

EAST TIMOR

The Inside Story

N° 22 June 1998

1300 East Timorese refugees in limbo

Asylum-seekers in need of certainty and freedom from persecution

We call for fair treatment of East Timorese asylum-seekers in Australia, either by the creation of a special permanent resident visa class, or by allowing them to be considered for normal refugee protection status against Indonesia alone. The Australian Government must drop the spurious Portuguese citizenship argument.

There are currently over 1300 East Timorese refugees in Australia. They are waiting to know if they can stay or will be deported by the Australian Government. Solidarity groups across the country are working in support of their need to stay in Australia.

The following is an edited version of our submission to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs on 1998-99 Migration and Humanitarian Programs and settlement related issues. Please use this information to discuss the issue with friends and colleagues, and to lobby your local parliamentarian. The lobbying campaign is underway - see the back page for more details.

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Brief summary

FOET (WA) has great concern on a number of important issues related to the operation of the Humanitarian Program as it affects East Timorese people. Primarily these are:

- The currently unresolved status of those 1300+ East Timorese in Australia who are seeking asylum under the Domestic Protection Visa (Class 866);
- The withdrawal of Asylum Seeker Assistance for those who may have their initial application for Domestic Protection refused.

These issues also include:

- The decision to terminate rather than extend the Special Assistance Category (SAC Class 208) for East Timorese in Portugal, Macau and Mozambique;
- The lack of a Special Assistance Category (SAC) for East Timorese in Indonesia/East Timor;
- Discrimination against East Timorese applying to visit Australia;
- The treatment of East Timorese who bypass immigration clearance to enter Australia.

Each of these issues is addressed in some detail in the following submission.

Details

1. The currently unresolved status of those 1300+ East Timorese in Australia who are seeking asylum under the Domestic Protection Visa (Class 866).

The most urgent and substantial problem facing East Timorese people in terms of Australian immigration policy is the case of the 1300+ East Timorese currently seeking asylum under the Domestic Protection Visa (Class 866).

The Minister will be aware that the previous ALP Government took the line that these people had 'the right to live in a safe third country', namely Portugal, based on a dubious assertion that East Timorese born in East Timor prior to 1974 have current citizenship rights in Portugal.

Prior to the 1996 Federal election, the Coalition in opposition spoke out strongly against this argument, in contrast to the other areas of Coalition policy on East Timor that were broadly similar to that of the ALP Government. FOET (WA) were heartened to read, for example, the strident criticism of the Keating Government's double-standard in this matter, in *The Australian* of October 12 1995. It read as follows...

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Newsletter of the Friends of East Timor (Western Australia)

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FOET is the WA Affiliate of the Australian Coalition for a free East Timor (ACET)

A message from inside East Timor

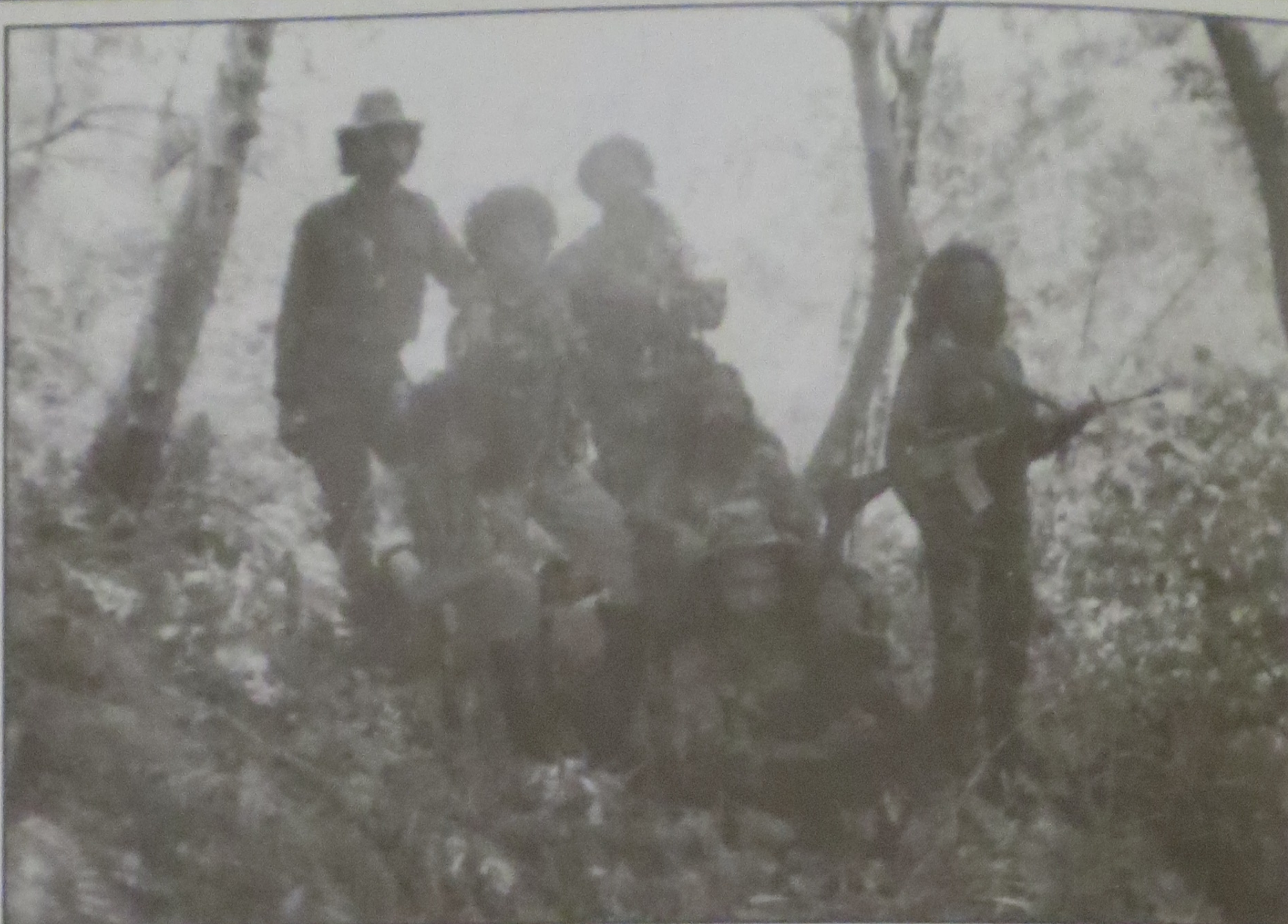
A Message by
Taur Matan Ruak
Chief of Staff of FALINTIL

Timorese compatriots, children of East Timor! Today, with profound grief and sorrow, for the first time, I come to address you through the international means of communication.

To all East Timorese and our friends of the international solidarity spread around the world, to the Clandestine Front and to all fighters scattered in the villages and Mountains of East Timor, and specially to the East Timorese leaders, I would like to inform that Nino Konis Santana, Secretary of the Directive Committee of Fretilin, Chief of the Executive Council of The Armed Struggle and the Clandestine Resistance, died on 11 March 1998, in the areas of the district of Ainaro. He was on his way to the central areas of the country on political and military duties. The tragic death of our unforgettable Hero was caused by a fall when he was trying to take shelter in one of his hiding places. He was buried on the same day at 23:30 hrs, East Timor time.

Timorese compatriots, children of East Timor! We have lost a great man, a tireless fighter for the Motherland. Like many other heroes and martyrs of the National Liberation, Nino Konis Santana, has attained a proud place in the history of East Timor and has left a lasting memory for generations that there is duty and obligation to perform: that is to defend the territorial integrity and the self-determination for East Timor. Unfortunately, he has left behind an unfinished task, a history to be concluded. For his memory to rest it's now up to us to assume the responsibility to carry on with that obligation.

Brothers and sisters, Timorese compatriots! In praising the participation and the contribution of our great hero for the liberation of our country, it's very important to stress: his contribution to the reorganisation of the resistance struggle after the capture of the leader of the resistance, Xanana Gusmão; the expansion and the consolidation of our political and military presence in



One group of East Timorese FALINTIL guerrillas

the western part of the Territory; and the reinstallation of radio communications with the outside world. May the people and the history of this country never forget for generations; and may God Almighty honour his presence in His kingdom ... The eternal glory for the heroes and martyrs for the National Liberation ... Amen.

Comrades-in-arms, children of Motherland, as a consequence of the tragic event, today, I officially announce my assumption to the leadership of the Resistance inside the country subject to final decision by the competent bodies.

By inheriting the complex aspect of this struggle, my fundamental mission is:

1. To support and promote the political reforms that are necessary for the consolidation and unity of all Timorese in the struggle against the Indonesian military occupation. It is fundamental to reopen dialogue to obtain consensus on the position of the international legality of the question of East Timor.
2. The establishment of the political alliances with all the recognised and interested parties.
3. The establishment of a common political strategy for a consensus solution.
4. To fight for the consolidation and

expansion of our political and military presence all over the country, and to organise a very strong, credible and systematic internal pressure against the Indonesian military occupation.

5. To support the efforts of the international community, particularly Portugal, Indonesia and the United Nations in the pursuit of a satisfactory solution for the problematic question of East Timor.

Before ending, I would like to appeal to the International community, especially to the European Union and the United States of America to exert pressure on Jakarta for the adoption of a more flexible position in its approach to the East Timor question. I appeal to the Community of the Portuguese speaking countries to unite in the front line of the struggle of our people. I appeal to the international solidarity organisations all over the world to consolidate and expand their network in support of our cause, the cause of our people and country. I appeal to Portugal to maintain its firm stand in accordance with the principles of International Law and the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic.

From our part, we will continue to support the inclusion of Portugal

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"To defend self-determination for our people"

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in the quest for a just solution to East Timor. I appeal to the Jakarta government to work in conjunction with the international community towards a peaceful resolution and to consciously realise that the radicalist (uncompromising) approach will not benefit Indonesia. On the contrary, it will only aggravate the internal situation, which consequently will damage the international

reputation of Indonesia.

Finally, I appeal to FALINTIL members, to the youth of East Timor, from North to South, from East to West, to be ready to face the new challenges in our struggle for Freedom.

Motherland or Death!

To Resist is to Win!

By the Executive Council of the Resistance
Taur Matan Ruak
Chief of Staff of FALINTIL
(National Armed Forces For The Liberation Of East Timor)
East Timor
March 30, 1998.

Posted through the East Timor International Support Centre, Australia.

About East Timor

Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese enclave of East Timor in 1975 and annexed it as its 27th province a year later. In the years following the invasion over 200,000, or a third of the population, died either fighting the Indonesians or from disease and starvation. The United Nations has not recognised the annexation and still considers Portugal as the territory's administrator. Australia is considered one of the main Western allies of Indonesia.



About Friends of East Timor (Western Australia)

FOET supports:

- An immediate end to the human rights abuses in Indonesian-occupied East Timor;
- The implementation of the United Nations resolutions on East Timor which affirm the rights of the East Timorese to determine their own future through the formal process of decolonisation, and a free and fair referendum for all East Timorese.

FOET's activities include:

- Campaigns to inform Australians about the situation in East Timor;
- Lobbying the Australian Government, the United Nations and others to fulfil their obligations to the people of East Timor;
- Monitoring current developments and media coverage of the issue.

Friends of East Timor (WA) is the WA affiliate of the Australian Coalition for a free East Timor (ACET)

Friends of East Timor can be contacted at:

PO Box 570
Victoria Park WA 6100
telephone (08) 9361 4678
email <foetwa@perth.dialix.oz.au>

Are you on email?

If so, email FOET <foetwa@perth.dialix.oz.au> for a list of resources on East Timor available through the internet.

Famine strikes East Timor

After 22 years of Indonesian 'development' in the occupied territory of East Timor, the local people are facing large-scale starvation on a scale not seen since the early and bloody years of the invasion.

The endemic economic crisis afflicting all territories under Indonesian control is well known to Australians who follow regional affairs. Less publicised, however, has been its severe impact on East Timor, in combination with widespread crop failure caused by climatic conditions and agricultural mismanagement by the puppet administration.

The first area hit was the small island of Atauro, which lies 40km off the coast from the capital, Dili. In the late 1970s, Atauro was used as a concentration camp to imprison family members – particularly women and children – of East Timorese resistance fighters who remained outside Indonesian-held areas, and as such is no stranger to starvation. Earlier this year, widespread hunger began again. The representative of the Federal Government's aid organisation Aus-Aid in Dili sent an urgent report to Canberra in February, excerpted below:

There has been virtually no rain at all to date on the coastal areas. The situation in Atauro is appalling. I cannot stress enough the privations that the people are suffering. There is absolutely no corn. The people are too lethargic from hunger to walk down to Vila (the capital of Atauro) to carry stock back. Schools are closing early, and many of the children are starving. Virtually the entire population is subsisting from scavenging the reefs at low tide. By March or April most of the population, according to the locals, will be 'setengah mati' (half-dead). East Timor, and especially Atauro and the coastal areas, needs urgent assistance, not another report. I beg you to react quickly. The water problem, a perennial one in Atauro, is critical.

The response of the puppet administration in Dili, and the Indonesian government in general, has been abysmal. (It already costs the

Indonesian government \$US 500 million per year simply to maintain their occupation forces in East Timor, which leaves little money or will to provide additional 'assistance' to the territory's actual inhabitants.) Some very limited relief in the form of rice deliveries were commenced from Dili to Atauro, but only after the English language media in Jakarta started asking questions. Food aid from US NGOs began to flow into Atauro in late March.

While the immediate crisis in Atauro appears to have passed – thanks to this international assistance – other areas of East Timor are now suffering intensely. The Darwin-based East Timor International Support Centre (ETISC), who follow closely developments in the territory, reported early in April that relief workers are now witnessing deaths from starvation on mainland East Timor. These are occurring in the worst-hit drought areas: on the north coast and the western border area, such as in the village of Fefudin, where 85 people starved to death in late March.

Such tragedies are likely to be repeated elsewhere in the coming months – much of the seed that should have been used for planting in northern East Timor has been eaten due to the lack of any other food. Many people are now subsisting on dwindling supplies of sago, tubers and even leaves. ETISC quotes relief workers as saying that "the East Timorese may perish as a people if outside aid is not forthcoming fast".

Why East Timor?

The currency crisis has hit all areas under Indonesian control, with prices for basic essentials rising by up to 500%. Similarly, bad weather patterns have been prevalent in much of eastern Indonesia. As a result, many Indonesians are suffering too. But a number of historical and political factors have combined to make the situation in East Timor that much worse.

Firstly there is the presence in East Timor of a huge number of Indonesian troops, who are economically both very demanding and

unproductive in themselves. For example, the huge concentration of troops in Dili has resulted in water shortages in the eastern part of the town where many of the locals live. More so than any other territory under Indonesian control, the military in East Timor have an absolute stranglehold, and in the past humanitarian aid has been stolen by the Indonesian army for consumption or for resale. The fact that the wages for Indonesian soldiers are now almost worthless is only likely to exacerbate this problem.

The massive influx of Indonesian immigrants promoted by the government has forced the East Timorese off productive land. Other highly productive land in areas receiving rain are declared off-limits for military and political reasons, and remain unused. A good example of this is the two vast crop areas near Iliomar in south-central East Timor, which provided almost a third of the island's crops in the past. The East Timorese farmers who normally work that land also supply food, intelligence and supplies to the guerrilla unit which operates nearby.

To starve this unit out, the Indonesian military has banned farmers from working this land – an utter waste of good resources. The removal of villagers into strategic hamlets under military control, often far from their traditional lands, has also decimated agricultural practices and experience in those areas still under the plough. The effects of prolonged warfare, including the use of napalm and chemical defoliants, and inappropriate agricultural practices introduced by the new regime, has also resulted in severe environmental degradation in many areas.

Economic monopolies by military conglomerates, and policies of active discrimination against East Timorese with family members still serving in the guerrilla forces, have contributed to far higher unemployment in East Timor than in Indonesia generally. The unemployed are able to cope even less with the massive increase in prices than others, and the

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economic monopolies encourage profiteering.

The current suffering of the East Timorese people is something over which Australians in particular need to act, given that it is in part due to our governments' complicity in Indonesia's annexation that has led to them living (and dying) under a brutal and incompetent regime. These are all good reasons why East Timor deserves special attention in the context of the general Indonesian crisis.

What's needed?

What the East Timorese need is urgent food and humanitarian aid in the short term. There needs to be active monitoring of the distribution of this aid to prevent misuse by the Indonesian military. However, it is clear that much of the current crisis has roots in longer term problems caused by the Indonesian occupation. To prevent such famines

occurring every year, Nobel Laureate José Ramos-Horta argues that Indonesia must allow permanent unrestricted access to East Timor for far more NGOs than are currently allowed – and specifically to UN agencies including UNICEF, WHO and the World Food Program. This would also contribute to the internationalisation of the East Timor problem and make a resolution of the broader issues more likely.

What can I do?

1. Make a personal donation, or better still, organise a collection among friends or workmates.

FOET(WA) does not administer humanitarian relief directly, but the excellent Sydney-based East Timor Relief Association does.

ETRA can be contacted on (02) 9891 5861. Cheques can be sent to ETRA Famine Relief Fund, PO Box 1102, Parramatta NSW 2124, and

receipts are issued on request.

2. Pressure the Australian government to provide food and humanitarian aid, and support increased access by NGOs.

While some aid has been promised to Indonesia in general, it is unclear how much of this will reach East Timor, and if it does, whether it will be distributed effectively. The responsible Minister is Alexander Downer (Foreign Affairs), but your local Federal members might also benefit from a call or a copy of any letters.

You may also wish to raise your concerns with them about the East Timor issue generally, including the refugee issue (see two articles in this issue). The famine issue is likely to develop rapidly – for the latest update contact FOET, or Darwin's East Timor International Support Centre (ETISC) on (08) 8948 4458.

Rob South

Trade Union response

On March 3, representatives of the WA Trade Union Support Group and the East Timorese community addressed the Trades and Labour Council of WA. In response, the Council unanimously passed the following resolution:

Council calls on the Federal Government to ensure that an appropriate part of the humanitarian aid to be supplied to Indonesia is sent to East Timor. Parts of that territory have been badly affected by crop failure and famine; and the situation is worsened by the continued military occupation by Indonesian

forces.

Council calls on the Federal Government to use its influence with Indonesia and within multi-lateral bodies to achieve unrestricted access to East Timor for NGOs and UN agencies including: UNICEF, WHO and the World Food Program.

Council requests affiliates to give whatever support is practicable to organisations such as the East Timor Relief Association (ETRA) or through the Red Cross to help alleviate the additional suffering that the people of East Timor are now undergoing.

The resolution ended with contact details for ETRA (see below).

Famine Relief Fund

East Timor Relief Association

Telephone 02 9891 5861

Please send cheques to:

ETRA Famine Relief Fund
PO Box 1102
Parramatta
NSW 2124

Australia grants oil licences

The Australian government announced that it had granted seven new licences to explore oil in the Sea of Timor.

Australian Minister for Resources, Warwick Parer, said that the new licences, granted to local and foreign oil companies, would lead to an expected investment of more than US\$88 million during the next six years. Three of the licences are

located in the area known as Timor Gap, an area being jointly explored by Indonesia and Australia.

Portugal has challenged the agreement entitled Timor Gap Treaty, signed in 1989 between Jakarta and Australia and allowing both countries to explore the resources in the area.

Lusa, 6 Mar 98

Indonesia reinforces military

Indonesia has reinforced its military presence in East Timor since the beginning of the year by stationing an additional eight battalions totalling 5,600 men in the territory. The East Timor International Support Centre also said Indonesia was stopping the Red Cross from visiting areas in East Timor affected by human rights violations.

Lusa, 23 Mar 98

Changing guard no better than combat troops

Once again a young farmer has fallen victim to "territorial security" measures by Territorial Battalion Troops (BTT). In the village of Builale, about 35 km south of Baucau, Salvador dos Reis Ornai, 20, was captured and tortured by BTT 401/Banteng Raiders and Team Rajawali III, until he lost consciousness.

On the morning of 7 March 1998, when Salvador was on his way to his rice-field, a routine activity for a farmer, he encountered BTT and Team Rajawali III employing two East Timorese informants, Mario Pinto, member of GADAPAKSI, Ossu Branch, from the village of Uaguia, and Francisco das Ruas, from the village of Ossu de Cima.

Although Salvador had identified himself by presenting his official Identity Card (KTP), this proved insufficient to avoid a violent attack by the Armed Forces personnel. He

was detained and tortured.

MateBEAN sources in Baucau state that Salvador remains unconscious, receiving only the care of his family at their home in Builale, a village on the banks of the river Assalaitula.

The Assalaitula river and the borders separating the Baucau and Viqueque regencies are among the most dangerous areas, not only for their civilian populations but also for Armed Forces personnel and Falintil guerrillas.

It was near this river, on 20 August 1996, that Falintil guerrillas, led by David "Daitula" Alex, Taur Matan Ruak and Ular, staged a surprise attack and shot dead two Armed Forces personnel, and seized their weapons. The attack was recorded on camera by a foreign journalist, and was subsequently broadcast on Portuguese television, 7

December 1996.

To the east, about 4 km away, last February 1998, Team Rajawali captured and killed a peasant, Duarte; his body thrown into a cave to be discovered by Venilale youths two days later.

BTT troops are used by the Indonesian military to replace combat troops. The label "territorial" is used to give the general impression, especially among Indonesian and international communities, that East Timor is no longer in a state of war.

For the people of Timor Loro Sa'e, BTT is seen as more ferocious than combat troops. For this reason they interpret BTT as short for: "Buru (hunt down), Tangkap (capture), and Tembak (kill)".

MateBEAN
through Kabar dari PIJAR
22 Mar 98



East Timorese house in a field.

Foundation for Peace and Democracy

José Ramos-Horta has initiated the *Monsignor Martinho da Costa Lopes Foundation for Peace and Democracy*. It has been set up with his share of the monetary award that goes with the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ramos-Horta outlined the main aims of the Foundation as being the defence and dissemination of the democratic ideal and the study of cultural, social, economic and political phenomena of the peoples of East Timor and the Asia Pacific region. He also referred to the main activities which the Foundation would undertake:

- a) to organise, promote or sponsor conferences, seminars, debates, etc., and public events on subjects of particular political, economic, cultural and/or social relevance;
- b) promote training schemes on political, economic-social and technical-vocational subjects;
- c) finance the activities of public and private sector bodies whose work involves the promotion of the democratic ideal and provision of assistance to Timorese nationalists in East Timor and abroad;
- d) organise, promote or sponsor publishing initiatives which were in line with the Foundation's aims;
- e) provide Timorese with study grants with a view enhancing their academic and technical-vocational qualifications;
- f) organise, promote or sponsor any kind of initiative considered necessary or useful to the pursuit of the Foundation's aims;
- g) promote co-operation between Portugal and East Timor, and between East Timor and all other Portuguese-speaking countries

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"Just knew it was a bit of a hot spot"

As told by Lou O'Shay to Brad Raymond

I went to East Timor in 1994. I was 20 years old. Until then I knew very little about the place and its problems. Just knew it was a bit of a hot spot, that's all.

I read an advert in The West Australian placed by an independent journalist asking for a photographer to go to East Timor. He was doing an article for Revelation magazine. I had a bit of photography experience so I applied.

We took off from Darwin. That was the cheapest way to do it. In Darwin we met a group of people who had been before. And after speaking to them I wasn't too sure whether I'd made the right idea; it all sounded so intense.

One man, a doctor, had actually been deported two months earlier. He'd been at a demonstration at a cemetery when he was rounded up by police. So he'd left a video tape at the cemetery hidden under a gravestone. He said it was under a head-stone that said 'Jaz'. So, when we get to the cemetery we find every head-stone says Jaz. He'd drawn us up a diagram, but that proved useless. So we gave up looking. It was impossible. But, funny enough,

half-an-hour later or so I found it. Stumbled across it by complete chance. So he finally got it back.

Going to East Timor has dramatically changed my perception on life. These people have to endure such an intense oppression each day. It's incomprehensible until you see it.

After speaking to the people in Darwin I was expecting to see trigger-happy Indonesian soldiers roaming the streets. Well, it's not that blatant. But, nevertheless, you can feel the fear. It's everywhere you go: people continually at the mercy of others.

I used to do gymnastics so I was able to play with the kids, show them some silly little gymnastic things. And whenever I did the parents would move into the background. They felt they couldn't be close to their kids having fun with a Westerner. There's always the military watching them.

You'd pass people on the street, and they'd whisper something. You could see on their faces that they thought by just saying 'this place is bad', they were taking a huge risk.

Our bags were filled with medicine (that) we took to orphan-ages. They treated us like Royalty. So

happy to have it. At one boys home, Don Boscoe, I think it was called, we stayed there one night. The next day we had to leave. The staff had been approached by the police. They wanted to know what we were up to.

One of the most surprising things for me is the gentleness of the people. I mean, they are victims to such violence, yet to us they were so warm, caring and fun. Similar to a clown, really: Filled with fun and laughter but inside is all sadness.

The military has full reign. That was clear when I took some photos of them. When they saw me taking them they started yelling and waving violently. They certainly made it clear that taking photos of them was a no-no.

The Darwin doctor wanted to know what happened to his friends who were detained from the same demonstration he was deported for being at. When the names were mentioned people went quiet, shook their heads and sighed. That said it all.

And I made some great friendships – as you do when travelling. One was Pedro. Recently found out he was killed after crossing a border without a passport.

It just goes on and on, doesn't it.



East Timorese street parade with some people in traditional dress

Amien Rais supports referendum in East Timor

Amien Rais, Indonesia's leading opposition figure and head of the 26-million strong Muhammadiyah, said on Portuguese Radio, Wednesday 13 May, that he supports the holding of a referendum in East Timor. He said that all sides should undertake to accept the results, whatever they are.

He also told Portuguese radio that he was ready to take on the mantle of the Indonesian presidency in the current crisis in Indonesia.

TAPOL, 13 May 98

A people living on the edge

Ever since Australian World War 2 soldiers relayed stories of their lives being saved by countless acts of East Timorese bravery, the small island has come to symbolise many of the heroic, honourable qualities existent in humanity. Today, Australians are trying to repay their gratitude.

Report by Brad Raymond.

"I focused the camera – click – took the street loner's photograph and upon turning around was surprised to see a military soldier searching through my bag. The soldier asked me if I was a journalist and, without waiting for an answer, dropped the bag to the ground and impassively walked away," said Peter, an activist with Perth's Friends of East Timor.

Peter, who did not wish to be identified, is the latest FOET member to visit the island and see first hand that East Timor is still oppressively ruled by the military, a fact the Indonesian soldiers are never shy of demonstrating.

He arrived in East Timor with a bag filled with medical supplies for the Timorese and returned home with countless stories of sorrow and violence, told by a people living on the edge.

"Although it was a depressing experience in one sense, I'm glad I

went. It has given me a new appreciation of the freedoms enjoyed so casually by Australians," Peter said.

He said experiencing New Year's in Dili – East Timor's capital – typified life under military occupation. Due partly to the arbitrarily enforced Indonesian curfew only a few people moved quietly along Dili's promenade on the night of one of the most widespread and well-loved of festivals.

"From what I could see they don't have much to celebrate, anyway. Riddled with decaying government buildings and flimsy housing – apart from some new Indonesian migrant homes – the city is overrun by pigs and goats that rummage through an endless supply of garbage."

Peter said everything is permeated by the overwhelming presence of the Indonesian military, armed, watchful and ready on every street corner to move when someone steps over the tightly guarded social boundaries.

"I met a Dili University lecturer who spoke of the Portuguese in Timor before 1975. He said they had armed forces, but they stayed in their barracks, while Indonesians are at half-a-dozen places along every block."

The lecturer also told Peter the

Indonesian forces flaunted their domination over the Timorese by alternating their uniforms – the same man will wear a soldier's dress one day and a policeman's the next day.

"The lecturer said the Indonesians lie massively about their military strength on the island. They say the official figure is five battalions (approximately 700 soldiers each), but the real number is closer to fourteen."

Peter said virtually nothing favourable could be said about the Indonesian occupation of the island, whereas the figure of more than 200 000 indigenous Timorese killed since the invasion must always be foremost in the mind of every Timorese, which of course, was made hard to forget by the continuing daily brutality and oppression of the living.

On his second day in Dili, standing outside the dilapidated marquee of a movie house on the main street, Peter was approached by a Catholic priest who asked what he thought of the well publicised Nobel Peace Prize awarded to East Timor's Bishop Belo and the community's international spokesperson, José Ramos-Horta.

Peter said the priest believed it gave the Timorese hope that the

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Peter:
"The Indonesian military searched my bag for taking this photo"

Back of the Flamboyant Hotel, in Baucau. For many years, this was used as a torture centre by the Indonesian forces.



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world at last would acknowledge the fact that under the Indonesians, East Timor had to put up with the same sort of abuse they suffered under imperial Portuguese for the past four hundred years.

Peter said as the conversation continued, a curious thing happened. A circle of about twenty to thirty young men gathered quite silently around him and the priest. They appeared to be listening; but only with their eyes, probably, no more than one or two of them understood English. It was unnerving to see apprehensive teenagers study profoundly the gestures of two men.

The priest told Peter at least ten people came to him every day from all over East Timor and complained of abuse suffered under the Indonesians. This included being beaten violently, burned with lighted cigarettes, having electric shocks applied to the most sensitive parts of bodies and young girls being raped in outlying villages.

The priest claimed also that the Indonesians were worried by the continuing Timorese resistance. Recently the Government had established a special service of one thousand previously unemployed Timorese youths to spread

propaganda decrying the effectiveness of FALINTIL, a 200-strong guerrilla force, holding out against the Indonesians in the East Timor jungles.

"By now two soldiers who had been watching us began to walk casually forward," Peter said. "The circle of young men noticed them move and immediately, quietly, dispersed in all directions. In the same leisurely way the priest took off after them.

"I was a little nonplussed. Like most Australians, I've been conditioned to expect a sudden, brutal reaction to any indiscretion by any Timorese. Yet those two soldiers had approached us so casually as to suggest that they wanted to give us time to disperse without trouble."

Peter remembered the university lecturer mentioning the Indonesian's tour-of-duty in East Timor was for twelve months. Perhaps it was long enough for at least a few of them to come to some sort of accommodation with the people they were there to oppress.

The second biggest town in East Timor, Baucau, is a four hour, 120km mountainous drive from Dili through breathtaking coastal views. "However, there's nothing breathtaking in Baucau, crowded with military camps and army trucks that

command the roads."

The noticeable high number of soldiers stationed in the town has influenced many shops to operate peculiarly. Each night Peter ate a can of fruit from the general store, as he could not find a food-stand open after 6:30. Also, it is in Baucau, more than anywhere else, that people want to talk about "the situation".

One teenager introduced himself off the main street, just after dark, and immediately began to complain about the military. When an army truck filled with soldiers lumbered up the hill he disappeared into an alley. Late the next night Peter was awakened by knocking on his door. Distressed, the boy spoke of not having seen three friends since a demonstration they participated in last October.

He also suffered from the same protest. A soldier broke his nose, and his name and photograph were taken, which meant he was black-listed, guaranteeing him constant torment by the military and ineligibility for government employment. Pondering his future, he broke down and cried, Peter said.

During the boy's visit the town blacked out for twenty minutes and he explained that the military often did this. They hoped the darkness

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An Indonesian warship in Dili harbour. Its presence keeps the invasion and on-going occupation foremost in people's minds.



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would restrict assistance given to rebels by villagers and towns people, when the military believed it was closing in on the guerrillas.

On Peter's return to Dili he was stopped in the town centre by Luis, a young man who had previously asked him several times to come to his house to discuss East Timor's problems.

Reluctant to jeopardise Luis' safety, Peter nevertheless entered the only Timorese home he would visit while on the island.

"At his home Luis showed his scars," Peter said. "The most visible is a stomach wound from a bayonet, which he says he suffered during the infamous 1991 Santa Cruz massacre."

Luis told Peter he was running with everyone else while the soldiers kept shooting. He saw New Zealand Community Aid Abroad worker Kamal Bhamadaj get shot and subsequently die after which, Luis was bayoneted.

Later that day in the hospital during the military interrogation Luis was smashed on the head with a rock. He was delirious for a week.

On Peter's final day in East Timor, Luis proudly brought photographs of FALINTIL and asked Peter to tell Australia of 'the situation'. Too many nations had forgotten about East Timor, Luis told Peter.

Last year's Nobel Peace Prize

awarded to two of East Timor's favourite sons, however, has created new-found hope that the island's tragic struggle could be approaching a resolution.

For joint-coordinator of Friends of East Timor, Graham, who wished not to be identified further, in order not to jeopardise any future entry to East Timor, the Nobel Prize was personally fulfilling, recognising years of activism.

"When I found out last year that Belo and Horta won the Nobel, I cried," Graham said. "Not just for those two men and the people in East Timor, but for the people within such groups as FOET, scattered around the world,"

"I've been with the group for four years and it's bloody hard work organising rallies and informing people of the terrible plight currently suffered by the Timorese."

Graham was a driving force behind Ramos' successful February visit to Perth, undertaking a heavy, unpaid workload, which resulted in the Nobel laureate's meeting many of Western Australia's most prominent figures.

Graham was pleased with the visit's outcome, but wished more volunteers had played a part. This would have resulted in more WA businesses attending the various proceedings.

His altruism is fueled by the memory of his uncle who was in the 2/2 Australian Independent Com-

pany on the island. During World War Two, 300 Australian soldiers fought against 20 000 Japanese troops on East Timor. Largely through the support of the Timorese, of who 40 000 lost their lives, only 40 Australians were killed.

Graham has also visited East Timor twice in recent years, where he remembers playing frisbee with kids, who would suddenly sneak away when the military became visible.

And still etched in his mind is an anaemic village woman thankfully accepting medical supplies before politely shutting her door to minimise interaction with a Westerner.

"I feel shame that the Australian government can turn its back on East Timor when genocide is endemic on the island. To do so, when one considers 40 000 Timorese were killed by the Japanese for helping Australian soldiers, is an evil, cowardly act."

Some historical points

1975: Perth's Friends of East Timor gain passionate voice in opposition to Indonesia's brutal military invasion of East Timor. FOET rallies Australian government to oppose Indonesia's takeover.

1978: Australian government officially recognises Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor and then begins immediately negotiating

Continued bottom of next page

Alfredo's story: the journey is now three years long

The hope for security and a sense of happiness was what drove many East Timorese to leave their homes, families and friends behind and embark on a journey to settle in Australia.

For many, however, security and happiness are still yet to be experienced and the journey is now three years long.

Alfredo Alves and his young family have been in Australia for several years, living in limbo. Seeking asylum, Alves has no idea as to what stage the Immigration Department is at with his case.

Ade Fraga knows of the frustration Alves is experiencing. Fraga, with his wife and two children, has been in Perth for two years, waiting for an answer.

Alves is currently unemployed. Fraga is washing dishes. Given their current circumstances, jobs of reasonable wages and conditions are almost impossible to find. Employers want workers they can rely on. Can't rely on refugees who could suddenly be deported.

Both men have two small children; therefore, they receive \$772 a fortnight. Sounds pretty good.

But in reality that doesn't go too far when they are given no other assistance besides Medicare. Whenever they use public transport – such as when they must catch a bus to the Red Cross headquarters to receive their financial aid, which is paid by the government – they must pay full fare.

If Fraga or Alves wish to receive an education, learn a skill or attend a cinema they must pay the full price. Last year Fraga applied to begin a hospitality course at Bentley TAFE. He quickly dropped that idea when told he would have to pay the full cost: a few thousand dollars.

Tools in their hands, both men were standing beside Fraga's conked-out car when they spoke to Friends of East Timor. The car symbolises their plight. Will it ever run again? Will they be allowed to stay? They don't know.

Disillusioned, Alfredo said "We know nothing!" in relation to the government's handling of his family's protection visa application.

If the Ministry of Immigration has a process to deal with such matters, Alfredo has no idea what stage it is at with him. He only knows his family

has been in Australia for a long time; one of his children was born here.

Adjusting to a foreign culture, finding work, learning English; these are some of the hurdles East Timorese asylum seekers have to overcome. As Alfredo points out, maybe such families as his would have been better to begin new lives in Canada, USA, England or Holland. Some of their friends chose these places and are now residents, certain of their futures. All that Alfredo and Ade are certain of is that life back in East Timor is becoming more miserable.

Friends of East Timor approached the Red Cross, who said it was obliged by the government not to speak about refugee matters. Therefore, the Immigration Department in Canberra was phoned and – after being handballed to different staffers and listening to many on-hold telephone tunes – was told nothing concrete that could enable Alves and Fraga to experience at least a small degree of hope.

Brad Raymond



Waiting around on a hot Timor afternoon

Portugal to give \$4 million to NGOs in East Timor

Portugal said on Saturday it would give \$4 million to non-governmental organisations in East Timor to help to alleviate the effects of Asia's financial crisis.

Prime Minister Antonio Guterres said the money, to be spread over three years, would only go to NGOs which did not have close ties to the Indonesian government.

Reuters, 4 Apr 98

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with Indonesia over mineral rich Timor seabed rights.

1989: Australian and Indonesian governments sign the Timor Gap Treaty, sharing exploration rights

over the sea's rich minerals.

FOET continues its activism that includes assisting East Timorese asylum seekers to Australia, organising public rallies and writing letters to authorities around the

world – including the Indonesian and Australian governments – of the injustices suffered by East Timorese people.

To date, more than 200 000 Timorese have been killed.

East Timorese asylum-seekers

From page 1

Portugal yesterday denied that the 1300 East Timorese seeking refugee status in Australia are automatically Portuguese nationals. Portuguese Ambassador Dr Rui de Avila said the East Timorese could only qualify for citizenship if they expressed a desire to be Portuguese and met certain specific criteria. "... It is not an automatic umbrella that is there for them to be considered Portuguese since the moment they were born", he said. ... He disputed the argument that East Timorese had dual nationality.

Opposition spokesman on foreign affairs, Alexander Downer, ... said: "The Government had been given this information by the Portuguese Government and has chosen to ignore it. ... The fact is Australia has never considered the people of East Timor as anything but Indonesian since 1979 – the latest claim by Mr Keating that they are Portuguese is simply absurd and hypocritical".

FOET (WA) were privileged to be able to subsequently meet with the current Foreign Minister Alexander Downer on 21 February 1996, at the campaign office of Dee Kelly, then LPA candidate for the electorate of Perth. The then Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs stated categorically that under a Coalition Government, Australian authorities, in assessing the claims of East Timorese for refugee status, would consider these claims solely against Indonesia, without reference to the dubious issue of Portuguese citizenship, an approach that would thus be in line with successive Australian Governments' stated views since 1979 that East Timorese are Indonesian citizens.

FOET (WA) members at that meeting sought clarification on this point a number of times to ensure that this was the Coalition's position, and the full membership of FOET (WA) were advised of this commitment prior to the election in March by the committee.

FOET (WA) were therefore extremely distressed and disappointed when, after the election, the new Coalition Government quickly disregarded their pre-election promise on

this matter and instead adopted the policy position of the previous Government. FOET (WA) urges the Minister to rectify this matter by honouring the pre-election commitment to the East Timorese asylum-seekers.

It appears that the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) are awaiting the outcome of the 'test case' of Mr Kim Koe Jong, an East Timorese of Chinese ethnicity whose application for refugee status was rejected by the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) on February 13 1996, despite the RRT acknowledging he faced 'a real chance of persecution' if he was to return to Indonesia/East Timor.

The decision was based on advice given to the RRT by the previous Government, relating to the issue of Portuguese nationality. If FOET (WA)'s understanding of the current situation is correct, the RRT decision was overturned by the Federal Court, and DIMA are now appealing that decision to the High Court of Australia. Our understanding is that the basis of the Federal Court's decision was not the issue of dual nationality, but rather that DIMA had not adequately explored the issue of possible persecution in Portugal. If that is the case, it would appear quite possible that subsequent cases could easily have this issue addressed by DIMA in their initial decision.

This of course opens the possibility that at any time, but probably following the full legal process of Mr Jong's case, DIMA may immediately reject all 1300+ applications, and commence deportation proceedings against the East Timorese asylum-seekers.

DIMA and the Government's position on the East Timorese asylum seekers is unacceptable, both legally and morally. It is clear to anyone who considers the case that the position is, as Mr Downer said, 'absurd and hypocritical'. Indeed it is probably unnecessary to discuss the situation in excessive detail here, as Mr Downer's public comments recorded above adequately explain the position!

Briefly, Australia has regarded

East Timorese, rightly or wrongly, as Indonesian citizens since 1979. Australia has rejected Portuguese claims to retain administrative responsibility for the territory. This position was recently and forcefully put by Australia in answer to Portugal's case before the International Court of Justice in 1994-95.

Put simply, Australia regards Indonesia as having sovereignty over the land, the people, and the natural riches of the territory of East Timor. Yet as soon as the traumatised victims of this reprehensible policy manage to escape to Australia, they almost miraculously metamorphose into Portuguese. The argument is so flawed as to be dismissed by a child of ten, and no legal technicality will serve as excuse for this to the Australian people.

FOET (WA) are concerned that the Minister and Cabinet may be unaware of the likely public uproar that will inevitably occur should DIMA move to deport East Timorese asylum-seekers. It would be a terrible misjudgment to believe that the reaction at the time the decision to break the pre-election promise was announced would be any way comparable to that which will occur should deportations become imminent. This is because the decision was not followed by any action, due to the delays in the test case, and news media did not treat the issue in the depth that it inevitably will once the issue becomes less 'academic' and more urgent.

The Minister will be aware of the existence and preparedness of the Christian Sanctuary Network, which intends to harbour East Timorese threatened with deportation. The Minister will also be aware of the great sympathy felt by Australians across the political spectrum for East Timorese people.

The Australia Remembers year in 1995 resulted in a huge surge of public interest in the Second World War (one only has to look at the number of archive requests to the Australian War memorial since

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1995), and the issue of East Timorese support for Australia during the War will inevitably be featured in any anti-deportation campaign. Put frankly, the public outcry which will accompany any deportation attempts by DIMA is one which no Government in its right mind would want to deal with.

It is possible that Australian lounge rooms would be bombarded with images of police and DIMA officials arresting Australians for blocking entry to churches housing distraught East Timorese women and children. Nuns, priests and ex-service men and women might face charges and possible imprisonment for harbouring East Timorese families. In the face of these images, accompanied by images of Australians and East Timorese working alongside one another in the War, any Government would appear mean-spirited, hypocritical, divisive and aggressive. It is FOET (WA)'s fervent hope that the current Government will not embark on this course.

It is also critical that the Minister and Cabinet understand that opposition to deportation would by no means be confined to one side of politics. It would be a misjudgment to believe that the apparent rise in intolerance toward Australian immigration policy would easily apply to the East Timorese.

A good example of this is the opinion of Howard Sattler who, as the Minister will be aware, is Western Australia's most prominent radio talk-back host, commanding a huge audience. Mr Sattler is known for his outspoken views on many issues, views that are clearly those more identified with right-wing politics. Mr Sattler has on many occasions stated that Australia should lower immigration levels, and detain and deport illegal 'boat people' who he refers to as 'queue jumpers'.

His views on the East Timorese are quite different, however. Mr Sattler has categorically stated that East Timorese asylum-seekers, including those who arrived by boat in Darwin in 1995, should be granted

permanent residency. He says that "we owe them". Any Government should therefore be aware that an extremely broad and influential spectrum of Australian public opinion will coalesce behind opposition to deportation of the East Timorese.

FOET (WA) believes that Government reticence to accept the asylum-seekers is based partly on the belief that to do so would offend the Indonesian regime. This is a weak argument. Successive Australian Governments have done more than any other Western nation to provide diplomatic support for Indonesia's annexation of East Timor.

The Indonesian Government must be pragmatic enough to accept that Australia cannot 'eat its cake and have it' on this issue – that if Australia is to recognise and cooperate with the annexation, it must be able to deal appropriately with the victims of such a policy. In addition, the recent economic instability in the region, and Australia's aid to rectify the accompanying problems, must have led to a further reserve of goodwill which will allow Australia to be more forthright on these matters.

FOET (WA) also notes with concern the trauma that the delay in processing the Domestic Protection visas continues to cause East Timorese asylum-seekers. Many of these people have now been in Australia for some years, and many of those with bridging visas that allow work have commenced productive lives in our community. Some now have children born here. Many have been victims of torture and need certainty that this cannot happen to them again. It is imperative that the Government help by removing the sword of Damocles which hangs over these people's heads. They deserve a fair go.

In summary, FOET (WA) urges the Minister to ensure that East Timorese asylum-seekers are granted asylum in Australia if they can demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution in Indonesia or East Timor. The dubious issue of Portuguese nationality should not be used as an excuse to refuse asylum.

The prompt, quiet and compassionate acceptance of these people into Australia as permanent residents is the only just outcome of this matter. The method of achieving this outcome is the choice of the Government. The easiest way would simply be to quietly drop the argument relating to Portuguese citizenship. If this is not considered possible, the Minister should create a special visa class to allow the East Timorese to stay. Which avenue to take is at the Minister's discretion.

2. The withdrawal of Asylum Seeker Assistance for those who have had their initial application for Domestic Protection (866) refused.

The Minister announced on August 20 1996 that from October 1 1996, anyone who is rejected at the primary determination stage immediately loses entitlement to Asylum Seeker Assistance (ASA), the financial assistance scheme funded by DIMA and administered by the Red Cross which allows asylum seekers to survive while awaiting a determination. Previously ASA could continue through the appeal process.

FOET (WA) believes that if East Timorese asylum-seekers are denied at the primary determination stage, they clearly have strong legal and moral case for appeal. Hopefully this issue will not arise too frequently as the Government may choose to follow a course as recommended in point (1) above, and the majority of East Timorese will be assessed as eligible for protection based on their well-founded fear of persecution in Indonesia/East Timor alone. Should the Government choose to reject this course of action, it is imperative that it allow East Timorese continued access to ASA while they appeal.

Some of those affected include women with young children, and are entirely dependent on ASA for their very survival. FOET (WA) asserts that the denial of ASA will make a mockery of the asylum-seekers legal rights to appeal, as they will in effect be 'starved out of justice'. At the very

Continued next page

East Timorese asylum-seekers

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least the denial of ASA assistance will place enormous economic and social pressure on the already traumatised and vulnerable East Timorese community in Australia.

Points (1) and (2) above represent the most immediate concerns of FOET (WA), as they relate to East Timorese already in the Australian community. However, FOET (WA) has additional concerns on immigration matters which affect East Timorese outside Australia, and concern Australia's more general obligations to the East Timorese people. These are detailed briefly below.

3. The decision to terminate, rather than extend, the Special Assistance Category (SAC Class 208) for East Timorese in Portugal, Macau and Mozambique.

FOET (WA) is aware that there are still East Timorese abroad, including in Portugal, Macau and Mozambique, who should be eligible for Special Assistance to join their family and community in Australia. FOET (WA) notes particularly the uncertain future faced by those East Timorese currently in Macau, which is due to be returned to China in 1999. There are also significant numbers of East Timorese who have been forced to flee their homeland during the escalation of Indonesian violence in the 1990s.

The SAC should be altered to cover these more recent arrivals (before the announced termination the SAC covered only those who had arrived in a designated country prior to 30/6/94), and extended where appropriate to cover those who have been forced to seek temporary shelter elsewhere (eg. other countries of South East Asia). This SAC should apply to all East Timorese who have been forced to flee their country and where resettlement in Australia would be the appropriate course for the applicant.

4. The lack of a Special Assistance Category (SAC) for East Timorese in Indonesia/East Timor.

DIMA currently operates, or has recently operated, a number of country specific SACs which enable persons to apply for migration to Australia directly from their home country in which they suffer persecution and/or discrimination, the exact criteria varying with the particular SAC. Such countries include Burma, Cambodia and Sri Lanka.

FOET (WA) believes that DIMA should urgently set up a similar SAC for East Timorese in Indonesia/East Timor, possibly modelled on the Burmese in Burma SAC (Class 211). This would be justified given the similarly appalling human rights record of Indonesia in East Timor, at the very least analogous to the Burmese Government's domestic human rights record.

The more regulated nature of such a SAC could also have the effect of lowering the numbers of East Timorese forced to flee to Australia (legally or otherwise) prior to announcing their intention to seek asylum, and hence reduce associated costs to the Australian community. The humanitarian benefit of reducing the need for dangerous and traumatic flight (eg. that of the 'boat people' who arrived in 1995) is self-evident.

5. Discrimination against East Timorese applying to visit Australia.

Due to the inability of East Timorese to currently apply for asylum in Australia from anywhere except onshore (see point 4 above) a number of East Timorese have entered Australia on visitor's visas prior to applying for asylum. This was particularly prevalent in the mid-1990s, for reasons which have not been publicly clarified but which are probably better understood by the Minister and Department than by FOET (WA).

In reaction to this, it is clear that DIMA has subsequently identified anyone of East Timorese extraction as being a 'high risk' in terms of applying to remain in Australia beyond the end date of their initial visa. The practical effect of this has

been to deny to East Timorese the rights given to what the Department would regard as 'other (non-East Timorese) Indonesians'.

East Timorese genuinely applying for visitor's visas have been refused in cases where Indonesians would have had little trouble. (In fact anecdotal evidence suggests that this practice is so transparently in operation that Indonesians from some islands in Eastern Indonesia such as Flores are expressing concern that they are being refused visitor's visas purely on the grounds that they may have Portuguese surnames or appearance). This has caused great distress among East Timorese families who are hindered in or denied access to relatives in utterly genuine cases of intended short-term visits (eg to attend weddings or births).

6. The treatment of East Timorese who bypass immigration clearance to enter Australia.

FOET (WA) applauds DIMA's earlier decision to allow the East Timorese who arrived in Darwin by boat in 1995 to be released into the community while their applications for asylum are considered.

Notwithstanding that these people share the same parlous treatment outlined in points (1) and (2) above, FOET (WA) believes the decision on their release was a humanitarian one, and urges the Department to do likewise with any future cases of East Timorese arriving on Australian shores without valid visas. While it is possibly not within FOET (WA)'s mandate to make broad recommendations on detention practices, it is noted that in general detention of refugees for long periods can only be harmful to their well-being, particularly given their frequently traumatised state.

Prepared by Friends of East Timor
(Western Australia)
13 February 1998

National Council of Timorese Resistance

Timorese Nobel peace laureate José Ramos-Horta said the election of a front against Indonesian rule had united the resistance and strengthened the leadership of jailed guerrilla chief Xanana Gusmão.

"The election of the National Council for the Timorese Resistance has reinforced the leadership of Xanana Gusmão and united the Timorese," Ramos-Horta told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"We showed that our system is legitimate and democratic," he said the day after a four-day convention near Lisbon chose a committee representing East Timorese who oppose Indonesian occupation of the Pacific territory.

The convention was the first step to choosing a shadow government to press for self-determination for the Timorese. Gusmão, who has been in jail in Jakarta since 1992, was elected leader of the newly formed National Council for the Timorese Resistance, an umbrella organisation that will group all of the various East Timorese groups.

Ramos-Horta was elected one of two vice-presidents. The identity of the other vice-president was kept secret as he is still living and active within the Indonesian-held territory.

Ramos-Horta said he hoped the convention would accelerate the process towards self-determination for the Timorese. "We will continue

very firmly in our struggle for self-determination," he said.

Ramos-Horta reiterated his call to Indonesian authorities to free political prisoners and open a serious dialogue with the Timorese towards self-determination.

"The most important thing is to open a serious dialogue. We know how to be flexible," he said.

José Ramos-Horta was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 1996 along with the Roman Catholic bishop of Dili, Carlos Belo, for their efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to the East Timor issue.

Lisbon - Reuters
28 Apr 98

Movement for Reconciliation and Unity

A new organisation called *Movement for Reconciliation and Unity of the East Timorese People* has come into being in East Timor, led by Manuel Carrascalao as the chair and Francisco de Carvelho as secretary. The organisation has some thirty members, all of them well known political figures or former civil servants.

Manuel said the intention was to establish roots in society, among all sections of the people, in accordance with international law, under the UN.

Fully aware that the aims of his organisation did not meet with the wishes of the government, Manuel

said he was fully prepared to be arrested by the security forces at any time. "We are not afraid," he said, "and are ready to accept whatever risks may be involved in setting up this new organisation."

The governor shrugged off the movement, saying that they are an insignificant group of people, "trying to grab people's attention. All they want to do is to disrupt development in East Timor," he said. Some circles in East Timor have accused the organisation of being involved in the recent unrest.

As for Major-General Syahrir, military commander of Udayana military command based in Bali

(which commands operations in East Timor), he regards the group as 'clandestine', a new anti-integration organisation.

He said that the military authorities, along with the prosecutors' office and the police, were taking all the necessary measures to prevent the group from exerting any influence in society.

"If anyone knows anything about them, please report to us and they will be dealt with in accordance with the laws in force," said Major-General Syahrir.

TIRAS
8 Dec 97

Foundation for Peace and Democracy

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- and territories;
- h) defend and promote East Timor's admittance to the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries - the CPLP;
- i) promote and support national and international initiatives which aim to promote understanding of the Timorese situation, and which contribute to activities involving mutual solidarity and cultural exchange;
- j) organise, or sponsor and support initiatives involving research studies on East Timor and its people, or on the sub-region of South

East Asia and South Pacific;

- l) promote or support the setting up of one or more bibliographic and iconographic documentation centres on East Timor and the sub-region;
- m) promote and support the training of human resources in Portuguese-speaking countries and the Asia-Pacific sub-region in specialised subjects relating to East Timor;
- n) undertake solidarity work with Timorese abroad to enhance their social integration, and support the initiatives of Timorese groups, representative of differ-

ent political, social, cultural, technical and economic areas, with a view to benefiting the various exile communities.

Developing the cultural front, study and research into historic values, and training of human resources are among priority tasks in laying the foundations for a future Free Timor.

Commission for the Rights of the Maubere People
10 Dec 97, Lisbon

Newsletter editing and layout by
Shane Guthrie

Public Demonstration

Monday 17th August

Indonesia's National Day

1949 Self-determination for Indonesia

1998 Why not self-determination for East Timor?

Public demonstration

Friends of East Timor and the Christian Centre for Social Action are sponsoring a demonstration on this day to show our political leaders how Australians feel about this injustice.

Will you join us to help put this position right?

It's an early morning rise! 7:00 am to 9:00 am, Monday August 17th at the Causeway. Meeting at either:

- (a) City end in the car park
- (b) Victoria Park end between

Armagh Street and the on-ramp to Canning Highway

For further details, please contact FOET on 9328 1115 or 9361 4678 or the Christian Centre for Social Action on 9472 4227.

Indonesia recognised – East Timor denied

In 1949, after hundreds of years of Dutch colonial rule, the people of Indonesia finally gained their independence. During that struggle, a slogan appeared on walls in the cities of the old Dutch East Indies was the demand for *self-determination*.

Self-determination is enshrined in the United Nations Charter and gives the peoples of colonial empires the right to determine their future by referendum.

This is all the people of East Timor are asking – a vote on whether they should

- be part of Indonesia; or
- exist in a special relationship

with Portugal (their old colonial rulers); or

- be an independent nation.

Spokespersons for the East Timorese resistance have stressed that they will accept the result of such a referendum – whichever way it goes.

East Timor was never part of the Dutch colonies that became Indonesia. It was invaded in 1975 by the Indonesian military. Since then, the East Timorese have been denied that same democratic choice that Indonesia rightly claimed for itself.

Double standards – Australia's shame

Both Coalition and Labor govern-

ments have connived with the Indonesian military rulers to deny the people of East Timor this right.

In the Second World War, the East Timorese gave unstinting support to Australian soldiers at great cost to themselves. After leaving the island, Australian planes dropped leaflets saying *Your Friends will not Forget You*.

In 1949, the Australian Government, trade unions, churches and others helped the Indonesians in their struggle for independence.

In 1979, the Australian Government gave de jure recognition to Indonesia's annexation of East Timor and has been providing diplomatic and military support to Indonesia's iron rule ever since.

Whoever is afraid of a referendum in East Timor is afraid of the truth

Xanana Gusmão, imprisoned leader of the National Council for Timorese Resistance

Lobbying campaign

Organising delegations now

Friends of East Timor have extended the lobbying campaign to reach as many Federal electorates as possible.

Members of the FOET Committee are currently organising people in their local electorates to meet parliamentarians. In these meetings, we will request that the parliamentarians commit themselves to acting on East Timor issues.

Please contact FOET if you wish to participate – telephone 9361 4678. East Timor will have heightened relevance to a parliamentarian

when the issue is raised by people in their electorate.

We want politicians to pursue efforts towards:

1. The withdrawal of Indonesian troops from the territory of East Timor.
2. The implementation of a genuine act of self-determination for East Timor under United Nations supervision.
3. The unconditional release of all East Timorese political prisoners as defined by Amnesty International, including prisoners such as Xanana Gusmão, ostensibly

gaoled on criminal charges.

4. Unrestricted access to East Timor for the media; the United Nations and its specialised agencies; Amnesty International; Asia Watch and other similar NGOs.
5. Fair treatment for East Timorese asylum-seekers in Australia, either by the creation of a special permanent resident visa class, or by allowing them to be considered for normal refugee protection status against Indonesia alone – by dropping the spurious Portuguese citizenship argument.