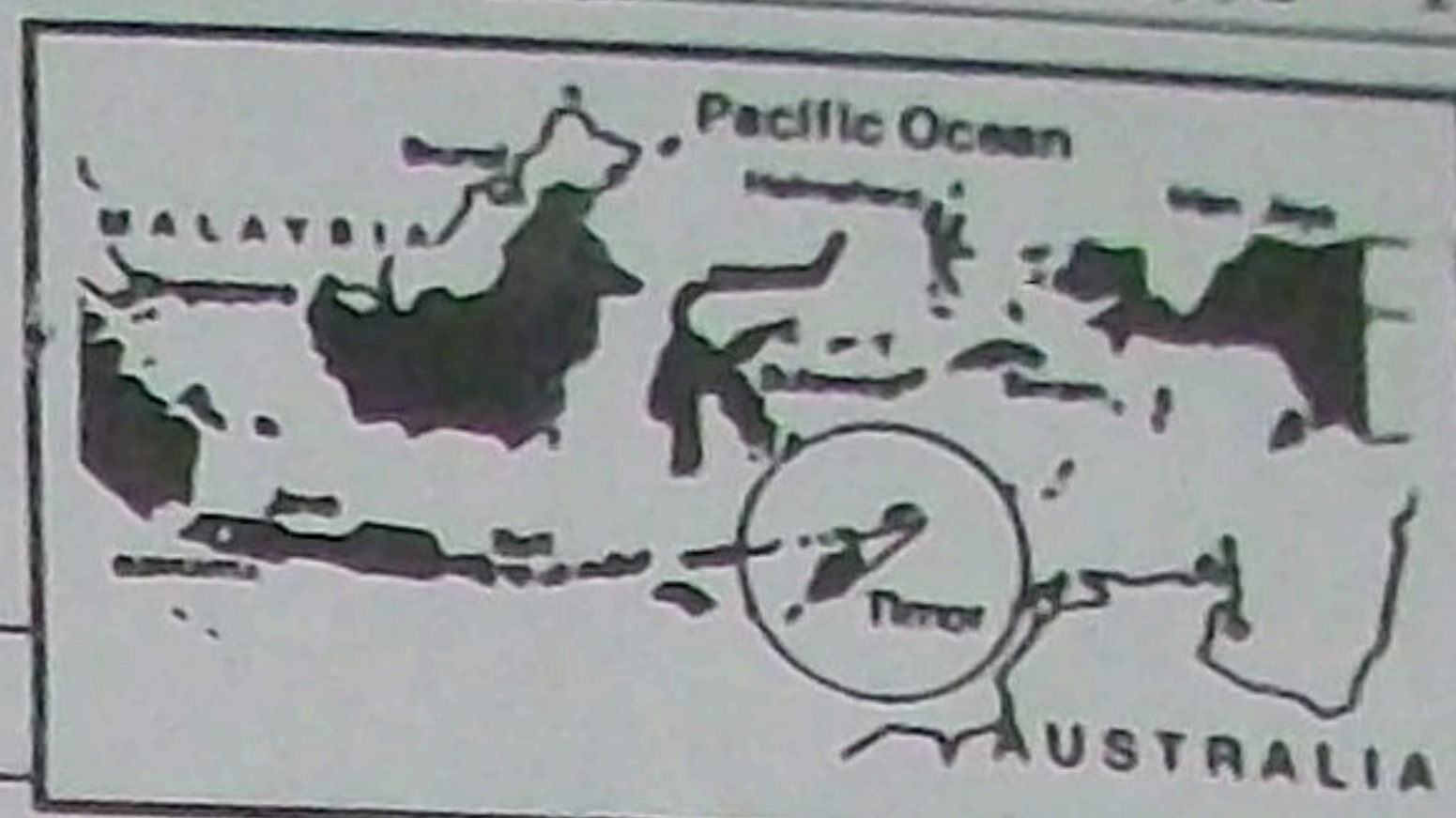


EAST TIMOR UPDATE

Number 9 — March 1, 1992



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

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

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

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

Ottawa: 2760 Caroset Cres. #511, Ottawa Ont., K1T 2N2

Eastern Ontario: 217 Glengarry Rd., Kinston Ont., K7M 3J6.

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

Québec: 1375 Sherwood Cres., Town of Mount Royal, Que., H3R 3C8

Action of the Month

Following the massacre of last Nov. 12 in Dili, East Timor, hundreds of survivors were arrested and accused of "provoking" Indonesian soldiers in firing on the crowd. In Dili, 37 are still imprisoned; thirteen students are to go on trial shortly for "being involved"; four of these are charged with subversion, which carries a maximum penalty of death. These show trials make a mockery of any pretence by Indonesia to be punishing the soldiers who ordered the massacre.

Please appeal for the release of all Timorese prisoners, especially those charged with subversion (Gregorio da Cunha Saldanha, Francisco Miranda Branco, Fernando de Araujo, João Freitas da Camara). Write to President Suharto (Istana Negara, Jalan Veteran, Jakarta, Indonesia). Ask Canada to intervene on behalf of the thirteen (External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall, House of Commons, Ottawa Ont., K1A 0A6). And if you're a student, get your school or student group to speak out for these Timorese students.

Peace ship makes waves

Foreign journalists have been banned from East Timor by Indonesian military authorities, and "scores" of arrests of young Timorese are being reported in preparation for a "peace ship" that plans to land in East Timor in early March. The Portuguese and international students on board the Lusitania Expresso plan to lay flowers on the graves of massacre victims at Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the capital of East Timor, where Indonesian soldiers gunned down as many as 200 unarmed pro-independence demonstrators last Nov. 12.

The ship, which left Portugal last month, is carrying former Portuguese President Antonio Ramalho Eanes (a former army general who played a decisive role in securing democracy in Portugal after the 1974 revolution and was head of state from 1976 to 1986), and over 100 students and journalists.

The Ontario Federation of Students has sent representative Genevieve Appleton, a film student at Ryerson Polytechnic, on the "Peace in Timor Mission."

In the weeks it has taken the Lusitania Expresso get from Portugal to the South Pacific, Indonesian authorities expelled American journalist Peter Goodman from East Timor and announced the territory was being "temporarily" closed to foreign journalists for the first time since 1989. Brig.-Gen. Theo Syafei, military commander for East Timor, set up a "special task force to safeguard the people's sovereignty and state from being undermined and provoked by the arrival of the Portuguese ship." — a task force that has already launched a new wave of arrests, according to sources in East Timor.

With some members of Indonesia's rubber-stamp parliament calling for the ship to be "sunk" if it enters Timorese waters, fears of further violence are running high.

Canada lifting sanctions?

Canada may soon restore suspended economic aid to Indonesia, External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall said after meeting Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas in Ottawa on Feb. 24. "I can see a time when we would alter the policy we have taken regarding aid.... We believe the government of Indonesia is very strongly attempting to come to grips with the situation."

Canada suspended \$30 million in government-to-government aid in December to protest the Santa Cruz massacre, while leaving existing aid untouched. In 1991, Indonesia was third among all recipients of Canadian aid, getting \$46 million.

McDougall also accepted the report of an Indonesian government inquiry into the massacre. The inquiry panel, dominated by retired soldiers, called massacre victims the "perpetrators" of the violence. Its report has been rejected by Amnesty International as "fatally flawed and unacceptable."

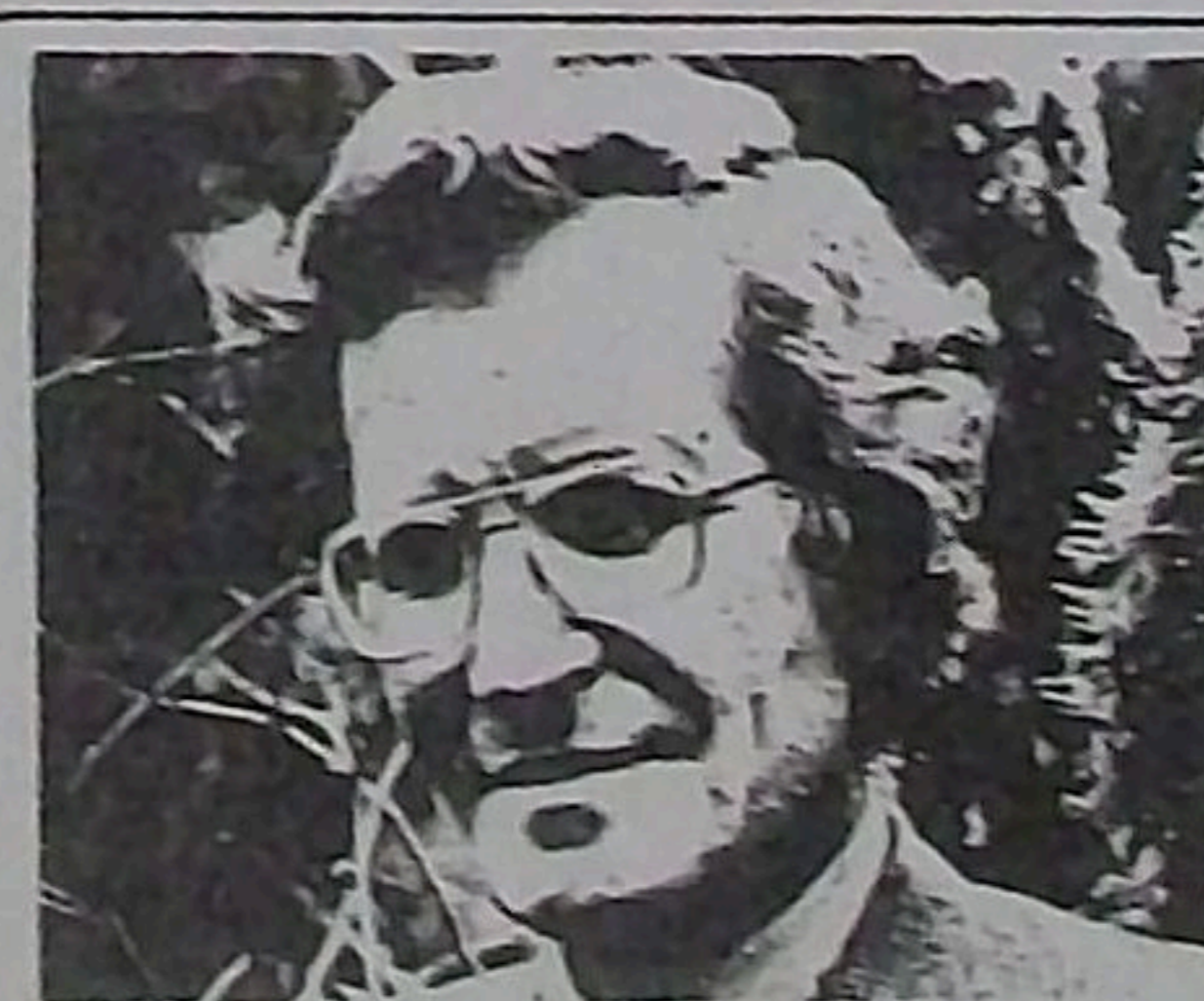
Alatas has scaled down a high-profile damage-control tour to Western capitals in



Genevieve Appleton (left, with camera) at picket of Indonesian consulate, Toronto.

the wake of a public-relations disaster last month in London, when his news conference excluded all reporters with a Portuguese passport and his officials refused to accredit Jill Jolliffe, a correspondent for the London Sunday Times who has written extensively on East Timor. In Washington, Alatas' news conference was "by invitation only," while a joint appearance by Alatas and McDougall in Ottawa was kept a secret until shortly before it happened.

However, ETAN made sure the other side of the story was told, by organizing demonstrations at both Indonesian consulates in Canada. In Vancouver and Toronto protesters laid flowers and poured blood in memory of the hundreds who have died in East Timor since November and the more than 200,000 killed since Indonesia invaded in 1975. Both the opposition parties called on McDougall to keep the aid suspension in place and impose new sanctions.



"The tragedy of East Timor is one of the most terrible of the modern period. The shameful complicity of the West is relieved only by the work of small numbers of dedicated activists, who have kept the issue alive, brought the story to a wider public, and pressured their governments to live up to the principles they profess. The East Timor Alert Network has been outstanding among such groups. Its work has already saved many lives, and if they can bring others to join them, may yet bring about a day when the people of this tortured land will enjoy the right to self-determination for which they have struggled with such courage."

— Noam Chomsky

Can you help? Please send donations to ETAN, 104—2120 West 44th, Vancouver BC.

More atrocities reported

New details of atrocities committed by Indonesian soldiers last November have just reached the outside world, in the form of a handwritten note from a Timorese eyewitness. According to the note:

- * 189 Timorese were killed by Indonesian soldiers at Santa Cruz cemetery on 12 November.
- * 36 were buried collectively in Hera.
- * A large number were buried in mass graves in Taci-tolu and Tibar.
- * More than twenty were cremated in a 'tank' in the military hospital in Lahane.
- * A large number of young people, boys and girls, were raped and killed.
- * On 14 November, four boys and three girls were murdered in Fatu-ahi. This was witnessed by many people in the area.
- * On 15 November, five young people were murdered in Kai-koli, Dili. The bodies had been cut in pieces and stacked into five bags and thrown into the water. Witnesses reported this to the local International Red Cross delegate.
- * On 27 November, nine youths were killed and their bodies carried to Hera.
- * On 28 November, it had rained heavily. A box containing 20 human hearts was found by local people in the river near the Salesian Mission Bispo Madeiros. It had been washed down the river from the hospital backyard following the torrential rain.
- * On 30 November, Indonesia military cut off the ears of a 19-year old because he did not have an identity card.

Oakville petition drive

ACT (for Disarmament (Oakville) has just launched a petition campaign for East Timor, with the goal of collecting 5,000 signatures in Halton Region (about 1% of the region's population). Supporters in Oakville, Burlington and the rest of Halton are encouraged to contact ACT Oakville at (416) 844-4453. And we encourage similar local initiatives wherever you are! A petition text is available from ETAN or from Ray Funk MP (House of Commons, Ottawa Ont., K1A 0A6).