacKELLAR (Warrington—Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs)—by leave—I wish to inform the House that agreement has been reached with the Indonesian Government concerning arrangements for the reunion of East Timorese in Australia and their close relatives from Timor. In a joint communique issued at the conclusion of the visit to Indonesia in October 1976, the Prime Minister and President Soeharto announced that they had agreed that Australian and Indonesian officials should meet to resolve the problems of the East Timorese exiles who came to Australia without their families. Following discussions in Jakarta, the Indonesian Government has agreed, in principle, to a visit to East Timor by a team of Australian officials to interview Timorese who are eligible for entry and have been nominated by relatives in Australia. The Australian Government has agreed in principle to a visit to Australia by an Indonesian team to consider applications by any Timorese who wish to be reunited in East Timor with their families. The Australian Government has very much in mind the distress occasioned by the separation of families and arrangements are proceeding for the visit to East Timor to take place as early as circumstances permit.

Any Australian immigration action in East Timor requires the co-operation of Indonesian authorities to locate and assemble nominees for migration procedures. It is necessary, therefore, to provide relevant details of nominees to the Indonesian authorities. The information will be provided to the Indonesian authorities only with the agreement of the sponsors. The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is compiling a list of sponsored nominees acceptable under family reunion policy. The acceptable categories are:

spouses, minor dependent children and parents of Australian residents,  
relatives who have employment skills and experience recognised and in demand in Australia.

It is necessary to set a closing date for receipt of nominations so that the operation can proceed as quickly as possible. Nominations received by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs up to close of business on 22 April 1977 will be considered in this operation.

The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is seeking from sponsors details of the disposition of their families so that all relevant factors may be considered in assessing the eligibility of their nominees for entry to Australia. In accordance with normal immigration procedures, this information is for internal departmental use only and is being obtained on a form used, where required, in cases involving family reunion.

## NOMINATIONS RECEIVED

East Timorese responded to the MacKellar statement by nominating 2,668 relatives they wished to be permitted to enter Australia from East Timor.

2538 REPRESENTATIVES 2 June 1977

## Immigration: Residents of East Timor

(Question No. 689)

Mr E. C. Whitlam asked the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, upon notice, on 26 April 1977:

How many nominations of persons in East Timor had been received in each of the eligible categories by the closing date, 22 April 1977, under the special arrangements he announced on 30 March 1977 (Hansard, page 758)?

Mr MacKellar—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

All nominations have been received covering 2668 persons said to be residents of East Timor. They were described by their sponsors as being within the categories eligible to be considered for migrant entry to Australia.

The nominations are within the following categories:

Spouses and dependent children: 96 nominations	164 persons
Parents and their families: 309 nominations	1 236 persons
Relatives stated to have employment skills and experience recognised and in demand in Australia: 206 nominations	941 persons
Finances and funds: 6 nominations	6 persons
Cases in which special consideration has been sought on humanitarian grounds: 84 nominations	121 persons

The numbers eligible to be considered by the immigration team will not be known pending completion of a detailed examination of the nominations which is presently in progress. On the basis of available information, it is likely that very few of those nominated on the basis of their occupations being in demand in Australia will in fact have qualifications and/or experience recognised in Australia.

It would appear that a significant number of the families of parents nominated are not dependent members of the parents' families.

Note those categories of people regarded by the government as likely to be eligible. It becomes clear from this that the Australian government is treating the case of East Timorese wishing to come to Australia as a 'migration' exercise rather than a 'refugee' situation. For more details on this aspect, see Appendix 3 on page 14 of this report.

## CRITICISMS OF THE REUNIFICATION ARRANGEMENTS:

Complaints were made to Mr MacKellar concerning the time limit for nominations and fears were expressed that detailed information about people in East Timor given to the Australian government by relatives in Australia, might be misused. Timorese here felt that if that information was given to Indonesian authorities in East Timor, those people may be mistreated.

Following his March 30 statement, Mr MacKellar was asked why there had to be such a short time for nominations to be made:—

(see over page)..



Mr. MacKellar replied:-

Mr MacKellar—I will tell you why there has to be a time on it. We have to send a team to Dili, and we need the names of the people before we send the team there. We cannot keep the team there indefinitely.

(23)

Proposals that an international welfare organisation such as I.C.R.C. be invited to supervise the family reunification program (24) and that a member of the Timorese community in Australia go to East Timor with the Australian immigration team to act as interpreter and ensure that information provided to Indonesian authorities was not misused (25) were rejected by the Australian government on the grounds that these proposals would jeopardise the Australia-Indonesia agreement on family reunions. (26)

## MAY 1977 - MAY 1978: NOTHING HAPPENS.

One year after the April 22, 1977 deadline for nominations, still no Australian team had been to East Timor; no families had been reunited. This is despite frequent reports during that period that the team's visit to East Timor was 'imminent'.

Below are some examples of reports on the immigration team during that period:

MAY 1977

### Timor team set to go

A SPECIAL immigration team is preparing to leave for East Timor to process applications by refugees for entry into Australia.

The team will include a senior medical officer.

No date has been set for the team's departure, but it is understood the Federal Government is anxious to have the applications processed and the refugees brought to Australia as soon as possible.

Reports yesterday said that up to 2000 refugees would be brought to Australia, but this had not been confirmed last night.

Negotiations are continuing between the In-

donesian and Australian Governments on the arrangements.

The Departments of Foreign Affairs and Immigration are treading carefully to avoid any problems with the Indonesian Government.

Of the 2581 East Timorese evacuees who arrived in Australia between August and September 1975, 1776 have stayed.

They were advised they could nominate relatives to come to Australia and the application date expired on April 22.

Sun (morib.) 9.5.1977

JULY 1977

An Australian aid organisation representative met with Immigration officials in Canberra -

*"With regard to the situation in East Timor, we were advised that negotiations with the Indonesian government about the visit of an Immigration team to East Timor have now reached an advanced stage, and is in fact, 'reasonably imminent'."* (27)

MARCH 1978

## Migrant team to visit Timor

CANBERRA — An Australian immigration team is likely to visit East Timor within a few months to interview Timorese who want to live in Australia.

The Indonesian Government has told the Foreign Affairs Department that final arrangements for the visit will be discussed after Indonesia's presidential elections later this month.

A total of 2000 East Timorese have been nominated to migrate here by relatives already living in Australia.

The Timorese families have been waiting for action on their requests since the end of April last year when nominations closed at the Immigration Department in Canberra.

The delay in processing the applications has been linked with Indonesia's displeasure at previous Australian Government policy on Timor.

But this attitude appears to have changed after Australia's announcement in late January that it would grant de facto recognition to Indonesia's takeover of the former Portuguese colony.

The Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Peacock, said yesterday the humanitarian problem of the family reunions was one of the Government's two main concerns on the Timor issue.

The other was the Government's disapproval of the Indonesian invasion — although it recognised that it was the vacuum left by Portugal's withdrawal which had led to the civil war in East Timor.

Mr. Peacock was addressing IPI delegates.

Age 7.3.1978



## WHY THE DELAYS?

The Australian government has never made a clear statement on the reason for the delays. The following excerpt of a letter from a senior Immigration official (November 1977) provides a clue to the delays:-

*"The Australian government has been negotiating through the Australian Embassy in Jakarta with the Indonesian government for most of this year about arrangements for the exchange of immigration forms to enable the re-union of families in Australia and Timor."*

*"The Australian team will be sent to East Timor as soon as the Indonesian authorities agree but attempts to obtain answers have so far been unsuccessful, and no indication can be given as to when the matter is likely to be resolved." (emphasis added) (28)*

## WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING INSIDE EAST TIMOR?

People in East Timor have received very little direct knowledge on what has happened in regard to reunification with their families in Australia. Information received from East Timor indicates that much of what they do know, is derived from unofficial 'hearsay' and news broadcasts on Radio Australia (29).

There is evidence to suggest that East Timorese in Dili wishing to come to Australia for family reunion, were not approached at any time during 1977. (30)

According to information from East Timor, people wishing to come to Australia were first 'interviewed' by Indonesian officials in February 1978. Reportedly, people approached were obliged to provide signed copies of their passports/I.D.cards/citizenship papers to the Indonesian authorities and were instructed to sign 4 blank sheets of paper. It was reported that people feared these signed sheets would be used to their disadvantage - perhaps, for instance, statements saying they did not wish to leave East Timor would be written over the signatures. (31)

Except for a flare of optimism among people in East Timor following Opposition Leader Bill Hayden's visit to Jakarta (when press reports indicated that up to 600 people would be permitted to be re-united with their families in Australia), the most recent letters from East Timor (July/August) indicate that few believe anyone will be permitted to leave East Timor. (32)

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The most recent information from Indonesian and Australian government sources does not clearly indicate that the process of family re-unification will actually take place.

- In June, The Indonesian Embassy in Canberra published the following item in its regular newsletter:-

### 8. REPATRIATION OF EAST TIMORESE FROM AUSTRALIA

*"A team from the Australian Government will arrive in Indonesia in mid-July for talks on the repatriation of East Timorese families now living in Australia."*

*"Foreign Minister Nuchiar Rusemendaja told the Press this after reporting to President Soekarto on his plan to attend the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, from June 14 to 16."*

*(Text of item continued over page)*



"The Minister said the issue of the repatriation of the East Timorese should be settled soon. He said some of the Timorese families had been evacuated to Australia before the province was integrated into Indonesia. He did not know the exact number of refugees nor who would pay to send them back to their home towns. This would be discussed with the Australian team." (33)

Note that no mention is made of people in East Timor coming to Australia

- July editions of the Indonesian Embassy newsletter continue to avoid reference to the fact that East Timorese wish to be re-united with their families in Australia and even hint that the Australian government has prevented people returning to East Timor:-

"Australia's decision to enable East Timorese to re-unite welcomed"

"The Minister said Indonesia welcomed Australia's decision to enable East Timorese separated during the civil war in 1975 to re-unite. He added that Indonesia would carry out the re-unification program, not only with families now staying in Australia, but also with those living in New Zealand, Papua-New Guinea and even Portugal." (34)

#### "1. NO HANDICAPS FORESEEN IN REUNION OF EAST TIMOR FAMILIES"

Talks held between Indonesian and Australian authorities.

"There are no handicaps, and I don't foresee any, in the reunion of East Timor families now residing in Australia, following the 1975 civil war in that former Portuguese colony, and their relatives in East Timor."

"This was stated by the visiting Australian Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr Michael MacKellar, .....

"Asked whether the Australian Government would help finance the reunion, Mr MacKellar said this could be considered. He told another questioner that East Timorese who had resided in Australia since the outbreak of the civil war in August-September, 1975, would be allowed to stay in Australia if they wished to do so. Two thousand five hundred of the 6000 East Timorese now in Australia wished to return to Indonesia. Others had still to make up their minds." (35)

- Following a visit to Jakarta by Mr MacKellar in early July, 1978, a high level meeting between Indonesian and Australian officials to discuss family re-unions was set for July 25, 26.

That meeting did occur. Below is the complete text of the Immigration Department's Press Release on the outcome of that meeting:

#### TIMORESE FAMILY REUNIONS

27 July 1978

75/78

At a meeting of senior officials in Jakarta, on the 25th and 26th July, Indonesia and Australia made arrangements for the reunion of Timorese families, the Acting Minister for

(Text of Press Release continued over page)...



Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr Ellicott, announced today.

It is expected that the procedures accepted by both sides will enable the processing and movement of the people involved by Christmas.

Selection interviews for the people opting for family reunion will begin in about three months, when preliminary procedures will have been completed. It is expected that Indonesian and Australian officials will visit Indonesia (Dili) and Australia for this purpose at about the end of October.

Other important matters discussed included eligible nominees, arrangements for selection interviews and financial and other relevant matters.

In general terms arrangements arrived at will be on a reciprocal basis.

Both delegations emphasized that the talks had been conducted in an atmosphere of understanding and co-operation, reflecting the warm and friendly relations between the two countries.

Note that this statement makes no mention of the previous 15 months negotiations; provides no specific details on who will be eligible; is qualified with the term 'it is expected' ; does not explain what is meant by 'on a reciprocal basis' (second last paragraph).

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Given the experience of the past 15 months, the Australian government's statement cannot guarantee people will be allowed to leave East Timor. A recent letter from Mr MacKellar (August 4) indicates that he is not completely sure that an Australian immigration team will visit Dili.(36)

Given the vague wording of the above Press Release, items in the Indonesian Embassy newsletter, and impressions from East Timorese in Dili that few if any people will be allowed to leave East Timor, there is still no grounds for optimism that the process of family reunion will actually take place.

End.



# SOURCES, FOOTNOTES.

1. Weekly radio messages from East Timor (in English) give details of military encounters; the FRETELIN-run Radio Maubere broadcasts regularly in East Timor in Portuguese and Timorese languages as well as segments in English and Indonesian. These radio broadcasts are monitored and recorded in Darwin by the Campaign for Independent East Timor (CIET) and disseminated throughout the world. Australian mass-media, which relied on this source of information for details of the beginnings of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, now seldom report radio messages from the territory.

The content of these messages has been recorded since December 1975 in the Melbourne publication "Timor Information Service" and since early 1977 in the Sydney-based "East Timor News."

2. Examples of these reports can be found in the following issues of Timor Information Service:- Nos. 9/10, 13, 14/15 - 20/21, 23-26. See also James Dunn's Legislative Research Service reports for Parliamentarians entitled "The Timor Situation - Report from Indonesia" 22 Nov. 1976 and "Report on Talks with Timorese Refugees in Portugal" 11 Feb., 1977.

3. At various times, foreign journalists and government representatives have been permitted to go to East Timor, but they have all been subject to tight restrictions of time, movement, location and informants.

4. I.C.R.C. has sought at various times in the past 2 years to gain re-entry to East Timor but I.C.R.C. conditions for re-entry have not been approved by the Indonesian government. An Australian Red Cross official informed Action for World Development in August 1976 that I.C.R.C. was still interested in returning to East Timor but had not been invited. FRETELIN in East Timor has often asked for I.C.R.C. presence in East Timor.

For more details on I.C.R.C. and East Timor see "International Red Cross wants to return to East Timor" in Timor Information Service No. 22, December 1977.

5. Australian aid agencies in East Timor during that period included the ACFOA Timor Task Force team, Australian Red Cross, Australian Society for Inter-country Aid - Timor (ASIAIT).
6. Fighting between UDT and FRETELIN forces began in Dili in the third week of August and continued for over a week. There was fighting in several areas in the countryside. Fighting had ceased in East Timor by mid-September - except for a small area near the border with Indonesia. From October 1975 onwards, all evidence suggests that the military activity continuing in the border area was the result of covert Indonesian military operations inside East Timor.

Aid organisations in East Timor after the civil war estimated that between 2-3,000 people were killed during that war. For more details on the civil war see J. Dunn's "The Timor Story", Legislative Research Service, Canberra, 15 July 1976 and the recently released book "East Timor, Nationalism and Colonialism" by Jill Jolliffe.

7. These figures come from Question on Notice No. 43, Hansard, House of Reps., June 1, 1977, p. 2239. They conflict with figures cited by Senator Quilfoyle during the Adjournment Debate on March 14, 1976. She said "In September 1975 2,301 evacuees came to Australia from East Timor. 731 Timorese went to Portugal following a brief stay in Australia and the remaining 1,770 were permitted to apply for resident status...." Given that people came to Australia in August and October as well as September 1975, the writer has chosen the earlier figures for the purposes of this report.
8. The actual numbers of people who crossed the border is disputed. Indonesian officials claimed that as many as 50,000 had crossed into West Timor; Jim Dunn was told by refugees in Portugal that the figure never exceeded 20,000 - a prominent refugee told Dunn that Indonesian officials deliberately doubled the figures (see Dunn's "Report on Talks with Timorese Refugees" 11 February, 1977).
9. Interview in Melbourne with a refugee who was in the West Timor camps in 1975/6 (14 August, 1976). The informant left West Timor for Portugal soon after these



events and did not know what eventually became of those people.

10. Information received from East Timor by an East Timorese now permanently resident in Australia.
11. A letter from an Indonesian Church source (dated 6 June, 1977) said: "Officially all the refugees have gone back and consequently the (Indonesian) government aid program terminated. However a group of 1,000 refugees is still held in Sabugade" (inside East Timor on the border).
12. The figure of 192 was cited in Question on Notice No. 564, Hansard, House of Reps., 19 April 1977, p. 989. - the source cited was the Commissariat for Evacuees of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
13. The descriptions of President Suharto's visit to Dili on July 17 1978 in recent editions of the Indonesian Embassy newsletter in Canberra, convey a picture of calm and almost complete control of the territory. With the exception of the "Far Eastern Economic Review" (August 4, 1978) which has consistently supported the Indonesian government position on East Timor, western press reports of Suharto's Dili visit which are generally available in Australia, were very guarded in their accounts.
14. Letter from East Timor to an East Timorese in Portugal, Late 1977.
15. Letter from East Timor to an East Timorese in Australia, May 1978.
16. Only 2 people are known to the Victorian Timorese Committee for Permanent Residence who wish to return to East Timor (Information received 14.4.1978). In July 1977, Immigration department officials told voluntary agency personnel at a refugee policy conference that 6 people had applied to return to East Timor (private communication from aid agency representative 28.7.1977).  
78-year old Mr Tahu Au Ye first applied to return to East Timor in December, 1976. According to a report in The Age (2.2.78), the Australian government was waiting on a decision from the Indonesian government. Mr Tahu's reason for wanting to return to East Timor:- "I will die soon, but in the tradition of my people, I would like to die near my family."
17. "Indonesian newsletter" No. 17/78, page 1. See text of item on page 8 of this report.
18. Portuguese General Mucals da Silva told this to East Timorese in Portugal. Source: Letter from Portugal to Australia, January 1977.
19. The specific origins of this report have not been publically disclosed. Australian Church aid agency officials have determined that the report is a genuine document. It is reproduced and analysed in J. Dunn's "The Timor Situation - Report from Indonesia" 22 November, 1976.
20. This writer has no official documentation to support this story. It was related to the writer by the chairman of the Victorian Timorese Committee for Permanent Residence, Joao Goncalves, in Melbourne on August 18, 1978. Mr. Goncalves said he was able to confirm that some refugees in Atambua did actually receive the authority forms but with one exception, could not confirm the same for people in Dili.
21. Australian Foreign Affairs Record, October 1976, page 339.
22. Question on Notice No. 127 in Hansard, House of Reps., 2 June 1977, p. 2545.
23. Hansard, House of Reps., 10 March 1977, p. 760. It is possible at that stage that Mr MacNallan was expecting a speedy result on reunions. An internal telex message (No. 003911, 7.4.77 from Migrant Community Services, Canberra, to all State Directors) indicated that particular nominations (concerning dependent children) be collected by April 15, one week before the public deadline. It is not known whether this deadline is related to the visit of two Australian Foreign Affairs Department officials to East Timor on April 17-29, 1977 (see Question on Notice No. 611, Hansard, House of Reps., 25-26 May, 1977, p. 1306).
24. Letter from Timorese Committee for Permanent Residence to Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, April 14, 1977.



25. Letter from Timorese Committee for Permanent Residence to Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. April 28, 1977.
26. Letter from Minister for Immigration & E.A.'s to Timorese Committee for Permanent Residence, May 25, 1977. Mr MacKellar did not actually address the question of I.C.R.C. in this letter (which was a joint reply to sources 25 and 26 above. Correspondence from Mr MacKellar to other aid organisations on this matter suggests that the government was unlikely to accept the involvement of any organisation or individual in the Australian/Indonesian government process for family re-union.
27. Letter from Austcare representative to Action for World Development. 28.7.1977
28. Letter from Victorian Regional Director, Department of Immigration to Mr Joao Goncalves, 10 November, 1977.
29. There is a continual stream of letters from East Timor which escape a censorship system operated by Indonesian authorities in Dili.
30. Letter from Mr Joao Goncalves to Regional Director of Dept of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (Victoria), October 10, 1977 said in part - "... letters from East Timor dated recently state that no arrangements whatsoever have been made by the Indonesian authorities for the interviews to be made. Some of the news is even worse when they say that information received by the Indonesian authorities in Dili is that nobody will be allowed to leave East Timor."
31. Personal communications to writer during July/August, 1978. Information comes from letters from East Timor received by people in Australia.
32. Mr. Hayden's visit was reported in The Sun (Melb.) 13 June, 1978. People in Dili heard this report on Radio Australia and via an East Timorese who was in Jakarta at the time.
33. "Indonesian Newsletter" , Canberra. No.14/78, June 1978.
34. Ibid. No.16/78. July 1978
35. Ibid. No.17/78. July 1978.
36. "... Australian officials have made determined and continuing efforts to reach a method of operation and the most recent announcement marks very substantial progress.

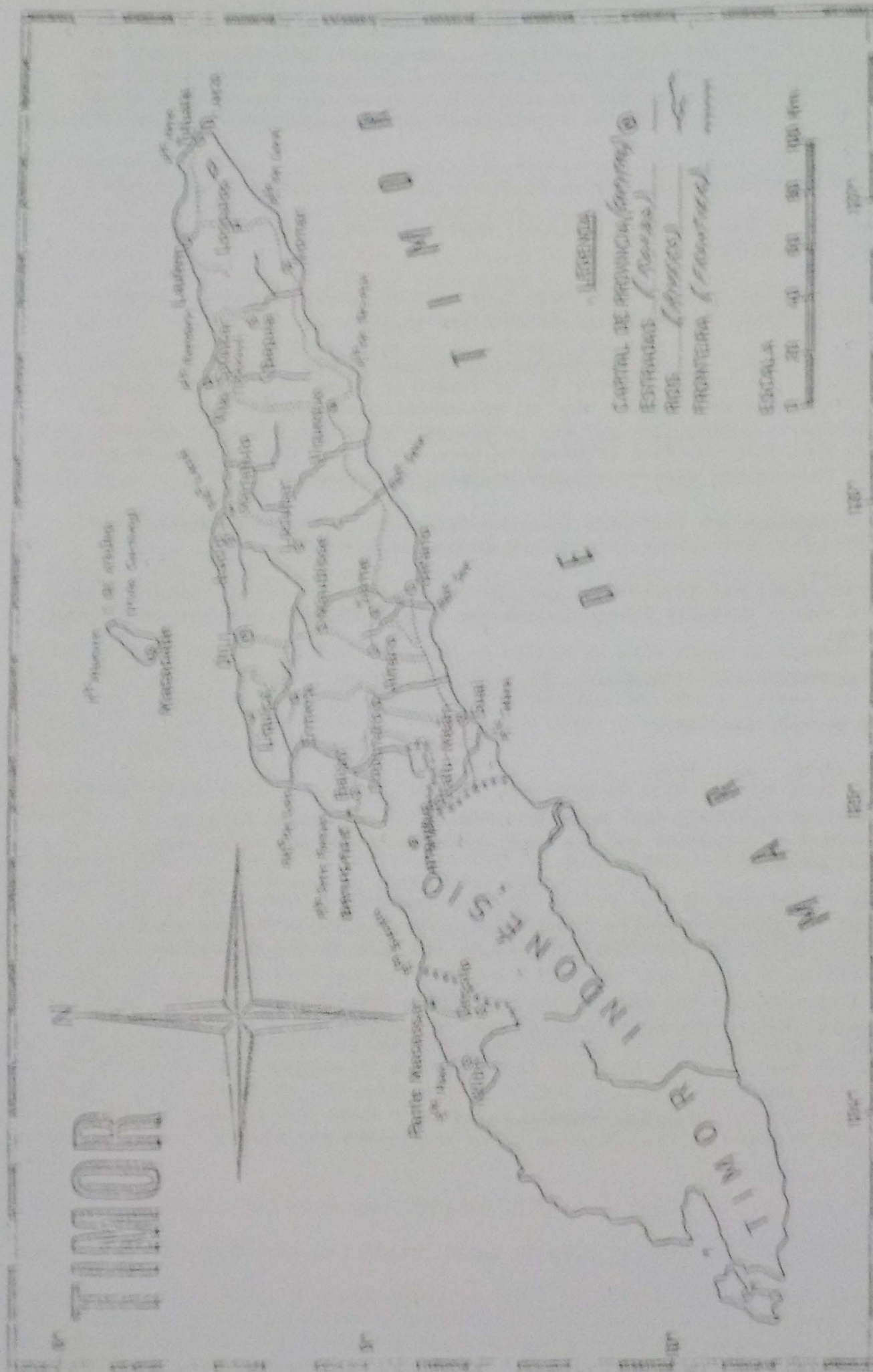
*"Certainly I hope that by the end of the year Australian teams will be in East Timor interviewing people for reunion. But I again emphasise that it is not a matter for unilateral action on the part of the Australian government."*

(Letter from Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to National Coordinator, Action for World Development, 4 August, 1978.)

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## APPENDIX 1









## APPENDIX 3

AUSTRALIA POLICY ON EAST TIMORESE ENTRY INTO AUSTRALIA

It appears that there is no information on the subject of the above mentioned person. The person is not known to the Bureau. The person is not known to the Bureau. The person is not known to the Bureau.

For example: 1. In an adjournment debate in the Senate, the Minister for Social Security, Senator Guilfoyle said:

5. In July 1977, a conference on Refugee Policy was held in Canberra between voluntary agencies and the Standing Inter-Departmental Committee on Refugees. A participant reported:

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According to the document's "Green Paper" on immigration and refugee policy, "Australia... recognizes that people can be refugees in their own countries and merit consideration as such." (Chapter 5, page 39).

It would appear that the Australian government is either unable or unwilling to give this consideration to East Timorese in East Timor.



The East Timor Situation - Report on Talks with  
Timorese Refugees in Portugal

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(1) Introduction

My visit to Portugal, which took place between 5 and 23 January, was made at the initiative of non-government agencies, among them Australian Catholic Relief and Community Aid Abroad, who provided funds to meet the cost of my return fare to Lisbon. The sponsoring organizations asked me to obtain information on the plight of the Timorese refugee community in Portugal, and, if possible, some information about the humanitarian situation in East Timor itself. My own special interest was to obtain a clearer picture of what transpired in East Timor after the Indonesian invasion of Dili on 7 December 1975. The fact that nearly all of the refugees are supporters of UDT, and include some of that Party's leaders, seemed to present an opportunity to construct a more balanced account of the events leading to the civil war which began in August 1975, of what happened in Indonesian Timor when the UDT remnants withdrew there in late September 1975, and of how and when the Indonesian military intervention began.

There are about 1,500 Timorese refugees in Portugal, nearly all of whom were repatriated in several contingents between July and October of last year. The assembly point for the refugees was Atambua in Indonesian Timor where most of them had been concentrated in camps since September 1975. However, a small number of these refugees had managed last year to get to Atambua from various parts of East Timor, some of them just before the time of their repatriation. Thus a small number of Timorese in Portugal - perhaps no more than 25 - spent several months under Indonesian occupation. A few of them had initially worked for the Indonesians, or in the administration set up by them.

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community in Portugal there are also a number of former UNT leaders, [REDACTED]

Most of the Timorese refugees in Portugal, especially those in the Estadio Nacional, near Lisbon, are living in depressing conditions. They are crowded into simple huts and tents, although the pre-fabricated dwellings now being constructed should improve their housing conditions. In view of the presence in Portugal of some 500,000 refugees from other former Portuguese colonies, and of the depressed state of the economy in a country, which is experiencing about 20% unemployment and an inflation rate of 26%, the future holds little hope for the small Timorese community, whose members are seriously disadvantaged in the competition for jobs. Refugees from Angola and Mozambique are generally better qualified. About 95% of the Timorese wish to come to Australia where more than a third of them are said to have relatives, most of whom came to Australia as refugees from Timor in August 1975. Apart from the family reunion aspect, the main reasons they gave for wanting to come to Australia were: better prospects for employment and resettlement; their desire to live in a climate more akin to that of Timor; and a general wish to live not very far from Timor, with a view to re-establishing contact with friends and relatives when access to the territory is eventually permitted by Indonesia. In Portugal, as in Australia, the Timorese community is inconspicuous and law-abiding. The High Commissioner for Refugees, Lieutenant-Colonel Ribeiro, told me that unlike the Portuguese from Angola and Mozambique the Timorese never complain and seldom pressed for any improvements to their living conditions, which are probably the worst being experienced by refugees in that country.



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During my stay in Portugal I visited camps containing about 900 Timorese, and talked to perhaps 200 of them. In only selected instances, however, did I record detailed notes of interviews. These concerned specific events of apparent significance. Although the role of the Australian journalists was frequently raised, I should like to stress that I did not set out to investigate this matter in Portugal. But as information about this incident was volunteered I took note of it. It should be stressed in mind that, with the limited time and means at my disposal, I was hardly in a position to take extensive interviews and, although I believe my notes do



generally accurate, further and more detailed questioning of the refugees would seem to be justified.

#### Refugee Accounts of the Situation in Timor

All accounts of the Indonesian military action against East Timor, and conditions under Indonesian occupation until as late as September 1976, portrayed a grim picture of the situation in the territory. Even in Indonesian Timor, according to the UNT refugees, apart from a few UNT leaders who were trusted by the Indonesians, the Timorese virtually became prisoners in refugee camps set up by the Indonesians, as soon as they crossed into Indonesian Timor. There were many accounts of how UNT supporters were not only disarmed but stripped of any personal items of value within 48 hours of the signing of the petition in September 1975. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told me that the refugees were forced to carry out hard labour and were given very little food, usually only 100 grams of rice a day. He alleged that none of the aid which was reported to have been directed through the Indonesian Red Cross ever reached the refugees. On one occasion he saw tents near the airfield and some supplies of powdered milk in Atambua Hospital, but the hospital facilities were not available to the refugees. On the other hand, according to this priest, the actual refugee population in Indonesian Timor never exceeded 20,000. He said that he had actually witnessed the Indonesians deliberately doubling the figures.

Conditions in the refugee camp were described as grim. There were few medical facilities and the refugees were usually asked to pay for such services as injections from the meagre funds still available to them. Between September 1975 and June 1976 there were many deaths as a result of the treatment they received. The Catholic Bishop of Atambua and some of the Indonesian Timorese sympathised with the plight of the refugees but only the military had effective authority.



5.  
In Atambua the refugees were frequently humiliated. They were forced to stand to attention when they spoke to Indonesian soldiers and were sometimes ordered to bow and to address them as "bapak". The refugee camps were under armed guard and the Timorese were not allowed to move freely. The detention of the refugees continued long after conditions in Dili and several other towns in East Timor were said to be secure. For some time the refugees had pleaded to be allowed to leave Timor and go to Portugal, but they claimed that if it had not been for the intervention of the commission led by General Morais-e-Silva and the Netherlands Embassy in Jakarta (which, as the representative of Portugal, took a consular interest in the plight of the Timorese at Atambua), they would not have been allowed to leave Timor. The Timorese leaders showed me a long list of names - possibly more than 5,000 - of Timorese who had asked to go to Portugal. However, only those who happened to be at Atambua between June and October 1976 had apparently been permitted to leave the country. In the event, this included a small number of Timorese and Chinese who managed to get from Dili to the Atambua concentration area.

I was particularly interested to talk to those Timorese who had spent some time in East Timor after the Indonesian invasion. There are probably about 25 Timorese of this category among the refugees and I talked at some length to more than half of them. Because of the importance of what they had to say, I sought to ensure that their accounts were as accurate as possible. In each case I urged them not to exaggerate or distort their accounts. Without exception, however, they related stories of excesses by Indonesian troops as the latter entered towns and villages. A number of these accounts were from people who claimed to have witnessed the incidents. Others that I took note of were from sources that seemed reliable - ~~who had not~~ <sup>who had not</sup> been involved in the politics of East Timor, and who had not initially been strongly opposed to "integration". According to informants, many of the Indonesian troops killed indiscriminately from the beginning of their attack on Dili. However ~~and~~ and



[REDACTED] both said that the killing in the mountain areas was far more extensive than it was in Dili. In the mountain areas, they claimed, whole villages were wiped out as Indonesian troops advanced into the interior. I was given an account of how Indonesians shot an entire family simply because they heard that the family had given a chicken to Fretilin soldiers; of families being shot when Indonesians discovered a Fretilin flag in their house. According to [REDACTED] the entire Chinese population of Maubara and Liquica was shot by the Indonesian troops when they entered these villages. A Timorese who said he had accompanied the Indonesians said that when the Indonesian troops captured Remexio and Aileu, all the Timorese in the village, except children under the age of three were shot, because "they were infected with the seeds of Fretilin". [REDACTED] also told me that the Indonesians shot more than 150 men in the town of Suai (on the south coast) because they tried to prevent the Indonesian troops from interfering with their women folk.

There were few first hand accounts of the situation outside the Balibo/Maliana and Dili areas. One of these was from a Timorese who said that he was in Baucau when the Indonesians attacked that town on 10 December 1975. He said there were few casualties at first, but that later, the troops shot many Chinese. There was, however, according to this informant a great deal of looting and raping of girls in Baucau. I was also told that fighting in the Baucau/Los Palos/Viqueque area had last year been very intense, because of effective operations by Fretilin.

A Timorese, [REDACTED] gave an account of an incident at Lamaknan (Lakmaras), a location in Indonesian Timor near the border. This informant said that in June last year he had driven [REDACTED] to this area where Fretilin troops were active.



The Indonesians set fire to the dwellings of East Timorese refugees who were camped there. When the refugees protested the Indonesians turned their guns on them. According to this informant, who said he was a witness to this episode, the troops shot, he thought, 2,000 of the Timorese, some on their knees, others with their hands raised. The victims, he said, included women and children.

A number of refugees gave accounts of events in Dili at the time of the Indonesian invasion and in the aftermath. Several of the refugees who included both Chinese and Timorese, had been in Dili at the time of the invasion, and a few had been there as recently as September/October last year. One [redacted] had spent two weeks in Dili in April, while at least two of the refugees had been among those who were taken to Dili to participate in the "act of free choice".

[redacted]

A number of Timorese gave their accounts of how Indonesian troops behaved at the time of the invasion. According to several accounts, on 6 December, the eve of the invasion, there was a general feeling that an Indonesian attack was imminent. Fretilin forces withdrew behind Taibesse, towards the mountains. Many people confined themselves to their houses, but quite a few moved into the church of St. Antonio which is near the lighthouse on the esplanade facing Dili harbour. The latter was therefore well placed to observe the Indonesian landing. According to the refugees account, warships shelled Dili before dawn and some aircraft strafed the town but little damage was sustained. Four persons, including two Timorese and two Chinese, gave accounts of indiscriminate killing by Indonesian troops. Two of those who had sought refuge in the Church told me that the Indonesian paratroops began shooting down people in the streets as soon as they landed, which was shortly after dawn. One said that several paratroopers drowned because they landed in the bay instead of on land. One refugee, who was in the Church gave the following account.



At 7.00 a.m. she said she saw Indonesian paratroops shoot a woman in the parish garage adjacent to the Church, and three others in front of the Church, although they had their hands raised. She gave the names of two of these people. The Indonesian troops then ordered all people near the Church to go inside. At 9.00 o'clock on the following morning, however, she and others were ordered by Indonesian soldiers to go to the wharf where some 27 women captives, some Chinese and some Timorese, were being held. She said some of the women had children and all of them were crying. The Indonesians, she said, tore the crying children from their mothers and passed them back to the crowd. The women were then shot one by one, with the onlookers being ordered by the Indonesians to count.

~~Source~~ At 2.00 p.m. 59 men, both Chinese and Timorese, were brought onto the wharf. One was ~~Chinese~~ ~~Chinese~~ whose widow, my informant told me, is in Australia with her two children. These men were shot one by one, again with the crowd, which she believed amounted to some 500, being ordered to count. The victims were ordered to stand on the edge of the pier facing the sea, so that when they were shot their bodies fell into the water. Indonesian soldiers stood by and fired at the bodies in the water in the event that there was any further sign of life. Many of the men, and the women who had been executed earlier, had pleaded with the Indonesians, some of them on their knees, but none of the group was spared. Another informant told me that the next day the bodies were washed up on the beach opposite the Bishop's house and Timorese were subsequently ordered to remove them. These informants said that they had heard that further executions had been carried out on the wharf.

Other persons who claimed to have first hand knowledge of similar indiscriminate killings included a Chinese who said he saw Indonesians shoot a group of Chinese leaders in the street near the Mimosa Hotel, and the driver of a Red Cross jeep which was clearly marked. Another gave an account of the shooting of 30 persons outside the former military police headquarters on the day after the invasion. There were several accounts of the killing of many Chinese men who were separated from their families and then shot. One of these was said to have taken



place in the shop Toko Lay. My informant said that the Indonesians had become enraged at the sight of an Australian flag protruding from the third floor of this building. They went up and shot all of the Chinese men in the apartment which housed 20 refugees. On the day after the attack, there were dead bodies everywhere in the streets of Dili, including many women and some children. At least two of the refugees in Portugal said they were among those ordered by Indonesian troops to help remove the bodies.

According to one informant many Timorese were shot in the Taibesse area when the Indonesians shot the entire families of houses which displayed Fretilin flags. Others said that near the Airport the Indonesians had killed many people by simply throwing hand-grenades into houses. [REDACTED] mentioned a figure of 60 persons who died this way.

According to [REDACTED] it was the Chinese who suffered during the first days after the invasion. On the first day alone, he said that he had been told that as many as 500 Chinese had been killed by Indonesian troops. In addition to the wharf area and military police headquarters, groups of people were deliberately shot, according to informants, at Villaverde, near Sang Tai Hoc, Santa Cruz, near the shop of Lay Ju Man, near the former Australian Consulate, (where some nurses were reported to have been shot), outside the house of João de Martires, a former Director of Customs, at Military Police Headquarters and near the former International Red Cross Headquarters.

The refugees all claimed that Indonesian soldiers looted extensively from the first days of the invasion. Shortly after the landing at Dili, according to several informants, most of the towns people were ordered by the soldiers to go to a location near the airport. When they returned their houses had been thoroughly ransacked, and in some cases they were completely empty. Cars, radios, items



of furniture, cutlery, even windows were taken to ships in the harbour and later away from Timor. Most of the cars left in Dili were taken on board ships by Indonesian soldiers. Most of the tractors in the Dili area, according to informants, were taken away. [REDACTED] Churches and the Seminary were also looted, and their books burnt.

According to the refugees some killing continued in the Dili area until the end of February. However, the place of execution was said to have been moved from the wharf to Tasitalo, a location near the airport. According to one informant, as recently as 17 August last year a number of people were killed for refusing to participate in an Indonesian Independence Day demonstration. An informant said she knew at least three of the victims: they included a Chinese [REDACTED] whom she knew well. According to an account between March and April 1976, a number of Indonesians, in particular several officers, attempted to improve relations with the local population, but, according to this informant, their efforts were always thwarted by the continuing looting and raping by Indonesian soldiers. I was told that it was common for Indonesian soldiers to round up young girls in trucks and rape them. It was also alleged that a special intelligence unit operating on the top floor of the Tropical Hotel regularly resorted to torture to obtain information about Fretilin. The officer in charge of this "interrogation unit" was Major Yusman, who worked to the Senior Intelligence Officer in East Timor, Colonel Sinaga, a man who is reportedly disliked and feared. One woman informant said she knew two women who had been tortured in an effort to obtain information about Fretilin. She said [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were stripped naked, and their breasts were burnt with cigarettes. She said that electrical instruments were also used on their bodies.



11.  
I was told that after April Dili was relatively secure, although sometimes shots could be heard at night. [redacted] said that when he travelled from Dili to [redacted] [redacted] about 5 kilometres from the town) in April 1975 his jeep was accompanied by three armoured vehicles and a truckload of soldiers. They were fired on during their journey and the Indonesian soldiers insisted that they would need to return before nightfall. Although Dili was relatively calm after April, refugees spoke of a growing food shortage. A woman who left Dili in September, said that relations between the Indonesians and the Chinese and Timorese community in Dili continued to be very bad, right up until the time of her departure. She said that little food was available to the people in Dili and virtually nothing was made available to the people outside the city. She said that it was possible to obtain a ration of three small condensed milk cans of rice each week but that no meat could be obtained by the ordinary people. She said that dog meat was being eaten when it could be procured. The Timorese could buy no clothing. Several of the shops had reopened under the management of Indonesians or Arabs (a small Moslem community near Dili which supported Apodeti) but the ordinary people had no money to purchase the goods offered by these shops.

The refugees all said that most Indonesians maintained an attitude of arrogant hostility to the local population. The Timorese were usually forced to stand to attention when talking to ordinary Indonesian soldiers. A refusal to do so could lead to a beating. When houses were exhausted of loot the Indonesian soldiers turned to the graves of Europeans and the more wealthy Timorese. I was informed [redacted] that the Indonesians dug up the grave of Father Magliana in Maliana (I spent a night in his Mission some 12 years ago) and removed his gold tooth. The graves of chiefs were also exhumed by soldiers in search of loot (Timorese chiefs are usually buried with some of their jewels).



The refugees said that the senior Indonesian officer in Dili was Brigadier General Dading, who was described as "Panglima" or Commander of the Military Forces in East Timor. However the overall Commander was Major General Moerdani, whom, a UDT leader told me, usually lived at Kupang. Other senior officers in Dili were Colonel ~~Binaga and Major~~ Anton Papilaya, who was a senior intelligence officer. General Dading lived in a house in the Parol area, which was formerly used by the Mayor. All the houses in the Parol area, which had previously been occupied by officials, were said to be occupied by troops. On the occasions when U.N. or foreign delegations visited Dili, the troops were sent out of Dili or dressed in civilian clothes. Both the Military Commander and the Provincial Government of Araujo had their offices in the Administrative Palace. The Timorese provisional officials, however, had little power, for Timor was dominated by the military at every level of administration.

Several refugees told me that the Indonesians had established a war cemetery in a square opposite the wharf. ~~there were more than 600 graves in the~~ cemetery, but that there were other cemeteries at Maliana, Ainaro, Baucau and Batugade. In Maliana he saw the grave of a Brigadier-General. A Timorese ~~said that in Dili~~ said that in Dili there were almost 1000 Indonesian graves and that one of the dead was a Lieutenant Colonel. According to these accounts, more than 3000, perhaps more than 5000 Indonesian soldiers have died in the fighting in East Timor. I was told that Fretilin resistance (and many former UDT and even Apodeti members were said to have joined Fretilin after the invasion) was so effective that Indonesian control did not extend more than a few miles beyond the main towns. The extensive and indiscriminate killing had alienated the population, giving Fretilin wide popular support.



I asked the leaders of the refugee community whether it was conceivable that 100,000 people have been killed in East Timor. All said that this figure was credible, because of the widespread killing in the mountains, and because of the extensive bombing (I was told that in recent months napalm was used). Many people had left the main towns and villages and were now in the mountains, in areas more or less under Fretilin control. The Timorese [redacted] said that there were, in September, about 30,000 Indonesian soldiers in East Timor. The latest information related to the situation in Timor in November. A Chinese, who had left Dili at that time [redacted] said that with the coming of the wet season the security situation had deteriorated. Food in Dili was very scarce because supplies could not be obtained from the producing areas.

#### Information Concerning Australian Journalists Killed or Missing in East Timor

A number of Timorese offered information about the Balibo incident and the fate of Roger East. They included [redacted] leaders and Timorese who claimed that they had been in Balibo on the day of the attack, during which the five Australian journalists were killed, that is, on Thursday 16 October, 1975. Others had spent some time there after the incident and offered second-hand information about how the journalists were killed. I should emphasise again that it was not my intention to undertake an independent enquiry into the death of the journalists, but, as I was in Timor at the time of the Balibo incident and knew something of the background to it, it seemed appropriate that I should collect this information.

A [redacted] leader said that the attack on Balibo and Maliana on 16 October 1975 was the first major Indonesian military intervention in Timor, although earlier, on 6 October, they had attacked Batugade and forced Fretilin troops to retire to Balibo. He said that the attack on Balibo and



Maliana was entirely an Indonesian operation under the command of Colonel Dading (later promoted Brigadier-General). The attack on Balibo itself was under the command of a Major Leo or Leos. A few Timorese - between 50 and 100 - went along with the Indonesians, but their role was confined to bearers and guides. These were led by Tomas Goncalves, who for several months previously had been an Apodeti leader in Indonesian Timor. This informant said that he himself did not go to Balibo at that time, but that according to information he received from those of his men who went with the Indonesians, the account given by Martins was generally accurate. He said that at least two of the journalists were deliberately shot by Indonesian troops. He also said that the Indonesians had propped two of the bodies behind a machine-gun and had photographed it, with the aim of using the photograph as evidence that the journalists had been fighting on the side of Fretilin. He said that although he was not a witness to this he had subsequently seen the photograph; he had been told later that Bakin (the Indonesian intelligence coordinating body) had decided against making use of it. This informant and two other refugees (including a priest) separately told me that Joao Tavares, a former UDT leader who threw in his lot with the Indonesians and is now Bupati of Maliana) was in Balibo at about the time the journalists were killed and took a watch from one of the dead journalists and a camera from another body. A Timorese, [REDACTED] said that he was in the village some time after the killing. He said he saw the bodies of persons he believed to be the journalists in the house of Lay Fah Nhang. Afterwards the bodies were carried to another house and burnt. He also said that [REDACTED] had gone into Balibo with THE INDONESIANS AND [REDACTED] and saw one journalist killed by an Indonesian soldier whose first name he thought was Gabriel. [REDACTED] had said that two of the journalists were killed inside the house and others outside.



A Timorese [redacted]

[redacted] offered some information about the killing of the journalists. He said that although he was not there at the time of the attack on Balibo it was common knowledge that the journalists were killed in the house of Lay Fah Nhang. [redacted] he was at Balibo when some Australian diplomats visited the town to investigate the killing of the journalists. He said that Indonesians ordered the Timorese away from the centre of the village. Indonesian troops were dressed in civilian clothes, according to this account, and it was they who met the Australian diplomats. [redacted] that he himself was instructed by the Indonesians not to approach or speak to the Australians. The only Timorese to talk to the Australians, he said, was João Tavares, now bupati of the Maliana district. He said that the diplomats were taken not to the house where the journalists were killed but to another house, the house of Lay Cam Nhang. [redacted] also mentioned that João Tavares had at the time of the incident taken some items, including a watch and a camera from the bodies of the journalists.

Another Timorese informed me that [redacted] had accompanied the Indonesians during their attack on Balibo. He said that [redacted] had told him that he had seen one journalist on the ground outside the house and two others with their hands raised. According to this Timorese his [redacted] told him that he saw these two journalists shot by RPKAD troops. A further account came from a Timorese who said [redacted] went into Balibo at the time of the Indonesian attack on the morning of 16 October. He entered the village shortly after the troops had moved in. [redacted] he entered the house of Lay Fat (also Lay Fah Nhang) and saw several bodies on the floor. One Australian, however, was not dead. Blood was coming from a wound on his head but he was sitting down and speaking into a tape recorder or radio.



While he was in the room an Indonesian soldier shot the wounded Australian.

I was told by yet another Timorese that two of the bodies were photographed near a machine gun before they were taken away and burned.

A further scrap of information came from [redacted] who said that he went to Balibo with Tomas Goncalves and saw the bodies of the journalists, which, by that time, were in front of the house of Lay Fah Nhang. He said he was not allowed to approach the bodies.

There was only one reference to Roger East who is believed to have been in Dili on 7 December 1975. A Timorese leader told me that although he had no first hand information about what had happened to East, he had seen his passport, together with some sheets of paper with notes about a paratroop landing, [redacted]. My informant said that the official told him that Indonesian troops had shot East and some Timorese in an apartment in Dili between the Sporting Club and the BNU (The Overseas National Bank) on 7 or 8 December 1975.

### Conclusion

An analysis of the information I collected from the Timorese refugees in Portugal adds considerable substance to the sketchy reports, which have been received in Australia during the past twelve months from Indonesian, Timorese, Chinese and Fretilin sources, that the Indonesian military seizure of East Timor has been a bloody operation, in which atrocities of a disturbing nature, have been committed against the civilian population. Indeed, these accounts of Indonesia's behaviour in East Timor, suggest that the plight of these people might well constitute, relatively speaking, the most serious case of contravention of human rights facing the world at this time. Reports that one sixth of the population may have been killed are impossible to assess, let alone authenticate, but the



fact that such reports persist serves to highlight the magnitude of the tragedy of Timor.

The refugee accounts of what happened at Balibo suggest that at least some of the journalists may have been killed deliberately by Indonesian soldiers. These accounts, though by no means conclusive, are on the whole consistent and they seem to open up new avenues of inquiry. The refugees' accounts seem conclusive in one respect: it is surely inconceivable that the attack on Balibo was other than an Indonesian military operation, in which Timorese participation was small and of the non-combatant kind. That the responsibility for the consequences of this operation rests with the Indonesian military command in Timor would thus seem beyond doubt.

This report is by no means an exhaustive study of the information available from among the Timorese refugee community in Portugal. Factors of time and distance prevented me from meeting many Timorese who may be able to contribute to our knowledge of important aspects of this tragic situation. Indeed, in the interests of accuracy, I have omitted from this report a number of the accounts I collected during my visit to Portugal. Names have also usually been omitted, but these can be produced on request provided conditions of confidentiality are established.