

Canadian Action for Indonesia and East Timor

May 1999



East Timor: hope and danger



Timorese schoolgirls. What kind of future will they face? Photo: Shawn Hupka

Since our last newsletter, events in East Timor have moved at an extraordinary rate. We are now at a critical moment — freedom for East Timor is closer than it has ever been. But the international community's grudging and almost nonexistent response to violence on the ground may be dooming the process before it even gets underway.

In January, President Habibie made the unexpected announcement that, if the Timorese did not want the "special autonomy" that he was offering, he would be willing to "let them go". This policy turn-around seemed difficult to believe, but it was followed up in the next round of talks between Portugal and Indonesia at the United Nations, where it was agreed that the autonomy package would be completed in March (later postponed until April) and presented to the Timorese — and that if it were to be rejected, Habibie would propose to the next session of Parliament that East Timor revert

to the status of a non-self-governing territory under Portuguese authority. The Portuguese government expressed its willingness to see East Timor through a transition period to full independence, with help from the UN.

Moreover, Indonesia agreed to release Xanana Gusmao to "house arrest". Though still technically a prisoner, and under round-the-clock guard, Xanana is now able to receive

**CAFIET's first
national meeting:
see pages 12-13**

CAFIET Contact List

National Office

Jessie Stevenson or Maggie Helwig
PO Box 562, Stn P, Toronto, ON, M5S 2T1
tel (416) 531-5850, fax (416) 588-5556
cafiет@interlog.com
www.interlog.com/~cafiет

Local Contacts

Quadra Island

CAFIET
Carol Foot
Box 229, Heriot Bay, BC, V0P 1H0
tel/fax (250) 285-3035
cfoort@yahoo.com

Vancouver

Robert Strang
Centerpoint, PO Box 19579, Vancouver, BC
V3T 4E7
(604) 879-1642
bobs@vcn.bc.ca or etanvan@vcn.bc.ca

Mission

Elaine Briere
33659 Fifth Ave, Mission, BC V2V 1X1
tel (604) 820-3699 fax (604) 820-3694

Prince George

Trudy Engler
7568 St Kevin Place, Prince George, BC,
V2N 4L3
tel (250) 964-7096

Kelowna

Chris Sy-Kassler
c/o SEED, 549-X Lawrence, Kelowna, BC,
V1Y 6L8
sy_kassler@hotmail.com

Edmonton

Trevor King
9927 - 84 Ave., Edmonton, AB T6E 2G4
(780) 437-0794
king.trevor@mailexcite.com

Calgary

Larry Grieve
101-824 4th Ave NW, Calgary, AB, T2N 0M8
tel (403) 283-3408

Regina

CAFIET
Susan McQuarrie
2138 McIntyre St, Regina, SK, S4P 2R7
tel (306) 586-9685

Peterborough

OPIRG East Timor Working Group
c/o Luisa Durante
OPRIG-Trent, Peter Robinson College,
Peterborough, ON, K9J 7B8
ldurante@trentu.ca

Windsor

Friends of East Timor
c/o Green Planet, PO Box 548, Windsor, ON,
N9A 6M6
(519) 973-0994
hupka@hotmail.com

Toronto

c/o National Office

Halifax

CAFIET
Brooks Kind
Apt #2, 1230 Barrington, Halifax, NS, B3J 1Y4
tel (902) 422-1265
am532@chebucto.ns.ca

St John's

✓
East Timor Action Committee
c/o Newfoundland and Labrador Human
Rights Association
PO Box 6203, St John's, NF, A1C 6J9
tel (709) 754-0690
nlhra@nf.sympatico.ca

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continued from page 1

visitors at a small house in Jakarta, and has three volunteer staffers plus translators who can assist him in carrying out his political duties. This move was undertaken specifically in order to allow Xanana a greater degree of participation in any negotiations on East Timor's future.

The missing piece was any decision as to how East Timorese opinion would be consulted, as the Indonesian government continued to refuse the idea of a referendum. But then, in the latest round of talks in March, they stated that they were willing to allow a "direct ballot" on the autonomy proposal in July, with all Timorese, including those overseas, able to vote — a referendum in all but name.

It is generally understood that the East Timorese will vote overwhelmingly against autonomy and for independence. The Portuguese and Australian governments, and the European Union, have already made financial and other commitments to seeing East Timor through a transition period of three to five years if the vote goes against autonomy.

This is, of course, an amazing development, and extremely exciting for the Timorese and their supporters around the world. However, these encouraging developments are already greatly endangered. While negotiations at the UN have been proceeding in a positive direction, the situation on the ground in East Timor has been deteriorating in a marked fashion, and it has reached the point where the peace process as a whole might be disrupted.

The main threat has been coming from paramilitary groups, armed and equipped by the Indonesian military (ABRI). Some of these groups have existed for years and are virtually units of ABRI — paramilitaries were included on the payroll in ABRI documents leaked last summer. Others have been formed more recently, and in some cases seem to have slightly looser ties with ABRI, though there is no question about where they get their weapons, and at least the outlines of their orders. There are also a number of cases reported in which paramilitaries and ABRI units acted together in attacking civilians.

Paramilitary violence in East Timor has increased sharply over the last few months, aided by "black propaganda" and the exploitation of the fears of those Timorese who have collaborated with ABRI.

No one can be sure why the Indonesian government's position at the UN talks, and the behaviour of ABRI on the ground, seem to differ so dramatically. Some have suggested that there is a split, either between Habibie and ABRI, or between different factions within ABRI itself. Others believe that the Indonesian government is only pretending to cooperate with the UN talks, while knowingly creating the conditions in which a peace process will fail.

The Timorese resistance, and solidarity groups internationally, have been asking urgently for a substantial UN presence in the territory, and for immediate disarmament of the paramilitaries. The Indonesian government has refused all such proposals, saying that ABRI can keep the peace in the territory. Australia has specifically refused to send peacekeeping troops, and the UN has been unwilling to press for any presence in the territory in advance of the ballot. As violence worsens, however, it is becoming more and more clear that a substantial external presence is urgently needed to protect the peace

process, and if such a presence is not established very soon, the ballot may not be able to take place.

On April 5, the paramilitary group Besi Merah-Putih attacked a group of civilians in the village of Alas. FOKUPERS, an East Timorese women's group which had members in the village at the time, stated that "The clash began when the militia attacked the people by throwing stones, shooting with arrows, throwing spears and stabbing with samurai swords and machetes. The pro-independence youth attempted to defend themselves and forced the militia to step back. At this point the Indonesian army moved forward and began to shoot randomly at both armed and unarmed civilians. Many victims fell during this clash."

Reports on the death toll have varied, with estimates as high as 17 killed. Yayasan HAK, a human rights group which sent investigators to Liquica, reports that four people died in the attack, at least eight more were wounded, and ten houses were burnt down or destroyed. They also reported that Indonesian troops, as well as paramilitaries, were involved.

That evening, Xanana Gusmao issued a statement lifting the ceasefire which FALINTIL, the armed Timorese resistance, had maintained since January. He called on FALINTIL to take "all necessary action in defence of the population of East Timor" and also called for "popular insurrection against the armed militia groups".

Militia leader Basilio de Araujo responded by saying, "If you want to sell war, we'll buy it. We'll see who is stronger."

The next day, another attack took place in Liquica. According to Yayasan HAK, both Besi Merah-Putih and ABRI troops surrounded a church where many civilians were taking refuge, opening fire and throwing grenades. HAK, having received a report from the village priest, estimated the death toll at 50. Bishop Belo, who visited Liquica the next day, said that he believed 25 people had died.

Yayasan HAK stated that they "hope there will be intervention from solidarity groups in Indonesia or other countries. They calculate that this attack from BMP which was supported by ABRI will provoke retaliation from the pro-independence groups and Falintil. If there is such a reaction, the number of victims will increase."

As yet, however, though solidarity groups have been trying to put pressure on their governments, the international response has been muted. Habibie has made it clear that Indonesia is still unwilling to accept a UN presence, and the UN has made only statements calling for "restraint". Meanwhile, as this newsletter goes to press, the paramilitaries are escalating their provocations by holding rallies in different cities and continuing attacks on civilians, probably acting together with ABRI; the Indonesian Justice Minister has threatened to send Xanana back to jail; and Bishop Belo's car has been attacked, though the Bishop luckily escaped unhurt. There has been discussion of calling off the "consultation", though at the moment the UN still intends to go ahead — whether it can be a real test of Timorese opinion, in the current situation, is another question. We seem to be on the edge of massive bloodshed in East Timor unless international action is taken very soon.

See next page to find out what you can do.

UN presence needed in East Timor now: Canada must act

On February 22, CAFIET attended a government-organized roundtable on East Timor, along with a number of other NGOs, government representatives, and Timorese (four of whom had come from inside East Timor to attend the meeting). The discussions stressed the dangerous nature of the situation within East Timor and the risk of increasingly serious paramilitary violence. Recommendations were forwarded to Lloyd Axworthy's office, most importantly a call for an immediate and substantial UN presence in East Timor.

A few days later, Foreign Affairs issued the following press release. While Axworthy's (somewhat timid) endorsement of self-determination for East Timor marks an important turn in Canadian policy, perhaps more important is Raymond Chan's call for a UN presence in East Timor.

February 26, 1999

CANADA URGES PROGRESS IN THE UPCOMING EAST TIMOR TALKS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy today welcomed the progress made in the ongoing rounds of United Nations-sponsored tripartite (Portugal, Indonesia and the UN) talks on the future of East Timor, based in large part on the change in Indonesian government policy and their willingness to consider autonomy or independence for East Timor. In this context, Canada urges the parties involved in the negotiations to examine UN proposals for a procedure that would give the East Timorese an opportunity to exercise self-determination in accordance with their status as a non self-governing territory.

Canada views the UN Tripartite Process, under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, as holding the best prospect for a peaceful solution to the issues affecting East Timor. These UN-sponsored discussions between Indonesia and Portugal are set to resume on March 9 in New York.

"The most effective way to ensure progress is through meaningful and comprehensive consultations with the East Timorese, as has been advocated by the UN Secretary General's Personal Representative, Jamsheed Marker," Mr. Axworthy said. "It will be up to the parties involved, with the assistance of the UN, to decide on how consultation with the East Timorese will take place."

Minister Axworthy reiterated Canada's concern about the level of violence in East Timor. He called for an immediate end to violence and a process of disarmament by all parties, including civilian militias. In this regard, the Minister declared Canada's support for the proposal by East Timorese leader, Xanana Gusmao, for a Peace Commission, which would bring together a group of Timorese leaders and Indonesian officials to calm tensions in East Timor as the territory prepares to express itself about its future. The Minister renewed Canada's call for the full and unconditional release of Mr. Gusmao and other East Timorese political prisoners.

In addition, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) Raymond Chan commended the UN for its involvement in the process of

determining East Timor's future. "The UN, and particularly Special Representative Marker, have played a crucial role in moving toward a resolution to this issue," Mr. Chan said. "Canada believes that the UN should establish a presence in East Timor in order to enhance its effectiveness there."

Minister Axworthy referred to the extensive bilateral relations that exist between Canada and Indonesia, recalling in particular Canada's direct support to the Indonesian Human Rights Commission, and Canada's significant development assistance programs over the years, including financial support to previous rounds of the All Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue.

The Centre for Canadian Foreign Policy Development this week hosted a roundtable on East Timor to examine the current political, social and economic context, and to look at ways in which Canada might assist East Timor in a peaceful transition. The roundtable was attended by both Canadian non-governmental organizations and representatives from the East Timorese community.

"There have been important democratization efforts by the Indonesian government over recent months, along with progress toward stabilizing the economy," Mr. Axworthy said. "The impact of the financial and economic difficulties of the past 18 months have been substantial for the Indonesian people. I wish to underline Canada's intention to continue to help in both the political and economic realms."

Canada is the third-largest donor in East Timor, with \$1.1 million in aid provided each year.

Unfortunately, the UN presence which has been called for by governments and NGO's internationally has not yet come about, and Canada does not seem to have followed up on this call in any effective way. Indonesia is refusing to accept such a presence, and the UN seems reluctant to press them. Yet violence in East Timor is reaching a critical level.

As the situation on the ground worsens, it is more and more obvious that an international presence is immediately necessary to save the peace process. Canada must take a strong and consistent stand in calling for such a presence.

Write to Lloyd Axworthy c/o House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6 (no postage needed), or fax him at 613-947-4442 or Chan at 613-996-1560. You can also e-mail him at axworl@parl.gc.ca

- Ask Lloyd Axworthy to instruct Canada's ambassador to the United Nations to make a formal request for a substantial and comprehensive UN presence, directed at disarming the paramilitaries, to be sent to East Timor as a matter of urgency;

- Ask him also to speak to Indonesian President Habibie and urge him to accept such a UN presence and to cooperate in the disarmament of the paramilitaries;

- Ask him to make a public commitment on Canada's part to provide personnel and funds for such a UN mission.

Human rights: some suggestions for the government

On March 4, the Department of Foreign Affairs held their annual consultations with human rights groups, in preparation for the UN Commission on Human Rights. CAFIET made two representations, one on East Timor and one on Indonesia.

EAST TIMOR

As we are all aware, rapid and encouraging developments are taking place in the UN process, holding out the possibility of a just and peaceful settlement to the East Timor issue in the near future. We welcome these developments, and we are also pleased that the Indonesian government has addressed some of the criteria established by the 1998 Commission on Human Rights Consensus Chair's Statement.

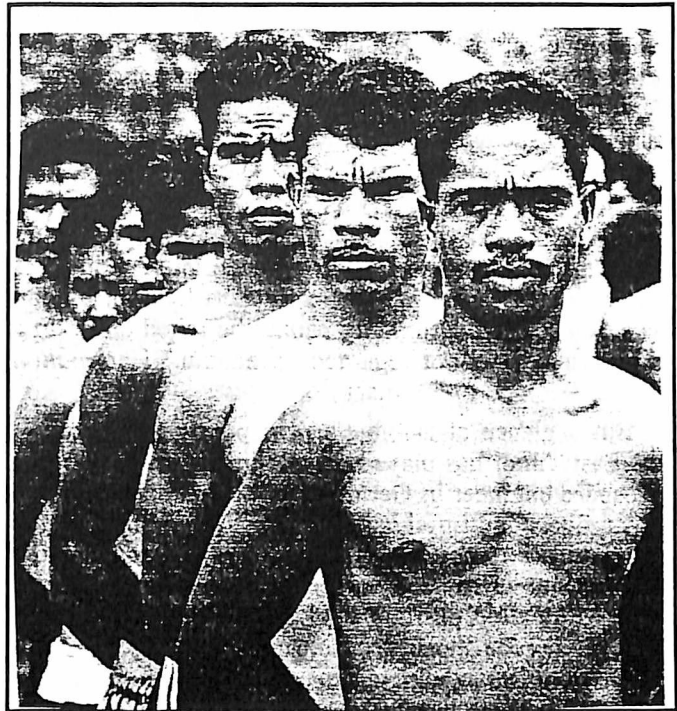
Yet we remain concerned that the human rights situation in the territory is not improving. Indeed, it is deteriorating, primarily due to the greatly increased activity of paramilitary anti-independence groups. The Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Dili, the Dili-based legal aid group Yayasan HAK, and the Australia-based East Timor Human Rights Centre, have all noted a sharp increase in human rights violations in the latter half of 1998, continuing into the early months of 1999. The International Committee of the Red Cross has also expressed great concern about paramilitary violence.

ABRI, the Indonesian military, has admitted to setting up paramilitary groups and providing them with bamboo sticks and other weapons. Indeed, there have been active, public recruitment efforts in recent months. Most paramilitary members are civilians who have received minimal training before being issued with weapons.

On December 5 1998, the military commander in East Timor announced that a number of militias were to be issued with rifles. General Wiranto has since stated that these particular militias have been disbanded, but this has not been independently verified. On February 5, General Sudrajat admitted to a BBC reporter that ABRI was currently giving rifles to the paramilitaries, though he insisted that they "asked for them back at the end of the day". The same BBC reporter spoke to a leader of Mahidin, who freely admitted to killing unarmed civilians with rifles received from ABRI. It is, in any case, difficult to see where else rifles could be coming from.

It should also be noted that some reports involve human rights violations by paramilitaries and ABRI apparently working in concert, notably an incident in Becora on February 24, where, according to the East Timor International Support Centre, both ABRI members and members of the paramilitary unit Mahidin fired on a group of students. Two students and one East Timorese member of ABRI were killed. Sources in Suai have also reported recent incidents in which ABRI and the paramilitaries together have attacked civilians. Xanana has recently said that he believes the paramilitaries to be working specifically with SGI, the intelligence unit of Kopassus, which is possibly still taking orders from Prabowo Subianto.

The Indonesian military should certainly be censured for the support they have given to these groups, and it should be made clear that no further organizing and arming of



New militia recruits (photo from TAPOL Bulletin)

paramilitaries will be acceptable to the international community. ABRI itself must maintain strict standards of human rights observance as long as it remains in the territory.

Representatives of the Timorese resistance and representatives of the Indonesian military participated in the signing of a peace declaration in Dili on February 24. This is a very welcome development, yet it is worrying to note that no representative of any paramilitary group signed this accord or participated in the ceremony. The paramilitary groups pose a real threat to any attempts to reach a peaceful settlement, and must be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

We are pleased to note that Raymond Chan, Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, called for a UN presence in East Timor on February 26. We strongly support this call. Mr Chan did not define what sort of UN presence he had in mind, but we would like to make some suggestions at this time.

First, the UN should send a team which is mandated and equipped to supervise the disarmament of the paramilitaries. We urge the Indonesian authorities not only to refrain from further arming of paramilitary groups, but to cooperate fully with an international supervisory team in disarming them. This should be followed by the UN-supervised withdrawal of all Indonesian military forces from the territory and the UN-supervised disarmament of FALINTIL.

Accompanying this disarmament team, or alternatively if necessary, we would urge that a substantial number of civilian human rights monitors be sent to East Timor in the very near future. This would need to be a large, well-trained and well-equipped team, able to provide extensive monitoring and accompaniment, and sufficient to work throughout the territory, not just in Dili and the surrounding area.

Any UN presence should include, but should not be limited to, representatives from the office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights.

We would strongly urge the Canadian government, and the Canadian delegation at the Commission on Human Rights, to repeat and strengthen Mr Chan's call, and do their utmost to ensure that an effective UN presence is established as quickly as possible.

We are extremely disturbed by the announcement yesterday by Maj-Gen Adam Damiri that Indonesia intends to send additional troops to East Timor to "protect settlers". It should be obvious that an increased Indonesian military presence — and it must be noted that the police are still, at this time, an arm of the military — can only exacerbate tensions. If the settlers are indeed in need of protection, an international team is much more able to offer this protection without further inflaming an already volatile situation. We ask Canada to speak out strongly and immediately against this plan.

The Canadian delegation at the Commission on Human Rights should also stress the need for Indonesia to comply with all outstanding recommendations of the Commission, most notably inviting the Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to visit East Timor, and should call for the full release of *all* East Timorese political prisoners. Here we would note in particular not only Xanana Gusmao, who has at least been transferred to house arrest, but some survivors of the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre who continue to serve long sentences, in one case a life sentence, despite the fact that they were not charged with any recognizably criminal offence.

More generally, we would like to stress the importance of UN supervision of any consultations of Timorese opinion, whether by a referendum, the election of an assembly, or any other means that may be agreed by all parties (including the Timorese). A free and fair consultation is only possible under the auspices of the UN; a consultation carried out by Indonesia with "help" from the UN would in no way be a fair reflection of Timorese opinion.

We ask Canada to use its delegation at the Commission on Human Rights and its seat on the Security Council to facilitate a peaceful transition and a swift end to the suffering in East Timor. While we are pleased and encouraged by the developments on the political front, because of our strong concerns about the immediate situation and continuing abuses by the paramilitaries and ABRI, we do ask that Canada put forward a resolution at the Commission on Human Rights, calling for an end to paramilitary violence and to all ABRI cooperation with paramilitaries, for a substantial UN presence in the territory, for the immediate UN-supervised disarmament of the paramilitaries, and for a ceasefire by all parties and the withdrawal of Indonesian troops from the territory.

INDONESIA

Indonesia, in its current transitional period, presents a complex and multi-faceted picture, and we will not attempt to deal with all aspects here. The changes since Suharto's resignation have been considerable, particularly in the



Soldiers patrol the streets of Aceh (from TAPOL Bulletin)

expansion of a newly free and energized civil society, but the process of change is far from complete, and there are still reasons to fear movement backwards. In this presentation, we want to single out some areas where human rights concerns are most pressing, and make some recommendations about these.

First, we would like to call attention to the situation in Aceh, where serious allegations of human rights abuses have been widespread since the late 1980s, accompanying a military campaign against armed separatist groups. In the summer of 1998, the Aceh office of the Legal Aid Foundation and the Komnas HAM carried out investigative missions, and unearthed a number of mass graves containing human skulls throughout the region. They did not, however, carry out full exhumations. On August 7, ABRI agreed to withdraw some troops from Aceh; however, after two days of rioting, in which the Chinese community was targeted, the troop withdrawals were cancelled and General Wiranto announced that ABRI was "taking over security in Aceh". It is important to be aware that there are allegations by the Legal Aid Foundation of the involvement of provocateurs in the outbreak of rioting; these allegations have never been investigated. It is clear that the situation in Aceh is fragile and volatile; it is by no means clear that increasing the military control of the situation will lead to any long-term improvements. In late December, five Indonesian soldiers were captured, apparently by the Free Aceh movement — unfortunately, the military appears to have responded in large part by arresting, firing upon, and in some cases killing, civilians. Most recently, on February 2, the military opened fire on a large crowd of civilians returning from a demonstration in Idi, possibly in response to some stone-throwing by the crowd. The response was clearly disproportionate; the Legal Aid Institute reported that 53 people were killed, and 97 were missing shortly after the incident; the Aceh Human Rights Forum reported 30 still missing on February 24.

It is important that past human rights violations in Aceh are investigated and brought to light, if any reconciliation can come about in this region. It is also vital that human rights abuses in the area do not continue.

We ask the Canadian delegation at the Commission on Human Rights to press for visits to Aceh by the Special

Rapporteur on Torture, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions. We would like to see an independent team of forensic experts unearth the mass graves. We would also ask that the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women make a trip to Aceh to investigate reports of widespread rape by the military. We believe that a reduction of the number of troops in the area remains important in improving the situation in the long term, and ask for an investigation into the possible provocation of the riots of early September.

Turning to the general situation, we ask Canada to participate actively in election assistance and monitoring to ensure that these very important elections are in fact conducted fairly and freely throughout the archipelago. Support for the monitoring efforts planned by Indonesian NGOs is important.

However, we are quite concerned about ABRI's recruitment of about 12,000 civilians, who have received rather cursory training, as militias (Kamra) to "assist the security forces" in policing the elections. Kamra were deployed during the MPR session in November; their role in this situation was not constructive, and indeed there was such embarrassment caused by their unprovoked attacks on civilians that some had their weapons confiscated and others were finally moved away from the Parliament building altogether. We ask Canada to speak out against the use of Kamra to police volatile situations.

We are also very troubled that General Wiranto has responded to unrest in Ambon and elsewhere by imposing "shoot on sight" orders against suspected rioters throughout all of Indonesia. There is no question that the situation in Ambon is very serious, but we question whether "shoot on sight" orders are either constructive, or supported by international law, particularly when they are universally applied across the archipelago. The Indonesian chief of police, Gen. Roesmanhadi, has not only threatened to dismiss any officers who do not obey these orders, but has actually claimed that the orders are supported by the 1990 UN Convention on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officers. Examination of the convention reveals that this is in no way the case — the convention notes, among other restrictions, that "law enforcement officials shall identify themselves as such and give a clear warning of their intent to use firearms, with sufficient time for the warning to be observed" and that "intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life." We ask Canada and the United Nations to speak out against the "shoot on sight" orders, and make it very clear that the UN does not support or condone such orders. With respect to Ambon, we also call for urgent humanitarian assistance to the victims of the rioting, a full investigation into the events, and support for any reconciliation efforts that may be undertaken by community or religious leaders.

The issue of political prisoners also needs to be raised. Though there have indeed been releases, they have been far from complete. Notably, a group of young people remain in prison simply because of their membership in the PRD — the People's Democratic Party — despite the fact that the PRD is now officially registered as a legal political party. We ask Canada's delegation at the Commission on Human Rights to

press for their immediate release. We would also like to draw attention to the situation of ten prisoners still jailed in connection with the alleged abortive coup attempt of 1965. These sick and elderly men have served more than thirty years in prison, under dreadful conditions and in some cases on death row. None of them received a fair trial. Whatever they may or may not have done, they cannot pose any threat to the society at this point, and they should be released on humanitarian grounds alone.

A full investigation into the violence surrounding the MPR session in November must be carried out as a matter of priority, particularly looking at the allegations of the use of snipers, and the events around the Semanggi Cloverleaf overpass and at Atmajaya Catholic University, where, among other killings, a member of the Volunteers for Humanity team was shot dead while administering first aid to a wounded demonstrator. It is clear that excessive force was used against student demonstrators; those responsible must be identified and held to account.

There are many other issues that need to be raised with respect to Indonesia. However, I believe some of these will be covered by our colleagues at this meeting, so we will limit our submission to the points discussed above.



Kamra member (Forum Keadilan)

NGO Statement on West Papua

We, human rights activists from every part of the world, call for a democratic and peaceful process towards a conclusion of the National Dialogue between the indigenous people of Irian Jaya/ West Papua and the government of Indonesia.

Witnessing the Indonesian Armed Force's (ABRI)'s brutality against the people of Indonesia — especially the military's brutal crackdown on peaceful demonstrations in July 1998 in Biak, Jayapura, Sorong and Manokwari, and the May 1998 riots in Jakarta — which has included massacre, torture, rape, and disappearance, we are deeply concerned that the demand for independence, following 35 years of colonization by Indonesia, which West Papuan representatives presented to President Habibie during the National Dialogue on February 26 might spark violence against civilians by the military or by forces backed by ABRI as has recently occurred in East Timor, Aceh, and the Mollucas.

Concerning the safety of one hundred Papuans representatives and everyone who has been involved in the dialogue with the President of the Republic of Indonesia on February 26th, 1999, and considering the indigenous people of Indonesia's need for peace and the respect of fundamental human rights including self-determination, we urge the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Prof. Dr. B.J. Habibie, and the Indonesian government to:

1. Listen to the plight and genuine political aspirations of the Papuans.
2. Continue the dialogue with the goals of ensuring respect for human rights and establishing a just peace in the country
3. Allow local, national and international representatives and journalists to monitor the relevant activities of the dialogue.

We urge the international community to call on all sides to exercise restraint from any kind of violence, including orchestration that may harm the peaceful continuation of the process of dialogue of the West Papuan people.

Justice and peace for the people of West Papua, All Human Rights for All -- March 29, 1999

Pornsuk Koetsawang (Ms), Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), THAILAND
Delphine Djiraibe (Ms), Chadian Association for Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (ATPDH), CHAD (Central Africa).

John Rumbiak (Mr), Institute for Human Rights Studies and Advocacy (IHRSTAD), West Papua (INDONESIA)
Denis Mizne (Mr), INSTITUTO "SOU DAPAZ", Sao paulo, BRAZIL

Baridi Legbara (Mr), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), NIGERIA

Bernadette Lukonde (Ms), Zambia Independent Monitoring Team, Luzaka - ZAMBIA

TAPOL, The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, BRITAIN
Canadian Action for Indonesia and East Timor (CAFIET)
CANADA

INDONESIAN WOMEN FOR PEACE

On April 6, 1999 at 04:00 PM a number of women gathered at the rotary in front of Hotel Indonesia, Jakarta. Clothed all in black, carrying black umbrellas, bearing banners, they expressed their concern and called for peace. This peaceful action is going to continue in other cities in Indonesia and Timor Leste on every Friday at 4:00 PM.

The activity of Women's Call for Peace is a spontaneous idea from various circles of women who are very concerned with the wave of violence in the country over the past year. They are aware that in this situation of conflict and riot, women have the chance to weave peace. When the society is separated into boxes of religion, ethnicity, race, and class, women feel that they can unify themselves in one universal concern. As a mother, she can feel the misery of other mothers who are worried and grieving for their children; as a woman she shares the determination with other women everywhere, from diverse backgrounds, to refuse being torn apart by violence. These women are calling for:

1. All women in Indonesia and Timor Leste to be united in solidarity to weave peace.
2. All women in Indonesia and Timor Leste to overcome group, racial, ethnic, religious interests and reject all forms of divide and rule and violence.
3. Society and government to involve women in every attempt toward reconciliation because working for peace without women will not produce desirable results.
4. Society and government to wholeheartedly uphold the perspective of women. Any attempt towards reconciliation of social conflict without referring to the experience of women — the ones who suffer the most from the violence and conflict — will be meaningless.

Our trans-regional activity is a form of cooperation among individuals rather than a program of a particular organisation. Coordination from one region to the other is done through word of mouth and through the network of women groups existing in different regions. Women who support this activity come from very diverse backgrounds in terms of class, ethnic, and religious groups.

Women figures involved in this activity in Jakarta are, among others, Mrs. Nuriyah Rahman, Herawati Diah, Saparinah Sadli, Lies Marcoes, Sita Aripurnami and Karlina Leksono. In Jakarta the activity will continue on Friday, April 16 with a special focus on Tual and Ambon. From April 23 onward the focus will be on Sambas, Aceh, Timor Leste, Kupang and all Indonesia.

Other regions which have agreed to join this activity with different expressions and methods are: In Dili a peaceful demonstration like in Jakarta will start on Friday, April 16. In Suai, West Timor, there will be a religious service of women on April 16, a vigil on April 30, and poetry reading on May 14. In Lubuk Pakan, North Sumatera, there will be a special gathering on April 23. In Takengon, Central Aceh, there will be a mass afternoon prayer (Shalat Ashar) continued with oration on peace and Shalawat Badar on April 9.

From week to week, from one site to another, Indonesian and East Timorese women have stated their determination to continuously make a call for peace and solidarity until this Earth of Pertiwi (Bumi Pertiwi) becomes a secure place for the children of Indonesia and Timor Leste.

1965 prisoners released -- but PRD prisoners still jailed

In late March, the Indonesian government released another round of political prisoners, 52 in total. Most of the prisoners released were Acehnese. Among them as well were the ten men accused of involvement in the "communist coup" of 1965, for whose release CAFIET has actively campaigned.

The truth of what happened in 1965 is still obscure. Suharto claimed that the PKI, the Communist Party of Indonesia, attempted to stage a coup against Sukarno, and that Suharto took control of the military, and then the country, in order to save Indonesia from communism. In fact, there are strong indications that the "coup attempt" may have been engineered by Suharto himself, in collusion with other army officers, and that Suharto then used the events as an excuse to seize power and crack down brutally on "suspected communists", in a wave of killings that claimed perhaps *one million* lives in a six-month period. It was in part the terror and trauma engendered by the bloody events of 1965/66 that allowed Suharto to hold onto power for so long.

TAPOL, the British-based Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, was first formed to work for the freedom of the many thousands of political prisoners, or *tapols*, detained during the 1965 events and afterwards. According to a TAPOL press release, "the ten men, four of whom have been under sentence of death for more than three decades, have been compelled to spend half their lives in prison, having been convicted in trials none of which was conducted fairly or in a way that allowed them to mount a proper defence. Moreover, they were conducted in a ferociously anti-communist atmosphere that ensured that they would be convicted and given heavy sentences.

"They have spent years in bleak conditions, deprived of their legitimate rights of appeal, suffering many ailments with little attention being paid to their need for medical attention. Despite physical disabilities, they have been able to preserve their human dignity and will at last rejoin their families in happy re-unions.

"TAPOL takes this opportunity of greeting these ten men in their moment of joy and wishing them all the very best as they return to their families.

"We call on the Indonesian authorities to make every arrangement for them to return home safely. They are entitled to receive all the support necessary by the authorities to enable them to recover from their terrible ordeal and their various ailments, and helped to cope with the trauma of returning to normal life after having been isolated for such a long period of time. They must be allowed to live the rest of their lives in tranquillity without the imposition of restrictions on their freedom of movement."

The founder and director of TAPOL, Carmel Budiardjo, who herself spent three years as a political prisoner from 1968 till 1971, said: "These releases mark the end of an era, of a dark period in Indonesia's history. I wish them all well as they leave their prisons and return to normal life."

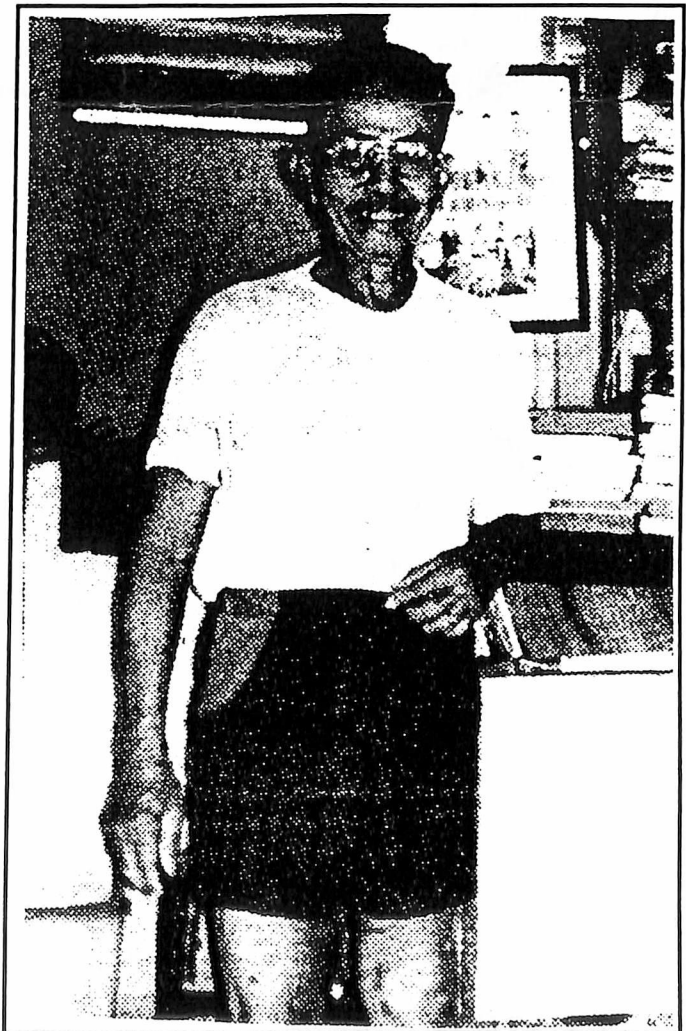
CAFIET hopes that these releases mark the beginning of Indonesian society's attempt to uncover the truth about what happened in 1965 and to come to terms with the terrible events. Such an effort is crucial for social healing and the

progress of democracy. It is encouraging that scholar Ben Anderson — blacklisted for many years — was recently permitted to speak in Jakarta on the events of 1965/66.

However, Indonesia continues to hold many political prisoners. Eight members of the PRD, including Budiman Sudjatmiko and Dita Sari, continue to be held for no crime other than belonging to what is now an authorized political party, which will be on the ballot in the June elections. Though some of the eight were offered a presidential amnesty, they turned it down, on the grounds that accepting an amnesty amounted to admitting that they were guilty of criminal acts. Quite reasonably, they refuse to make any such admission.

A large number of East Timorese prisoners remain in jail as well, most of them convicted in trials that do not come anywhere close to international standards of fairness. Two survivors of the Santa Cruz massacre are still serving lengthy sentences — in one case a life sentence — and Xanana Gusmao, though transferred to house arrest, is not yet free.

CAFIET is planning a national day of action in support of Indonesian political prisoners on October 10. Contact us for more information about what you can do.



Released prisoner Abdul Latief (TAPOL Bulletin)

Violence on Ambon

From Human Rights Watch, New York

In a new report on the communal violence that has wracked Ambon and surrounding islands for the last two months, Human Rights Watch calls on the Indonesian government to make public any hard evidence of provocation, investigate allegations of bias in the behavior of security forces called in to quell the violence, and acknowledge the terrible losses that both Christians and Muslims have suffered. It also calls on the government to examine and address the underlying communal tensions.

"Whether or not the violence in Ambon was provoked, communal tensions there were explosive," said Sidney Jones, Asia director of Human Rights Watch and the report's author. "This was never the paradise of interfaith harmony that has sometimes been portrayed." She said each eruption of violence that has taken place since January has added to the accumulated grievances of both sides, making any early resolution of the conflict much more difficult.

The thirty-page report, based in part on a visit to Ambon in February, presents differing accounts of the same incident from Christian and Muslim sources, showing the vast discrepancies between the two and the danger of relying only on one side. "Neither community has a monopoly on truth or suffering," said Jones. "The death toll is appallingly high for both, and both sides have seen entire neighborhoods burned down, and houses of worship destroyed." The report notes that Christian sources as of March 9 were reporting eighty-three Christian deaths, and Muslim sources said over one hundred Muslims had been killed.

Some 30,000 people have been displaced and are living in temporary shelters in and around Ambon, not counting the tens of thousands of migrants, mostly from Sulawesi, who have left Ambon since January. As of early March, the government had not permitted international aid and humanitarian agencies regular access to the displaced.

The report examines four questions: Who started the violence? Why did it escalate so fast? What, if anything, could the government have done to halt it? And what should the government be doing now?

The Indonesian press, many senior officials in the Indonesian government and opposition, and many Jakarta-based diplomats believe the violence was provoked as part of a nationwide strategy of rogue military officers linked to the Soeharto family to disrupt the forthcoming parliamentary elections in June and create the conditions for a return to military rule. The June elections, which promise to be Indonesia's freest Indonesia since 1955, would, if fairly conducted, almost certainly lead to a further diminution of the military's power, which has been on the wane since President Soeharto resigned in May 1998. In contrast, local leaders in Ambon tend to see the violence as locally instigated for narrow communal goals. In either case, the report says, government of Soeharto's successor, Habibie, seems to have been half-hearted about investigating allegations of provocation at either the national or local level.

Why did the violence spread so quickly? Ambon was

portrayed in the Indonesian media as a land where relations between Christians and Muslims had always been harmonious, the tranquility of interfaith relations protected by an alliance system called *pela*, where for centuries, a village of one faith had been twinned with a village of the other, where Christians helped build mosques, and Muslims helped build churches. The reality was very different. Tension between the two communities, Ambonese Christians on the one hand, and Ambonese Muslims and Muslims from various migrant groups on the other, was so high that it would have taken very little provocation to ignite an explosion. Once the violence began, it quickly fed on itself, dragging out historical grievances, creating new injuries, and generating new, deeply felt communal suspicions.

What might the government have done differently? A key question revolves around the use of lethal force. The conflict in Ambon separates into two distinct phases, demarcated by a decision to fire on demonstrators. From January 19 to about February 14, most of the deaths on both sides were caused by traditional or homemade weapons - machetes, long knives, spears, arrows shot from slingshots, molotov cocktails, and fishing bombs (illegal devices exploded under water to capture large quantities of fish). Many people also burned to death when houses or vehicles were set on fire. From February 14 onwards, most of the deaths took place when security forces, whose numbers by March had risen to 5,000 on an island with a population of about 350,000, began implementing orders to fire on rioters. There is no question that an extremely grave security threat existed, and the security forces were initially accused by both sides of standing by and doing nothing as the different sides were attacking each other. When they finally did intervene, they shot bullets rather than attempting to use any methods of non-lethal crowd control.

A second question relates to the composition of the security forces used. Both sides have made allegations of bias, with the Muslims tending to accuse the police of favoring the Christians, and the Christians tending to accuse the army of siding with the Muslims. The accusations of bias were based in part on non-military attributes of the soldiers and police involved (geographic origin, religion, ethnicity) but also on their behavior in the field. Muslims accused Christian police in one case of opening fire near a mosque; Christians accused Muslim soldiers in another of helping Muslims attack a Christian village. Those accusations need to be thoroughly examined by an impartial body. Moreover, the government should deploy security forces with a view toward minimizing perceptions of bias, a point we elaborate on below.

The first two questions are directly related to the protection of human rights in a situation of civil strife. There is a third question of the government's response, however, which has arisen in other outbreaks of communal violence, such as a serious ethnic conflict that erupted in West Kalimantan in late 1996 and early 1997. This is the Indonesian government's belief in top-down conflict resolution: that if the local government brings religious or customary leaders together and has them sign a peace pact or participate in a traditional ceremony, the

conflict can be solved. This approach can have unfortunate consequences, because when the pact inevitably breaks down, the participants often believe that the bad faith of one of the parties must have been responsible - and mutual distrust and suspicion grow deeper.

The report makes the following recommendations to the Indonesian government:

1. Ensure that its security forces respect the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officers and that troops assigned to Ambon are fully equipped with non-lethal methods of crowd control. Of particular importance to Ambon is the principle that "Law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms. They may use force and firearms only if other means remain ineffective or without any promise of achieving the intended result."

2. Investigate accusations of bias in the behavior of security forces. In many outbreaks of violence thus far, notably the shooting on March 1 of four people outside a mosque and the conflict on the island of Haruku on February 14, Muslims have accused Christian Ambonese police personnel of taking part in attacks against them. Likewise, the Christians have accused troop reinforcements sent from the Wirabuana command of the Indonesian army, based in Ujung Pandang, Sulawesi, of siding with Muslim villagers in several clashes. The fact that the Wirabuana command is led by a Muslim Ambonese, and that some of the Muslims involved in the conflict in Ambon are ethnic Bugis and native to the area around Ujung Pandang, does little to allay suspicions of bias. An impartial independent investigation, not necessarily of every outbreak of violence that has taken place, but at least of three or four major clashes where bias has been alleged, would be useful.

At the same time, independent investigators should work with local village heads (raja) and community leaders to examine reports that have been produced by both sides to identify points of convergence and divergence and use these findings to understand how perceptions have fed the conflict.

3. Avoid at all costs the imposition of a state of "civil emergency" in Ambon and surrounding islands. This option is currently being weighed by Cabinet ministers in Jakarta and has been recommended by some local leaders in Ambon. With the very clear exacerbation of the situation caused by the presence of security forces with orders to fire on rioters, additional measures that allow the military to bypass normal civil rights safeguards are likely to make things even worse.

4. Make absolutely clear in all public pronouncements and interviews that both Christians and Muslims are victims. There has been a distressing tendency in both the Indonesian and international media to quote sources from only one side of the conflict. That reporting feeds back into the communal tensions in Ambon, helping fuel one side's anger against the other.

5. Find and prosecute any provocateurs. If General Wiranto and other senior government leaders have enough information to acknowledge, as they have, that provocateurs played a role in the initial outbreak of violence, they have an obligation to make public the nature of their evidence and make every effort to ensure that those individuals are found and prosecuted to

the fullest extent of the law.

6. Ensure that international, non-religious-based humanitarian organizations are allowed full access to Ambon and surrounding islands to assist the wounded and displaced. The need is not so much for supplies of food and medicine but rather to find a way to distribute existing supplies safely and impartially.

7. Ensure that the rights of internally displaced people in Ambon are fully protected in accordance with "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" prepared by the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations.

A CALL OF CONSCIENCE AND HUMANITY FOR THE VICTIMS IN THE TRAGEDY OF AMBON AND SAMBAS

VOLUNTEER TEAM for HUMANITY

Dear friends,

Our conscience these days has been struck when hearing about, witnessing and getting in touch with the living conditions of the victims of political violence which has taken the form of riots and destruction of our civilization. Touched by the living conditions of all these victims, we would like to invite you all to join hands and to do our utmost in rendering humanitarian/social aid in a more concrete way like giving donations to these victims, "refugees in our own country", especially to those women and children who have become victims in the tragedy of Ambon and Sambas.

Conscious of human rights as the basic rights of every human being, including of course these victims (the right to raise opinion, the right to have hope for the future, the right to exist, the right to live), let us fight together for the rise of our nation's civilization: for truth, justice, and peace in our country.

The humanitarian/social aid that we need is in the form of concrete donations such as medicine (for wounds/first aid, cholera, dysentery, cough, influenza, tuberculosis, malaria, etc.), small surgery equipment, oxygen tank (small tubes), rice, nutritious food such as milk/food for babies and children, dried food (snacks, instant noodles, soybean cake, dried fish, etc.), clothes, blankets, plastic canvas for emergency tents, etc.

To friends who want to give donations, please contact our Public Relations personnel: Agung Putri (E-mail: advokasi@indo.net.id), Al. Andang Binawan (E-mail: galih@indo.net.id)

If you have problems in donating goods and would prefer to donate in fund, please contact the Treasurer of the Volunteer for Humanity: Chr. Widiartanti, SH, Tel/Fax: 021-4897761

Or you can send your donations directly to the Bank Account of the Team of Volunteers for Humanity at Bank BNI Cab. Matraman, Jakarta no. acc. 219.000171461.001 c/o. Christina Widiartanti, SH QQ TRK (US dollar account)

First national meeting for CAFIET



Participants of CAFIET's national meeting: (top, l-r) Allen Gunderson, Larry Grieve, Jessica Stevenson, Sean Murray (bottom, l-r) Douglas Taylor, Lynda Walker, Mary Hutchinson, Constancio Pinto, Elaine Briere, Maggie Helwig, Carol Foort, Brooks Kind, Derek Houlbrook. Photo: Fernando Nunes/Elaine Briere

From February 26 to 28, CAFIET held our first national meeting. Attended by representatives of seven CAFIET groups (with regrets from three others) and by Constancio Pinto of the CNRT, the meeting mapped out a political basis of unity and structure for CAFIET, and a plan for our actions for the next year.

On February 26, we gathered to hear Constancio Pinto speak on the current situation in East Timor. Summarizing recent developments at the UN and on the ground, he brought a message of great optimism, suggesting that independence for East Timor may be all but inevitable (unfortunately later events have cast a partial cloud on this optimism — see other stories in this newsletter). He also urged us to think about what we could do for East Timor during the post-occupation transitional period leading to independence.

The next day, we began with reports from groups around the country. St John's works closely in cooperation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Association, which includes East Timor in its work. They have included information about Inco's activities in Indonesia in a presentation made to the hearings on the Voisey's Bay

project and held an APEC demonstration.

On Quadra Island there's a big focus on letter-writing, and Carol regularly sends out her own supplement to the newsletter with letter-writing suggestions.

In Regina, education and awareness are the main focus. They are working on a booklet for teenagers about foreign aid and East Timor. They are also in regular contact with Amnesty, local church groups, local unions, and alternative media, especially Briarpatch, and write many letters to the editor to mainstream media. The Regina group participated in a march against sweatshops and child labour and have been researching an "ethical fund" which invests in Indonesia.

During the period leading up to the resignation of Suharto, the Toronto group held almost daily demonstrations and spoke to the media frequently. Since then, the group has co-sponsored a talk with Edwin Gozal of the PRD and brought Yeni Damayanti and Fernando de Araujo to Toronto to speak. They leafleted subway stops on December 7; have had tables at several human rights fairs; and have spoken to church youth groups and school classes. They also had a demonstration outside the Bata Shoe Museum about labour

STOP PRESS -- MILITIAS TAKE CONTROL OF DILI

As this newsletter is being mailed, extremely distressing news is arriving from Dili.

On Saturday, April 17, many of the paramilitary groups held a rally in Dili, at which they called for the murder of pro-independence leaders. They then fanned out through the city and began to attack buildings and individuals. The house of Manuel Carrascalao, the leader of the Movement for Peace and Reconciliation, was besieged by Besi Merah-Putih, the militia group responsible for the killings in Liquica last week. Carrascalao's teenage son was killed, as were a number of the refugees who had been seeking shelter in his house. The houses of various CNRT members have been burned down and the offices of the local newspaper have been ransacked. Foreign journalists were also intimidated. We do not yet have an accurate death toll but it seems that 13 deaths at least can be confirmed from Saturday's violence. Most probably there have been many more.

According to reliable observers, ABRI and police were present and made no attempt to stop the attacks. One foreign observer said they stood around "grinning". Whether or not ABRI actively participated in the violence is not yet clear but it is obvious that they gave, at the very least, their tacit consent (not to mention the weapons which they have supplied to the paramilitaries for some time).

As we are writing this on Sunday, we hear that the paramilitaries are ransacking the suburbs of Dili, killing many people, and that some have arrived in Jakarta, intending to hunt down pro-independence leaders there. We do not know what the situation in East Timor will be when you receive this newsletter. Please contact us at (416) 531-5850 or cafiet@interlog.com for updated information.

Contact Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy and insist that he speak strongly with President Habibie. If the Indonesian government does not take active steps to rein in the paramilitary violence, they must be treated as complicit in that violence and Canada should apply political and economic sanctions.

You can phone Lloyd Axworthy at 613-995-0153 or fax him at 613-947-4442.

conditions in Indonesia.

Calgary had a table at the Peace Fair.

In Halifax, people have written letters in response to urgent actions; there was a panel discussion on APEC at which Brooks spoke, as well as Jaggi Singh. Brooks in Halifax is still working on the issue of Dalhousie's involvement with Indonesia, currently attempting at least to get them to formulate a policy on overseas projects so there is a standard against which particular projects can be judged.

The Vancouver group put up a tremendous effort around APEC, reflected in the size of the demonstrations and the amount of media coverage; the "SprayPEC" hearings continue to be a focus. Elaine had a photo show in Burnaby with photos from East Timor and APEC.

After the updates, we went on to discuss our structure and our mission statement. We agreed on a structure which gives near-complete autonomy to local groups, requiring them only to keep to a rule of nonviolence in their actions. National activities and the work of the national office will be coordinated by a five-person steering committee, to be chosen annually at the AGM. This year's steering committee consists of Larry Grieve of Calgary (chair), Carol Foort of Quadra Island, Elaine Briere of Mission, Brooks Kind of Halifax and Mary Hutchinson of Toronto. For our mission statement, see the sidebar on this page.

February 28 was spent in planning our activities for the next year. A large list of actions was suggested, some to be carried out nationally and other by individuals or local groups. Among the highlights:

- A national day of action for Indonesian and East Timorese political prisoners on October 1
- A national day of action for East Timor on November 12 (the nature of this day will be decided once we have a clearer idea of where the rapidly-changing political situation is heading)
- A national petition calling for an embargo on arms sales to Indonesia (copies of this petition are now available from the national office)
- A variety of initiatives around the idea of providing skills exchanges and training for East Timorese, including the possibility of bringing East Timorese for training at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, and at the First Nations Legal Studies Department at UBC.
- Making contact with Peace Brigades International over their possible project in East Timor and doing what we can to support this and similar initiatives

- More public education on West Papua and Aceh

There was also much discussion of the likelihood of aid and development agencies flooding into East Timor during a transitional period (it was noted that this is, in fact, already beginning), and much stress was placed on the need for the Timorese to be able to choose how they want to "develop" their own society and lands. We talked about ways that the solidarity movement may be able to provide information and resources, and perhaps work with aid agencies to ensure that particular ideas of "development" are not imported against the will of the Timorese themselves.

Mission Statement

Canadian Action for Indonesia and East Timor (CAFIET) is a national network for human rights in Indonesia, and self-determination for the Indonesian-occupied territories of East Timor, West Papua and Aceh. We call on the Canadian government to impose an arms embargo on Indonesia until there is true democracy and respect for human rights and until the occupied territories can exercise their right to choose their own future. We ask the Canadian government to speak out strongly for a democratic process for deciding the future of East Timor. We also call on the government to put substantial and appropriate aid towards the reconstruction of East Timor's civil society.

We call for demilitarization of Indonesian society and ask the Canadian government to make all their dealings with the Indonesian government conditional upon substantial demilitarization and democratization.

We also call on the government to radically re-evaluate our aid programme so that it helps those truly in need rather than the wealthy. We call on the government to regulate trade and investment according to strict social and environmental standards. We ask Canadian corporations to take a more responsible attitude to the social and environmental impacts of all their dealings with Indonesia.

Our understanding of human rights includes women's rights, children's rights, labour rights, the rights of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, and the rights of the environment. We advocate for the release of all Indonesia's political prisoners.

We work to support the Indonesian democracy movement and those NGOs working for human rights in the country, as well as the movements for self-determination in East Timor and West Papua.

Resources Available from CAFIET

Merchandise

"Free East Timor" button with smiling girl, \$2

"Free East Timor" t-shirt, black with Timorese flag, L or XL, \$15

"East Timor: Betrayed but not Beaten" t-shirt, black and white with picture of Timorese house, L only, \$15

Videos

"Bitter Paradise", by Elaine Briere — the story of the tragedy of East Timor and Canada's complicity. (\$26.75 for individuals. For institutional rate, please contact Snapshot Productions, 33659 Fifth Ave, Mission, BC, V2V 1X1, fax 604-820-3694)

"Indonesia: Islands on Fire" — human rights violations in Indonesia and East Timor (\$25)

"There is only one word: RESIST!" — a profile of the People's Democratic Party of Indonesia (\$20)

Books

The Indonesia Kit, by Elaine Briere and Susan Gage: a primer on Indonesia and East Timor, intended mostly for secondary school students. (\$10)

Complicity: Human Rights and Canadian Foreign Policy, by Sharon Scharfe: a study of Canadian government involvement with Indonesia (\$15)

East Timor's Unfinished Struggle: Inside the Timorese Resistance, by Constancio Pinto and Matthew Jardine: Autobiography of a key member of the Timorese resistance, now living in the United States (\$15)

The West Papua Kit, from the Australia West Papua Association: history, background, culture and human rights in West Papua (\$10)

Subscribe to TAPOL Bulletin -- published in England every two months, this newsletter is the best source of comprehensive information on human rights in Indonesia and East Timor. A one-year subscription is \$35 (\$18 student/unwaged). Send subscriptions to **TAPOL-Canada c/o CAFIET, PO Box 562, Stn P, Toronto, ON, M5S 2T1**

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