

East Timor Update

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 population — have been killed. Genocide and massive human rights violations — everything from rape to indiscriminate killings to forced abortion — 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.

Contact the Network for more information:

National/West: 104-2120 West 44th, Vancouver BC, V6M 2G2.

Toronto: PO Box 562, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2T1.

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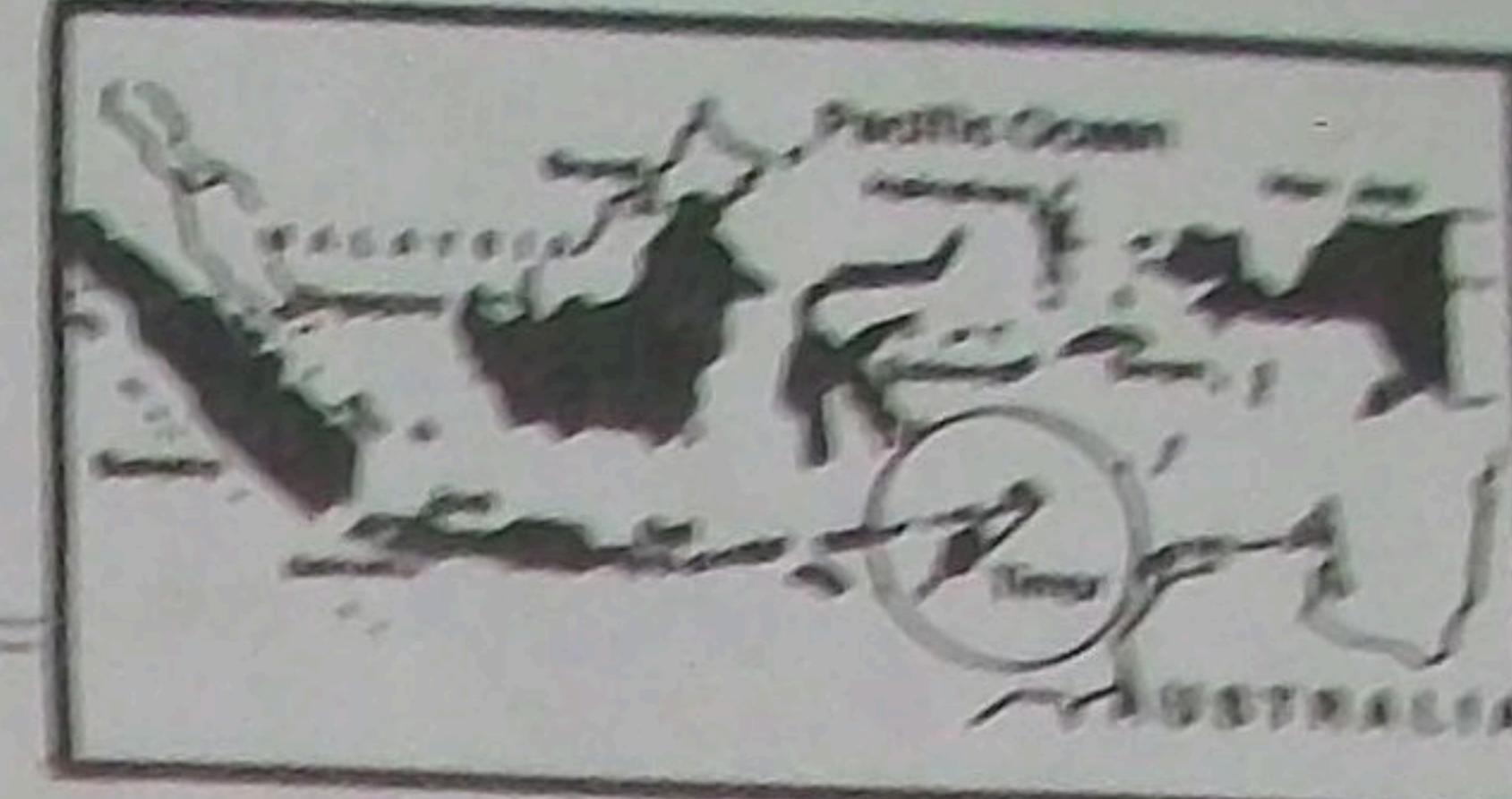
Western Ontario: Dr Peter Eglin, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo Ont., N2L 3C5.

NEW RESOURCES

- Video of Xanana interview East Timor, Sept 1991 (in Portuguese; loan only)
- Video from West Papua (copyright protected, loan only)
- "Free East Timor" T shirts (3-colour flag design on white, XL only, \$15)

STILL AVAILABLE

- "East Timor and Kuwait" backgrounder (\$1 each)
- "Free East Timor" buttons (\$1 each)
- FUNU: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor, by José Ramos Horta (\$10)



Terror in Timor

In preparation for the visit, expected later this year, of a Portuguese parliamentary delegation to (formerly Portuguese) East Timor, the Indonesian military authorities who now rule the territory have stepped up their campaign of terror against the indigenous Timorese population.

• Masked Indonesians armed with automatic pistols, walkie-talkies, night-binoculars and powerful video cameras, as well as knives and other offensive weapons, are roaming the streets of Dili, the Timorese capital. Sources say they will be assigned to carry out 'mysterious killings' by capturing people they meet on the streets and taking them to the killing fields at Tac-Tolo, just outside the city, where they will be slain and buried without trace.

• Crowds are being prepared to protest against the Portuguese parliamentarians to create the impression of support for Indonesian rule. About 450 East Timorese, plus some Indonesians brought in from West Timor, have been conscripted for this purpose.

• More than 110 young Timorese were arrested in the first half of 1991 in an effort to "clean up" suspected dissidents.

• Indonesian Defence Minister General Benny Mardani warned against equating Indonesia's recognition of Baltic independence with the case of East Timor. "There is only one country, the Republic of Indonesia," he told the Jakarta Post. "This is not a country based on a religion, a particular province or one ethnic group. Should anyone try to change this, the consequence would be that ... we would crush those moves."

World peace network supports Timor talks bid

The international campaign for peace in East Timor gathered steam in September as the world's major network of peace and disarmament organizations endorsed the call of Timorese resistance leader Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão for peace talks between resistance forces and Indonesia. The member groups of the International Peace Bureau, meeting in Toronto on September 15, unanimously agreed to "support a campaign for peace talks without preconditions, under United Nations auspices" and also called for a ban on all arms sales to Indonesia.

The conference was the first time an IPB conference held a workshop on East Timor. Carmel Budiarjo of the London-based Tapol (Indonesian Human Rights Campaign) and Elaine Briere of Canada's East Timor Alert Network led the workshop, which also had participants from as far afield as Australia, Germany and Korea. In addition, Ms Budiarjo was one of eight speakers at the conference's public forum, and an unprecedented videotaped interview with Xanana (smuggled out of the mountains of East Timor to supporters in Japan) was shown for the first time in North America.

The workshop pointed out that Indonesia is the leading military power in Southeast Asia and has one of the fastest-growing economies in the region. It is fast becoming a major arms producer, its military aircraft and weap-

ons industry have secured many deals with arms manufacturers in England, the United States, France, Sweden, and Canada for technology transfers so as to become a producer and exporter of military hardware.

Workshop participants agreed the peace movement should extend its support to people in East Timor and the other colonies of Indonesia who are struggling for their right to self-determination and do all in its power to publicize their plight. The IPB resolution, and its acceptance of the East Timor Alert Network as a full member, showed that many in the international peace movement are taking the call to heart.

Plans to launch a Canadian campaign for peace talks in East Timor are now underway. Contact the East Timor Alert Network for more details.

Remapping history

Activists in Oakville, Ont., have launched two initiatives for East Timor: a petition campaign that hopes to eventually collect 10,000 signatures, and a letter-writing campaign to the Canadian government to reinstate East Timor on classroom maps. (The United Nations recognizes East Timor as being separate from Indonesia; however the Canadian International Development Agency and other government bodies show no border between Indonesia and East Timor on maps distributed to Canadian classrooms. A similar initiative in Japan recently forced the Japanese government to begin marking East Timor as a separate country on its maps.)

Contact ACT for Disarmament Oakville (PO Box 7378, Oakville Ont., L6J 6L6) or the East Timor Alert Network for details.

Canadian gov't unmoved

Canada continues to recognize Indonesia's "de facto" control over East Timor (despite its recognition of the independence of the Baltic republics and its promise to recognize Ukraine and the Western Sahara if referendums later this year show a majority of citizens favouring independence). External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall told the House of Commons on September 18. McDougall's statement was in response to a question from Toronto New Democrat MP Dan Heap regarding the continuing and widespread human rights violations in Indonesian-occupied East Timor.

The following day, Winnipeg New Democrat Bill Blaikie raised East Timor in the House again.

The questions came during a visit to Ottawa by Carmel Budiarjo, international secretary of Parliamentarians for East Timor (headed by England's Lord Avebury). During the visit, several MPs joined the Canadian wing of the Parliamentarians' group, swelling its numbers to 16. Most prominent among the new recruits was former Tory cabinet minister (1979-80) David MacDonald, who served as Canada's ambassador to Ethiopia during the famine of the 1980s.

Canadian Parliamentarians for East Timor say they will press McDougall on the government's foreign policy double standard.



Contact: Svend Robinson (NDP), David MacDonald (Conservative) or David Kilgour (Liberal), all c/o House of Commons, Ottawa Ont., K1A 1A6. Letters of protest can also be sent to External Affairs Minister McDougall at the same address (postage free).

Protest? What protest?

Thirty young Timorese, representing hundreds of others, protested outside the Indonesian parliament in Jakarta in late August against the Tiara Foundation, headed by President Suharto's daughter Tutut. The foundation lured hundreds of Timorese to Jakarta with the promise of high-paying jobs of 300,000 rupiahs (US\$40) a month, but the workers instead received jobs that paid just 40,000 rupiahs a month.

Critics charge that the job scheme was just a ploy to remove young Timorese from their homeland to areas where they could be more easily controlled.

A report of the protest announced on the contents page of Tempo (the Indonesian equivalent of Time Magazine) was censored. For the first time in memory, Tempo appeared with a large white space where the report on the protest was to have appeared. In response to questions, the magazine said only that "we apologize. There were technical problems."

More students detained

Timorese high school students, the backbone of underground resistance in Dili and other cities, continue to top the enemies list for Indonesian security forces. On April 8, six students of St Joseph's school in Dili were detained and subjected to interrogation and torture at intelligence headquarters. One of them, Arnaido Mina, was sent to Bumus prison in Baucau and then hospitalized because of the torture he had been subjected to. The whereabouts of the others is still unknown, according to Fretilin sources in Portugal.

