

The tragedy of East Timor



Canada's support for genocide

"The situation in East Timor is the most obscene abandonment of world order since the Holocaust."

— Noam Chomsky

"I cannot understand why some nations willingly sacrifice the right of self-determination of East Timor in exchange for commerce."

— Martinhu da Costa Lopes, former Bishop of East Timor

EAST TIMOR?

East Timor, a tiny nation situated 650 km northwest of Darwin, Australia, is the site of one of the least-known cases of genocide in the world. The armed forces of Indonesia, East Timor's giant neighbour, have illegally occupied East Timor for 18 years and subjected the indigenous people to mass extermination. East Timor was invaded on December 7, 1975, a mere ten days after declaring its independence from Portugal.

East Timor's Catholic Bishop, Carlos Belo, has stated that "we continue to die as a people and as a nation." Independent human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have reported that at least 200,000 people (one person in three) have died under Indonesian occupation.

TORTURE AND MURDER

The East Timorese people are subjected to many forms of human rights violations, including rape, forced abortions, mass executions, and torture. In one gruesome example, an East Timorese priest told a visiting journalist about a 15-year old girl who was arrested, raped repeatedly and killed after her genitals were cut off and placed in her mouth and her breasts were cut off and placed one in each hand.

On November 12, 1991, the Indonesian military showed its full brutality by shooting 271 unarmed Timorese youths demonstrating for independence. The massacre was filmed by an undercover journalist and later broadcast on CBC-TV.

Three days later, on November 15, eighty witnesses of that massacre were forced to dig a mass grave and were then shot themselves.

The ongoing slaughter is part of an Indonesian government effort to eradicate the traditional East Timorese culture. The Timorese people are also forced to live in military-controlled villages, prevented from speaking their own languages and holding their ceremonies, and subjected to a coercive birth-control program which, coupled with mass Indonesian immigration, is designed to reduce them to a minority in their own country.

THE HIDDEN GENOCIDE

CANADA'S COMPLICITY

Canada has been one of Indonesia's most loyal supporters since the invasion of East Timor. At the United Nations, our government abstained from the original resolution condemning the Indonesian invasion and has voted on the Indonesian side since 1980. Canadian representatives actively lobbied to have the issue removed from the

UN agenda. The position is a startling contrast to that taken when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

The silence on East Timor is lamentable, especially for a government that claims to be founded on moral and democratic principles. The reason is trade.

More than 300 Canadian companies are present in Indonesia, with total Canadian investment in excess of \$3 billion. Canadian companies are attracted to Indonesia because of the economic benefits that result from a repressive regime that violates the labour rights of its own people. Indonesia is also one of the top three recipients of Canadian foreign aid.

The Canadian government has even supported the Indonesian military by selling tens of millions of dollars worth of ammunition, military vehicles, transport planes and helicopter engines since the invasion of East Timor. Although no sales have been made directly since 1991, Canadian arms still find their way to Indonesia through third countries, and Canada has yet to announce a ban on weapons sales to Indonesia.

Canada's support for the Indonesian dictatorship has placed profit before people. Canadians must demand that our government:

- Start working with the United Nations to stop the genocide of the East Timorese people
- Impose an outright ban on weapons sales to Indonesia, and support a general ban by all countries on weapons sales to Indonesia
- Suspend government-to-government aid to Indonesia and impose economic sanctions if necessary, along the lines of the sanctions used to end apartheid in South Africa
- Pursue by peaceful means the right of small countries — East Timor as much as Kuwait — to self-determination



HELP FREE EAST TIMOR!

If you are concerned about East Timor and you want to make a difference, you can:

- Write to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Foreign Minister André Ouellet, and your local Member of Parliament. All MPs can be written postage free c/o House of Commons, Ottawa Ont., K1A 0A6. You might also want to write Opposition Leader Lucien Bouchard and NDP external affairs critic Svend Robinson
- Circulate a Free East Timor! petition (available from your closest East Timor Alert Network local group)
- Support a general boycott of Indonesian goods, as well as products produced by Canadian companies heavily involved in Indonesia. The East Timor Alert Network has singled out Bata Shoes as our main boycott target. Be sure to let store-owners know why you're boycotting
- Organize an educational forum for your school, church, union, community group, or friends. The East Timor Alert Network can provide videos and speakers to help you
- Ask the media to cover East Timor
- If you are at a university, it may be involved in aid to Indonesia projects. Ask them to review their project on human rights grounds
- Join the East Timor Alert Network. Memberships are just \$10 from our Vancouver office. Please consider a larger donation as well. If you want a tax receipt, contact us for details
- Get involved! Contact your local East Timor Alert Network group::

To work to change Canadian and Indonesian policy towards East Timor, or for further information, please contact:

EAST TIMOR ALERT NETWORK/Ottawa

P.O. Box 1031, Station B

Ottawa, ON

K1P 5R1

Fax: 613- 834-2021

E-Mail: etanott@web.apc.org

**East Timor Alert Network/Canada: 104—2120 West 44th,
Vancouver BC, V6M 2G2, (604) 739-4947/264-9973**

**To contact us by electronic mail, write to
"etanor@web.apc.org"**