

IFET

INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION
FOR
EAST TIMOR

International Federation for East Timor (IFET)

Secretariat: Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor
c/o Initiatives for International Dialogue
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U.N. Representative: Charles Schœner
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May 3, 1999

Member Organizations

National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT, East Timor)
East Timor International Support Center (Australia)
Australia-East Timor Association (AETA)
Australians for a Free East Timor (AFFET)
Hobart East Timor Committee (Australia)
East Timor Alert Network (Canada)
Canadian Action for Indonesia and East Timor (CAFIET)
Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (Fiji)
Agir Pour Timor (France)
Association Solidarité Timor-Oriental (ASTO, France)
Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker (Germany)
Asian Centre for the Progress of Peoples (Hong Kong)
East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign
Indian Society for Human Rights
Free East Timor - Japan Coalition
East Timor Information Network (Malaysia)
International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (Netherlands)
Norwegian Cooperation Council for East Timor and Indonesia
Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor (Philippines)
Com. para os Direitos do Povo Maubere (Portugal)
Paz é Justiça para Timor Leste (Portugal)
A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste (Portugal)
Movimento Cristão para a Paz (Portugal)
Instituto de Estudios Políticos para América Latina y África (IEPALA, Spain)
Östtimor Kommitén (Sweden)
TAPOL (U.K.)
British Coalition for East Timor
East Timor Action Network (USA)
International Secretariat, Parliamentarians for East Timor

Hon. Kofi Annan
United Nations Secretary-General
UN Secretariat
New York, NY 10017
By fax to 212-963-2155

Dear Excellency:

We stand at a critical moment for the people of East Timor. In two days, the Indonesian and Portuguese Foreign Ministers will meet under your auspices to decide the security arrangements and the modalities for the August 8 ballot in East Timor.

For many years we have looked to the United Nations as the only legitimate and reliable body capable of settling this tragic issue in a way acceptable both to the long-suffering East Timorese people and to the international community. The United Nations is equipped with many resolutions which, properly implemented, guarantee a framework for the East Timorese people to determine their own future free from coercion and fear. We refer to Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 on the right to self-determination, Security Council resolutions 384 (1975) and 389 (1976) calling on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor without delay, and the eight resolutions of the General Assembly on East Timor.

Since you became Secretary General, your office has taken many initiatives to implement these resolutions. We appreciate your efforts and those of your competent and committed staff over the past two years, and share your eagerness to solve this 23-year blot on humanity's conscience.

You began your press briefing on April 23, after the last round of tripartite talks, by saying that this was a good day, and that there are not many of those at the United Nations these days. There are no good days at all in East Timor these days. During the month of April alone, more than 100 East Timorese civilians were murdered by paramilitary militias the Indonesian government has proven unwilling or unable to control.

President Habibie is actively engaged in your East Timor peace process, and is committed to allowing East Timor to become independent if the territory's people reject Indonesia's autonomy proposal. Many of us believe he is sincerely looking for a face-saving exit to Indonesia's long, illegal occupation of East Timor, and would like to work with the United Nations to achieve that end. But his good will is undercut by the Indonesian military and its paramilitary proxies.

Notwithstanding President Habibie's announced policy, the same army that illegally invaded East Timor in 1975 and has brought so much grief and suffering to that territory is still there. Although Indonesia's civilian government has acknowledged its responsibility to enforce law in East Timor, its army and police have encouraged paramilitary violence. The armed forces provide the paramilitaries with weapons, money and training. Senior military and police officers have attended rallies where the speakers have incited mobs to murder and stood by doing nothing as the killing ensued. Increasingly, there are reports of the police and army directly participating in the activities of these death squads.

At the April 23 tripartite talks, much was made of the April 21 Peace Pact brokered by General Wiranto. But the paramilitary violence persists, and Indonesia has made no significant efforts to control it. Murders continue daily, militia leaders exhort their coerced followers to assassinate pro-independence leaders and human rights workers with impunity, and tens of thousands of internal refugees live in fear for their lives. If the United Nations were to conduct a popular consultation in this atmosphere of terror, it would be a cruel hoax on the people of East Timor and a betrayal of the principles the United Nations stands for.

Many of the paramilitary leaders, who represent a small minority of the East Timorese population, have pledged to subvert the peace process and vowed to continue their terror campaign after August 8 if the voters reject autonomy. High Indonesian-appointed officials have declared their opposition to holding the consultation. Indonesia must act decisively to fulfill the commitments they are making to you and to the international community, both to ensure that the process proceeds and to create a climate conducive to peaceful campaigning and voting. August 8 is only three months away.

It is regrettable that representatives of the people of East Timor have been excluded from the development of the peace process, and will not participate in the negotiations and signing on May 5. Their non-participation places an extra responsibility on the United Nations, in accordance with the resolutions cited above, to ensure that their rights and interests are protected.

Available information gives us great concern about the agreements to be signed on Wednesday. The following elements are essential for a legitimate August 8 ballot. We have consulted with many East Timorese leaders and believe that these conditions also represent their wishes.

1. As soon as the 5 May accord is signed, the United Nations must assume responsibility for creating and preserving law and order in East Timor, and for protecting public safety. The Indonesian military has been there illegally for 23 years, and their occupation has taken more than 200,000 East Timorese lives. Even after President Habibie's change of policy, the Indonesian military and police have proven incapable of stopping paramilitary violence. It will be impossible for the United Nations to conduct a meaningful assessment of East Timorese public opinion if those forces – one party to the conflict, are controlling the situation on the ground. Furthermore, the United Nations should implement the voting process and not merely supervise an Indonesian-run ballot.
2. The so-called militias, created and armed by Indonesia's military, are criminal terrorists who openly and repeatedly violate Indonesian and common law. They must be disarmed and disbanded, and their leaders brought to justice. It is not sufficient for them simply to be ordered to 'lay down their arms.' The U.N. must take responsibility for enforcing the April 21 Peace Pact, since the Indonesian government has shown its unwillingness or inability to do so.
3. The principal military adversaries in the long-standing conflict are the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) and the armed forces of the East Timorese resistance (FALINTIL) who have exercised their internationally-recognized right of self-defense. They must both agree to lay down their arms in preparation for the consultation, and ABRI's troop levels should be reduced below 1,000 (still far above the number of FALINTIL personnel). For a week before and after August 8, both ABRI and FALINTIL should be confined to specific places so that voters are not intimidated by either side. The United Nations must provide sufficient personnel, suitably equipped and with the necessary mandate, to ensure this.
4. Many Indonesian-appointed East Timor officials (including Governor Abilio Osorio Soares, Ambassador-at-large Francisco Lopes da Cruz, and military commander Col. Tono Suratman) publicly oppose their head of state's decision to engage in this peace process. Such officials, whatever their political views, should be required to perform their jobs, meeting Indonesia's commitments to the world community. Those who subvert the process (which is not the same as exercising their right to advocate that people vote for autonomy) should be removed from their posts.
5. Indonesia has proposed six countries to participate in the peace process: the United States, Australia, Germany, Japan, the Philippines and the United Kingdom. All of these, with the exception of the Philippines, have a long history of supplying weapons, training and/or money to support Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor. Latin America, Africa and the Non-Aligned countries are excluded entirely. We urge Portugal, Indonesia and the United Nations to include a broad range of nations. Among the many which would be well-suited are Brazil (the largest Latin American country, whose government has already offered to help), South

Africa (president of the Non-Aligned Movement), Mozambique (with long experience in peacekeeping operations), New Zealand, Fiji, Norway, Ireland, Thailand and Canada.

6. If the East Timorese people reject autonomy on August 8, the United Nations should immediately establish a transitional government in East Timor. President Habibie has committed Indonesia to this process. The outcome of the consultation, in the context of international law and U.N. resolutions, must be followed through regardless of the results of the June Indonesian elections and the composition of the MPR.

We urge you to make it clear to the Indonesian government that these conditions are essential for the United Nations to conduct a meaningful consultation in East Timor. If they are not accepted on May 5, we urge you to go to Jakarta and meet with the President of Indonesia and use your high office and powers of persuasion to underscore their importance. If the May 5 talks fail to include these conditions, the resulting crisis will require you to bring the matter to the Security Council and demonstrate that these are elements without which the United Nations cannot proceed.

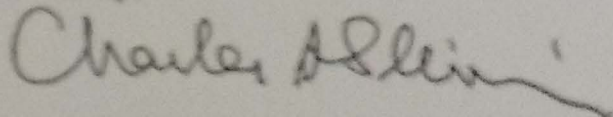
The Indonesian authorities must understand the absolute necessity of bringing their own forces into line with the policy announced by their head of state three months ago.

Over the last few months, the major consequence of the U.N. peace process in East Timor has been a marked escalation in violence. The world community has been shocked as machetes and guns have taken well over a hundred innocent lives. We know that you share our abhorrence of this blatant subversion of the process, and hope that you agree that action along the lines described above is the only way to rescue the process, the credibility of the United Nations, and the lives, rights and futures of the people of East Timor.

Since April 23, many key governments, including permanent members of the Security Council and most of those in the countries represented in IFET, have strongly urged the Indonesian authorities to stop the paramilitary violence. They would welcome your decisive action.

Thank you for your attention and concern. We in the international NGO community have worked on East Timor for many years. We stand ready to assist the United Nations peace process in any ways you feel are appropriate and helpful, and assure you that our concern and actions will continue until a just and lasting peace is in place.

Sincerely,



Charles Scheiner

United Nations Representative, International Federation for East Timor

cc: Foreign Ministers of Portugal and Indonesia
Ambassadors to the United Nations of the Security Council member states
International media

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May 23, 1999

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East Timor International Support Center (Australia)
East Timor Relief Association (Australia)
Australia-East Timor Association
Australians for a Free East Timor
Hobart East Timor Committee (Australia)
Friends of East Timor, Western Australia
East Timor Alert Network (Canada)
Canadian Action for Indonesia and East Timor
Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (Fiji)
Agora Pour Timor (France)
Association Solidarité Timor-Oriental (France)
Watch Indonesia! (Germany)
Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker (Germany)
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Hon. Kofi Annan
United Nations Secretary-General
New York, NY 10017
By fax to 212-963-2155

Dear Excellency,

When we wrote to you before you negotiated the May 5 Tripartite agreement, we were concerned about aspects of the popular consultation in East Timor. We are gratified that some of our points were addressed, although the most important ones were not. We understand the importance you place on moving the process forward, with the intention that when a U.N. team was in East Timor it would be possible to increase the pressure on Indonesia to take its security responsibilities seriously.

We are encouraged by your selection of Ian Martin to head UNAMET, by the serious commitment to a meaningful peace process we have heard during discussions with U.N. personnel over the past two weeks, and by the forthright statements issued by UNAMET's press spokesman in Dili.

Eighteen days have passed since the New York agreements were signed – 20% of the way to August 8. During this period, the militias and their Indonesian military sponsors have become more blatant in proliferating terror throughout East Timor. Since the beginning of 1999, they have forced more than 35,000 East Timorese people to flee their homes, many into paramilitary-controlled virtual prison camps. Killings continue almost every day. The close cooperation between Indonesian police and military personnel and the paramilitaries has become even more visible.

In our May 3 letter to you, we expressed concern that Indonesian forces, rather than the United Nations, were given responsibility for security in East Timor during the August consultation. When this was raised after the signing ceremony on May 5, you expressed the need for realism, and asked the journalists "What would you suggest?"

Regrettably, during the last two weeks it has become abundantly clear that the Indonesian military are doing everything they can to sabotage your efforts to solve the problem of East Timor in a peaceful, democratic and fair manner. It is as if the April 21 Peace Pact, in which Mr. Alatas placed so much stock during the tripartite negotiations, does not exist. East Timor has become a law-free zone, where Indonesian-backed militias murder and commit mayhem with impunity.

When UNAMET spokesman David Wimbhurst decries unprovoked militia killings of unarmed civilians, Col. Tono Suratman demands to censor his statements. The Indonesian Foreign Ministry calls U.N. people "biased" when they criticize paramilitary violence. Although U.N. personnel personally observed Indonesian armed forces training militias a few days ago, President Habibie says he needs proof that "rogue elements" of his military are supporting the violence.

But it is not "rogue elements"; it is the military from the top down. A few days ago, Gen. Wiranto belittled the U.N. role in East Timor. "They will only give suggestions to the Indonesian Police."

Every U.N. person we have spoken with acknowledges that a popular consultation in the current climate of fear would not accurately reflect the wishes of the people of East Timor. Yet the climate continues to worsen, and the U.N. process is proceeding. If the people of East Timor are not able to return to their homes, to live without fear of terrorism, that process will be a cruel hoax. We believe it can still be salvaged, but only through prompt and effective United Nations action to control the military/paramilitary violence. There are fewer than eleven weeks remaining.

The International Federation for East Timor will send teams of non-partisan NGO observers to East Timor before and during the August 8 vote, to assist the U.N. in ensuring that the vote is free and fair. U.N. personnel have told us that they will not be responsible for the safety of our observers, and we do not expect any special treatment. But the United Nations is conducting the popular consultation and is therefore responsible for the safety of all people in East Timor during that period, be they East Timorese, Indonesian, or other nationals. And the U.N. is failing in that responsibility.

When you report to the Security Council tomorrow, we urge you to ask for more than authorization to continue with the process agreed upon on May 5. That agreement assumed the good faith of Mr. Alatas and the government he represents. But in the last two weeks, the Indonesian government has shown no good faith, no indication that it respects the papers it has signed, the institution of the United Nations, or the collective wishes of the international community. Their recent unilateral attempt to change the date of the consultation is another example of the low regard in which they hold the agreements they have made with you.

In our May 3 letter to you, we asked the United Nations to take responsibility for security in East Timor. Events since then have made that request all the more imperative. We urge you to ask the Security Council for authorization to send U.N. peacekeepers to East Timor -- not merely to advise the Indonesian police, but to replace them with people who take the responsibility to protect the population seriously. This must be done as rapidly as possible -- each day of delay allows paramilitaries to kill new victims.

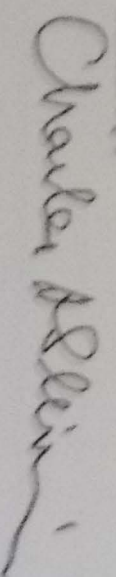
We suggested that you go to Jakarta to meet with President Habibie to underscore the importance of restoring peace to East Timor; that would still be useful. Perhaps you could go to East Timor as well, to further demonstrate to the Indonesian government and the international community the seriousness of the U.N. commitment to making this process work.

On May 17, UNAMET spokesman David Wimburst said "Words by the Indonesian Government are not enough. Determined action must be taken by the appropriate Indonesian Security authorities to curtail the activities of the armed militias..."

Words by the United Nations are not enough, either. Determined action must be taken by the United Nations to curtail the activities of the militias. The Indonesian military and its civilian leadership are playing the international community for fools, and the credibility of the United Nations itself is at stake.

Thank you for your attention, and for your continued commitment to a just peace process in East Timor.

Sincerely,



Cc: Security Council Member States
Media

Charles Scheiner
United Nations Representative

International Federation for East Timor (IFET)

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Join IFET!

The International Federation for East Timor was founded in 1991 by East Timor solidarity groups in Japan, Australia, Europe and North America to be a clearinghouse for NGO initiatives on East Timor and to support those initiatives, particular in United Nations fora. IFET is accredited with the U.N. Department of Public Information and has a U.N. Representative in New York. The secretariat is in Japan.

IFET invites all NGOs concerned with East Timor -- particularly with ensuring that the East Timorese people are able, at the earliest possible moment, to freely exercise self-determination guaranteed by the U.N. Charter -- to join IFET, so that

- NGOs in solidarity with East Timor can maintain the minimal mutual contact to ensure the effectiveness of our common struggle.
- We can fully reflect in UN fora the worldwide support for East Timor.

IFET includes single-issue East Timor groups, and others with a wider range of concerns which work on East Timor. At present, there are about 25 members. We are primarily concerned with information sharing and occasional joint statements to U.N. bodies.

IFET does not receive funding from anyone and depends on membership contributions of affiliating groups to cover the costs of printing and mailing biannual bulletins and occasional urgent updates. We hope you can contribute on a sliding scale -- funded groups or groups in First World countries are asked to contribute \$100, but dues are not mandatory for membership.

One upcoming activity is the United Nations Committee of 24 (Decolonization) hearings on East Timor in New York on July 23-24, 1996. IFET will help NGOs present petitions by providing information and arranging for someone to present the statement if your group cannot be there in person. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested.

Name of NGO: _____

Contact person: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ phone: _____ fax: _____

___ We would like to join IFET. Enclosed is our membership fee of _____

Payments can be sent by postal Giro to the Kure YWCA (attention Yoshiko Kawagoe), Acct. Hiroshima 2 27646, or in U.S. dollar check to ETAN/IFET sent to the New York address above.

___ We are still deciding. Please put us on the IFET mailing list.

If you would like materials from IFET, please indicate what on the back of this page.

Please describe your initiatives on East Timor so that they can be shared with IFET members.

Joint International Observer Missions To the East Timor Popular Consultation Process

PRESS STATEMENT

1 September 1999

We the International Observer Missions listed below consider it of the utmost importance to express our evaluation of the consultation process implemented by UNAMET in the Framework of the May 5th agreement under the auspices of the Secretary General of United Nations.

We want to state, in the very first place, our recognition to the professional work undertaken by the international and local staff of UNAMET, with full respect to the free will of the people to vote.

In sharp contrast with the electoral process, we are extremely concerned that despite the determination shown by the East Timorese people to vote in the popular consultation in such impressive numbers on 30th August, the climate of fear and intimidation continues to distort their will.

Specifically, we want to express our concern regarding the respect and full compliance with Article 3 of the May 5th Agreement which states:

"The Government of Indonesia will be responsible for maintaining peace and security in East Timor in order to ensure that the popular consultation is carried out in a fair and peaceful way in *an atmosphere free of intimidation, violence or interference* from any side."

There has been a systematic process of intimidation against the East Timorese population as well as local and international UNAMET personnel and international observers.

Roadblocks, checkpoints, beatings, shootings as well as the burning and destruction of property at different times and places, are some of the forms of intimidation that we see every day, especially by so-called "militias", whose actions have been tolerated by the police and the army.

The Indonesian Government is solely responsible for eradicating all forms of violence and intimidation to guarantee an adequate climate before, during and after the voting on August 30.

Therefore, we demand that the Indonesian government fulfil its responsibilities by immediately disarming and bringing the militias under control without further delay, and we ask that the international community and the United Nations take stronger measure to encourage Indonesia to restore safety, peace and security.

International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET)
Independent Committee for the Monitoring of Balloting (KIPER)
International Federation for East Timor Observer Project (IFET-OP)
Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR)
Australia East Timor International Volunteer Project (AETIVP)
Official delegation of Chile
U.N. Australia Association
Uniting Church in Australia
Asia Pacific Center for Justice and Peace (APCJP)
Oxfam International
Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)

International Federation for East Timor Observer Project

East Timor field office:

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Darwin, Australia
7 September, 1999

IFET-OP's field office was looted and burned shortly after we evacuated Dili. For further information, contact the IFET-OP International Coordinator:

Charles Scheiner, PO Box 1182, White Plains, NY 10602 USA
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Media Statement After Being Evacuated from East Timor

We are speaking for the International Federation for East Timor Observer Project, which brought more than 120 volunteer observers to East Timor from all over the world to observe the U.N. popular consultation process.

Today, September 7, the last of our observers was forced to leave East Timor. Over the past two days, the Royal Australian Air Force evacuated 60 of our nonpartisan volunteers to Darwin from Dili and Baucau.

We left East Timor for safety, but with tremendous sadness. The East Timorese people have no Australia to run to, no place to hide from militia terror. Last night, Australia and Indonesian military officers prevented one of our East Timorese staff members from boarding the plane with us -- and he faces an unspeakable horror shared by hundreds of thousands of his fellow East Timorese.

Most international observers and media fled East Timor before IFET-OP had to leave, and we were the last international NGO to leave. UNAMET has withdrawn from the entire country except Dili, where their communications and electricity has been cut off, and they are surrounded by militias who shoot into their compound virtually without interruption.

As we escaped East Timor, both IFET-OP and the people we left behind kept thinking of 1975, when the international community abandoned East Timor, allowing the Indonesian military to invade and kill 200,000 people with impunity while the nations of the world closed their eyes.

It is beginning to happen again -- and this time it must not be ignored. By its actions, the Indonesian military has not only declared war on the people of East Timor, but on the United Nations -- the representative of all nations of the world. No government would respond to such attacks with delegations and discussions. It is long past time for the international community to take immediate, forceful and effective action to stop the killings in East Timor.

For months, the world has accepted the Indonesian fiction that the militias, the military, and the police are separate entities. As our observers have seen in numerous incidents, and as virtually every East Timorese person knows in their bones, these are interchangeable uniforms with the same people, the same weapons sources, and the same purpose. Yesterday's declaration of martial law is an Orwellian manipulation of reality -- the militia wing of the military already controls nearly all of East Timor by their terrorist actions against UNAMET, civilians, foreigners, and, most seriously, pro-independence advocates -- more than 3/4 of the East Timorese people.

Hundreds of East Timorese, including many UNAMET local staff, have been killed by militias since the August 30 ballot. Foreign journalists and CivPols have been targeted and wounded. Yet there have been no casualties among the TNI or the police. If those armed government forces are

truly opposing militias that have shown no reluctance to kill, why are they not subject to the same murderous wrath as the civilian population?

In last week's vote, more than 78% of the East Timorese people voted for independence, which should invoke a transition from Indonesian rule to East Timorese independence. It is unconscionable that the result of the ballot is the forced exodus of the UN and other internationals from East Timor, and the transfer of power to killers armed and supported by the Indonesian military. It is as if Indonesia tricked the United Nations and Portugal into signing the May 5 accords, using the popular consultation to lure pro-independence East Timorese out into the open to be marked for death.

It is long past time for the United Nations to take responsibility for security in East Timor by replacing Indonesian police and military with U.N. forces who will put an end to militia terror and bring the perpetrators to justice. Each diplomatic ploy that delays UN peace enforcement is directly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of East Timorese people. Every time the Security Council accepts a TNI troop level increase or declaration of martial law as an excuse to forestall effective international action, they are complicit in killing.

Tens of thousands of East Timorese have fled to the mountains to escape militia terror. Nearly as many have sought sanctuary in churches, police stations, UNAMET compounds and elsewhere. They face militia attacks, starvation, disease and death from lack of security, food, water and health care -- and yet no reliable protection, aid agency or international support is allowed near them.

Equally frightening are widespread reports of East Timorese civilians and refugees being forced onto trucks or ships and taken away to West Timor or other Indonesian islands. Nobody knows how many have been abducted, but it is certainly in the thousands. Where are these people taken to, and what will they face upon arrival? Without any oversight, images of genocidal slaughter from Indonesia's occupation of East Timor 24 years ago spring to mind.

Because of the current situation, the International Federation for East Timor Observer Project recommends that the following actions be taken in order to forestall further killing in East Timor:

1. The international community must declare Indonesia a pariah government. All military and economic cooperation, IMF and World Bank support, and other financial assistance should be frozen until Indonesia brings the militias under control.
2. Since the Indonesian government is unwilling or unable to control the shock troops it has created, the Indonesian military must withdraw from East Timor, the militia must be disarmed, and the United Nations must immediately send armed peace enforcement personnel to East Timor to assume responsibility for security in the territory. This must be an international effort which should include all members of the Security Council, including the United States.
3. U.N., national, and non-governmental organizations must provide immediate emergency humanitarian aid to those displaced from their homes by militia terror. If the Indonesian government cannot provide a secure environment for these agencies to do their jobs, the U.N. must take on that responsibility as well.
4. Forced transport of East Timorese civilians out of East Timor by the Indonesian military must stop immediately, and those already relocated must be monitored by international agencies and allowed to return to their homes. If the international community cannot guarantee their safe resettlement in East Timor, Australia and other countries must accept and care for East Timorese refugees until order and peace is restored.