

East Timor monthly memo news

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ref: MM 50
20 October 1991

MONTHLY MEMO Nº8 1991

(Information received during September 1991)

1. EAST TIMOR

a. Visit preparations:

As well as the three video films made by FALINTIL within Timor which were mentioned in our last issue, recent months have also seen an intensive documentation by the clandestine resistance of repression and human rights abuses in the run up to the Portuguese parliamentary delegation visit. The reports we have received, which are very detailed, run to 18 typewritten pages in Portuguese (ETN/421, 422 and 423) and mainly cover events from July to September 1991. They are signed by either Manok, Executive Committee Secretary of the CNRM (National Council of the Maubere Resistance, the highest body within the East Timorese resistance), or by Tirilolu, of the Information Bureau based in the mountains of Aitana. A number have already been translated into English by FRETILIN Australia (ETN/420).

The clandestine resistance has also sent a detailed 6 page report specifically related to the visit preparations. These preparations have included the following:

the arrival of additional contingents of troops from Indonesia who have been stationed throughout the territory, often in civilian clothes

meetings convened by the military in all parts of the territory to threaten and intimidate the local population and impel them to demonstrate in favour of integration with Indonesia, and to display Indonesian flags etc during the visit

the formation of three Timorese para-military groups whose principal functions are intimidatory or punitive, with the intention of spreading a climate of fear among the population. These are comprised of the "Regu Gelap" (underground gang), a group composed of former guerrillas who surrendered or were captured and forced on pain of death to take part, whose aim is to capture Xanana Gusmão and to influence public opinion; the "Regu Railakan" (lightning group), a group of disaffected youth led by Tomé Filipe Gama, used for counter-resistance operations and abductions in the Dili area, and the "Regu Ninja/Petrus" (a platoon of masked men who carry out the notorious Petrus or "mysterious killings" [see MM 35]) who are equipped with Night Spoon binoculars and Sony video cameras as well as being armed and who patrol

in unmarked cars and on motorbikes by day and night engaged in espionage and executions

the formation of other groups of East and West Timorese, combined with Indonesian troops, with the specific aim of provoking confrontation and confusion during the visit. These are said to be rehearsing scenes whereby one section waving FRETILIN flags will shout pro-Indonesian slogans while a further two sections will be armed with pocket-sized automatic pistols ("Mars Mal"), flick-knives and poisoned syringes. These latter will be placed between the first section of bogus demonstrators and the ordinary public to forcibly prevent any counter-demonstration. Any resulting deaths or injuries will be put down to disturbances between rival pro- and anti-integration factions and will be used to justify restrictions on the movements of the visiting delegation for "security reasons".

an increase in the number of detentions and disappearances. It is reported that all suspected nationalist sympathizers are listed in central computerized data banks with the intention of carrying out wide-scale reprisals after the visit

intense pressure on local government workers to conform to pro-integration ideology. 15 are reported to have been dismissed from their posts for suspected nationalist sympathies. A further 15 rural officials who had been killed or listed as disappeared have been formally transferred to Dili where their widows will receive a pension so as to buy their silence.

the creation of a fund of 2 million rupiahs to finance the setting up of this network. A copy of the official fax, in Indonesian, showing a breakdown of the costing of the operation (Operation Eagle) has been made public by resistance sources.

the temporary displacement of specific sectors of the community, principally students and local government officials, to Indonesia either on the pretext of attending training courses or solicited by financially attractive work offers [see below] (ETN/425)

"Expresso" reports the number of fresh troops disembarked in Dili as 5,000 and says that they were assigned to commando battalions 212 and 330 and to infantry battalions 127, 164, 307, 414 and 612 which are stationed in those districts to be visited by the Portuguese parliamentary delegation, namely Baucau, Lospalos, Ainaro, Maliana, Manatuto and Suai. It also reports that all houses in Dili are being systematically checked and searched after 11.00 at night. (Expresso 21 September 1991)

Benjamin Martins, 28 years old, a student at Bali University who was home on holiday in Maliana was arrested and tortured. He was one of the students, believed to be a member of the clandestine student organization RENETIL, listed in the secret army intelligence document which was leaked earlier this year (see MM 45). Unconfirmed reports later said that he was released after two days.

The arrest also took place in Dili of Luis Vasco Gama and he is reported to have been tortured. (Indonesia Online, source Tapol 22 September 1991)

b. Timorese workers protest against job conditions:

About 30 East Timorese students protested outside the Parliament House in

Jakarta on 30 August and refused to leave the building until the House of Representatives (DPR) guaranteed their safety and that of 400 others involved in the Yayasan Tiara job scheme (see MM 48). They claimed that the salaries and conditions they had been promised had not materialized and that they were living and working under substandard conditions which they were being coerced by the army to accept. (Sunday Territorian 1 September 1991, Indonesian Observer 31 Aug. 1991)

Alfredo da Costa, 25 years old, one of the young East Timorese who had participated in the demonstration was killed the next day when he was knocked down by a car at 4.30 am as he was out jogging with two companions. His body was flown back to East Timor without an autopsy two days later. A witness who washed the body at the hospital is reported to have said that apart from bumps on the victims head there no other injuries, not even minor ones on the young man's body. (Indonesia Online, source Tapol 20 September 1991)

The 7 September issue of Tempo, the Indonesian weekly, carried a photo of the DPR demonstration on its contents page along with a reference to an item about East Timorese youth facing uncertainty in Jakarta after the protest. The item itself did not appear, leaving two columns blank in the national news section. In its 21 September issue the paper published a letter from an East Timorese student, Paulo Ximenes, asking about what had happened to the item and the editors reply : "We apologise. There were technical problems."

c. Military activity:

FRETILIN Australia reports that 16 Indonesian soldiers were killed and two injured in a clash with guerrillas on 26 July. Three Indonesian battalions (line 700, 303 and the Nanggala) took part in a "clean-up" operation which started on 5 August in the district of Same on the South coast. No casualty figures were given.

In the district of Lautem, on the eastern side of the territory, Indonesian battalions 745, 315, 141, 401 and 527 have been engaged in a military offensive against the armed resistance since 3 August. As yet no casualty figures are available. (FRETILIN Media Release 10 September 1991)

d. Ramos-Horta nominated spokesman:

José Ramos-Horta has been nominated to represent the CNRM in the exterior and he will have responsibility for "dealing with governments, parliaments, the UN and all international institutions, in all matters in the diplomatic field".

Mr Ramos-Horta, speaking in his first interview in his new capacity, said that Portugal should take the opportunity offered by its forthcoming presidency of the EC to put a strong case to the Human Rights Commission in Geneva in January 1992. He also suggested that if the planned Portuguese parliamentary delegation visit did not come about, then the mediation should pass from the UN to the EEC.

Referring to his new appointment, Mr Ramos-Horta explained that the representative of the CNRM in no way superceded or substituted either the FRETILIN External Delegation or the UDT. He sees two important steps for the near future: the UDT becoming integrated within the CNRM, and the creation of a non-party international secretariat to coordinate activities among both

Timorese organizations and support groups. (Público 15 September 1991)

A communication from António Tilman, in the name of Permanent Commission of the JNT (Timorese Nationalist Youth), denounced in strong terms the appointment of Mr Ramos-Horta, describing it as "lacking democracy" and "undermining the existing structures ... contained in the Nationalist Convergence" (ETN/420) According to "Diário de Notícias" these comments from Mr Tilman are said to reflect the view of FRETILIN Lisbon (Diário de Notícias 26 September 1991)

e. Documents received:

- 1) FRETILIN Media Release, Australia, 10 September 1991, 18p (English); ETN/420
- 2) Informação Nº 5/91, Manek, CNRM, East Timor 20 September 1991, 4p (Portuguese); ETN/421
- 3) Informação Nº 6/91, Manek, CNRM, East Timor undated September 1991, 7p (Portuguese); ETN/422
- 4) Informação Nº 2 and 3 September 1991, Tirilolu, Information Bureau, East Timor, 7p (Portuguese); ETN/423
- 5) Communiqué from António Tilman, "Juventude Nacionalista Timorense", Lisbon 15 September 1991, 3p (Portuguese); ETN/424
- 6) "Plans to manipulate the situation during the Portuguese parliamentary delegation visit to East Timor", East Timor, 6p (Portuguese); ETN/425
- 7) "EEC-ASEAN and human rights violations in East Timor" - Question to the Chair of European Political Cooperation, European Parliament, by Barros de Moura and ensuing debate, 11 September 1991, 12 p (Portuguese); ETN/426
- 8) "An appeal to international and Indonesian human rights NGOs from East Timor solidarity groups", CDPM, Lisbon and Tapol, London, 2p (English) 14 October 1991; ETN/427
- 9) Question of East Timor, Progress Report of the UN Secretary-General to the 46th UN General Assembly (with annex), New York 13 September 1991, 7 p (English); ETN/428
- 10) Address by the Portuguese Foreign Minister to the 46th UN General Assembly, New York 24 September 1991, 4p (Portuguese); ETN/429
- 11) Address in name of the Presidency of the EC, by the Dutch Foreign Minister to the 46th UN General Assembly, New York 24 September 1991, 2p (English); ETN/430

2. ADMINISTERING POWER: PORTUGAL

a. Agreement for visit in November:

Agreement was finally reached regarding the Portuguese parliamentary delegation visit to East Timor when the two sides signed an agreement in New York under the aegis of the UN Secretary-General and which the latter reported in his progress report to the General Assembly on 13 September.

It was agreed that:

"The Portuguese delegation shall be free to meet whomever it wishes and anyone who wishes to meet the Portuguese parliamentary delegation will be allowed to do so. No action, including of a security nature, may be taken by the Indonesian authorities that could prejudice any potential or actual contacts. Individuals who meet the Portuguese parliamentary delegation shall not be made to suffer any adverse consequences as a result of those contacts".

"The visit of the Portuguese parliamentary delegation shall be undertaken on the basis of a predetermined but flexible itinerary and list of contacts. During the visit the delegation may request that changes be made to the itinerary and list of contacts, providing they are of a reasonable nature, taking logistical constraints into account.

The Portuguese parliamentary delegation will provide its own interpreters and the contacts may be undertaken in private and on the basis of confidentiality." (ETN/428)

The other terms regarding the composition and timing of the visit were broadly the same as those we published in MM 48.

A letter, signed by 11 East Timor solidarity groups and addressed to 18 international NGOs connected with human rights, including 4 Indonesian organizations, expressed reservations that the guarantees contained in the Terms of Reference published by the UN Secretary-General were not adequate given that "developments during August and September show that these principles were already being violated." The letter appealed to the organizations to "remain watchful and ready to act immediately, in the event of more human rights violations in East Timor" and to alert governments and international agencies. (ETN/427)

The preliminary visit by the advance team to prepare the programme for the visit took place from 28 September to 4 October. This team was composed of two UN representative, two Portuguese and two Indonesian representatives. (Diário de Notícias 27 September 1991)

b. EEC reaffirms its position at the UN General Assembly:

Mr Hans Van der Broek (Holland) speaking on behalf of the European Community at the UN General Assembly on 24 September 1991, said that the situation in East Timor continues to be a "source of concern" and that they "view favourably" the forthcoming visit to the territory by the special rapporteur on torture.

The Portuguese Foreign Minister, João de Deus Pinheiro, in his address to the assembly, stressed that what was at issue was not a so-called bilateral difference of opinion between Portugal and Indonesia but rather a question of the fundamental human rights of the people of East Timor. (ETN/429)

3. INTERNATIONAL

a. European Parliament calls for Indonesian arms sales embargo:

Meeting in Strasbourg on 12 September, the European Parliament approved, by a large majority, a resolution calling on the European Commission, Council and member states to suspend arms sales to Indonesia until it respects human rights in East Timor. A suspension of cooperation between the EEC and Indonesia, which had been included in the text of the original resolution, was rejected.

The EP resolution followed a report on the situation in Southeast Asia by the British Conservative MEP, Derek Prag, in which he highlighted the human rights situation in East Timor and referred to the "flagrant disrespect" on the part of Indonesia towards the UN Security Council Resolutions on the

territory.

Prag's statements were strongly echoed by the Portuguese MEPS and also received vigorous support from the Danish MEP, Ulla Sandbaek, who strongly criticised the "genocide" carried out in East Timor and spoke of "entire villages in concentration camps".

Prag later told the "Diário de Notícias" that he was not in favour of the suggestion, put forward by Rui Amaral (Portugal) during discussion of the report, that an EP delegation should visit the territory. He believes that the most important action at this time would be the organizing of a referendum, under UN supervision and organization, to arrive at a solution. (Diário de Notícias 13 September 1991)

Also in the European Parliament, the Acting Chair of European Political Cooperation, Mr Dankert (Holland) confirmed that the issue of East Timor had not been referred to specifically during the EEC-ASEAN Joint Assembly talks in Luxemburg in May 1991 although events in Burma and Vietnam were raised (see MM 48 and 49). Mr Dankert, who was responding to a question by Barros Moura (Portugal), did say however that Indonesia had been made clearly aware of the content of the Council of Europe statement on human rights issued in Luxemburg in June 1991 (MM 49).

b. Oil firms keen to explore Timor oil fields:

A total of 33 foreign and national firms had expressed interest in exploring for oil in the Timor Sea since July, when Indonesia opened bids for the area. All bids have to be in by October and the successful candidates will be announced in December after meeting with Australia. (Indonesian Observer 3 September 1991)

c. Correction:

In the report on the UN Decolonization Committee in last months Monthly Memo the first line should have referred to the UN press release rather than to the Chairman and should therefore have read: "Special emphasis was given by the UN press release, to the presentation by ACFOA". We apologise for any misunderstandings which may have been created.

Editor and translator: Billy Williams
East Timor News is a service which publishes information in three forms - the Monthly Memo (MM) and the occasional publications, Subject Memo (SM) and Urgent Communique (UC). It can also make available, on request, copies of all documents mentioned in these publications. It is produced by two Portuguese NGOs, CDPM (The Commission for the Rights of the Maubere People) and "Peace is possible in East Timor". The annual subscription is 100\$US. The text in East Timor News may be freely quoted but in the event of the quotation of a significant portion of its contents, ETN should be credited.
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