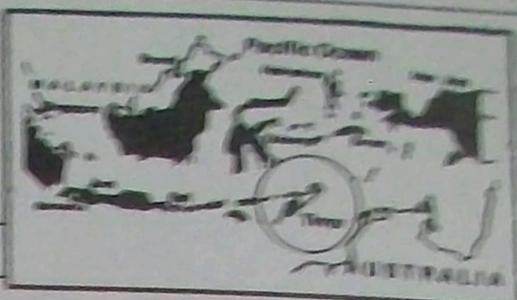


EAST TIMOR UPDATE

Number 15 — September 25, 1992



In December 1975, just ten days after declaring its independence from Portugal, the tiny southeast Asian country of East Timor was invaded by its neighbour Indonesia. In the decade-and-a-half since, 250,000 people — over a third of the indigenous Timorese population — have been killed. Genocide and massive human rights violations — everything from rape to indiscriminate killings to forced abortions — go on to this day. But so does the struggle for freedom of the East Timorese people. It is largely the support of countries like Canada that allows Indonesia to maintain its occupation.

East Timor Update is a monthly news service edited in Toronto by the East Timor Alert Network. Reprinting is encouraged, but please credit East Timor Update. Contact the Network for more information:

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Cold Blood

The Massacre of East Timor
First Canadian screenings of the full version of the Yorkshire-TV documentary. Followed by a speech by Abé Barreto Soares, East Timor representative to Canada

University of Toronto

Wed. 28 October

Hart House Debates Room, 7:30 pm
(Call (416) 979-9629 or 531-6154)

University of Guelph

Tues. 3 November

UC 334, 12:10 pm

(Call (519) 824-2091)

Dates at all other southern Ontario universities: TEA — write your local ETAN contact or ETAN/Toronto.

New Timor Governor a "common criminal"

Indonesia's choice of Abilio José Osório Soares for new governor of East Timor is being called a sign of impending finality in the administration of the Indonesian-occupied territory. José Ramos Horta, spokesperson for the union of pro-independence groups in Timor, said in Lisbon that "Indonesia chose a semi-literate henchman with a record for common crimes." The new governor, a former sergeant in the Portuguese colonial army, "has always been supported by Colonel Prabowo, Indonesian president Suharto's son-in-law," Ramos Horta said.

Osório Soares was a member of the Timor Popular Democratic Association (Apostoli), which supported the Dec. 7, 1975 invasion of East Timor. He replaces Mário Viegas Carrascalão, who followed a policy of softening the harshness of military rule in East Timor. Observers predict the new governor will give the military far freer reign.

Recent statements by armed forces commander for East Timor, Brig. Gen. Theo Syntex, support those fears. "The new governor must fight for the integration of Timor (into Indonesia and) exterminate those who are unfazed," he told the official Antara news agency.

New peace talks?

Spurred by an unprecedented condemnation by the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights, Indonesia may be preparing to enter into peace talks with Portugal and representatives of East Timor over the future of the country, which the UN recognizes as a Portuguese colony under illegal Indonesian occupation. Portuguese and Indonesian foreign ministers met in New York in September during the opening of the UN general assembly in what pro-independence Timorese hope will be the first step towards the peace talks without pre-conditions proposed by Timorese nationalist leader Xanana Gusmão.

The 13 to six vote (with four abstentions) of the human rights Sub-Commission blasts the Indonesian government for "continuing to shut East Timor off from the eyes of international observers." The Indonesian government is also required to free Timorese political prisoners jailed this year for "subversion" or "spreading hostility" under the Indonesian anti-subversion law. Finally, the UN commission asked Indonesia to provide aid to the families of over 100 Timorese civilians massacred by Indonesian soldiers last November 12.

Victim's family sues general

Indonesian General Sintang Panjaitan, currently in Boston to prepare for a course of study at Harvard University, is being sued by the mother of a New Zealander killed during the Santa Cruz massacre last November 12. Helen Todd, mother of Kamal Bamathaj, launched the suit with the help of the Centre for Constitutional Rights, alleging that Panjaitan was one of the generals responsible for the execution of her son and over 100 others by Indonesian soldiers.

Todd stated that the dozens of young Timorese killed along with her son were peacefully protesting "sixteen years of organized military brutality against the people of East Timor." She noted that the threat of reprisals by the Indonesian military prevented

the mothers of the other victims from joining her in this lawsuit, and stated that she will share any money judgement with their families.

Irish support self-determination

Irish Foreign Minister David Andrews made a strong declaration of support for East Timor's right to self-determination during a meeting in Dublin with José Ramos Horta, external representative for the East Timorese resistance. "He could not have been more straightforward in voicing his outrage," Ramos Horta said.

Andrews pledged to speak out for East Timor's rights and add Ireland's voice to that of Portugal in the European Community, United Nations and other international bodies.

Univ's rethink aid to Indonesia

East Timor activists at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby BC have pushed the question of SFU's \$20 million Eastern Indonesian Development Project to the forefront of the university senate's agenda. ETAN/Vancouver held several forums and hosted a visit by Liem Swei Liong, an exiled member of the Indonesian Democratic Front and co-founder of Tapol, the London-based Indonesian Human Rights Campaign.

According to Liem Swei Liong "the development of East Indonesia through all kinds of projects World Bank, ADB, bilateral g to g or university projects like SFU do have one thing in common: not only do they enhance the image of the Suharto government, but even worse can support the further obliteration of the threatened cultures of the local people in the Moluccas and West Papua."

The SFU project is linked with three major state universities: Universitas San Ratafaring in Manado (Sulawesi), Universitas Pattimura in Ambon (Maluku) and Universitas Cenderawasih in Jayapura (West Papua).

SFU's senate has responded to student pressure by setting up a special committee on international activities to look into the five-year old CIDA-funded project. SFU's Student Resource Centre is producing a pamphlet titled "SFU and Indonesia: Complicity in Human Rights Abuse?" which will be distributed with the help of BC PIRG in the university.

Meanwhile, the University of Guelph expects to hear back in November from an external review panel that is investigating the human rights impact of its \$35 million Sulawesi Regional Development project, the largest aid to Indonesia project of any Canadian university.



Kamal Bamathaj, November 1991

US companies fight to keep military aid for Indonesia

The battle over US military aid to Indonesia in the Senate continued to heat up in September with the intervention of a host of big American multinationals who do business with the Suharto regime. The corporate lobbyists, led by General Electric and the American-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, urged Senators to reverse a decision by the House of Representatives to cut off military aid to Indonesia given through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme. Senators are being asked to put trade with the fifth-most populous country on the world ahead of respect for human rights.

ETANUS and other groups, meanwhile, continue to lobby Senators to retain the aid cut.

Peace groups mark Nov. 12

The Canadian Peace Alliance has agreed to organize an open letter to the Canadian government, to be published in the national press, as part of a campaign aimed at peace for the people of East Timor and ending Canadian support for the Indonesian military occupation. Delegates to the CPA's convention this summer in Vancouver voted to sponsor the publication of the letter, signed by as many prominent individuals and organizations as possible, for Nov. 12, the first anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor.

November 12 will also be marked with international demonstrations in several countries, organized by member groups of the International Federation for East Timor and the International Peace Bureau. In Canada, there will be events in Ottawa (Parliament Hill) with a march to the Department of External Affairs and Vancouver (Canada Airlines).

