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## INDONESIA

### ISSUE

Canada-Indonesia bilateral relations in the context of the East Timor issue.

### BACKGROUND

The shootings in Dili, the capital of East Timor, on November 12, 1991, in which between 50 and 100 people or more were killed and many were injured, has been an important irritant in Canada-Indonesia bilateral relations. On December 26, the Commission of Inquiry, which had been set up by the Indonesian Government to investigate the shootings, submitted a preliminary report. This report increased the early casualty figures from 19 to 50 and acknowledged that the military had lost control.

Indonesian President Soeharto took the following initiatives after the issuing of the report: a) immediate translation and release of the report; b) removal of two generals most directly responsible for the shootings; c) set up of a military inquiry, which took disciplinary action against six officers in chain of command plus the court martialling of eight others including four officers, three non-commissioned officers and one private; d) review of the Indonesian development program in East Timor; e) the army commander was instructed to account for those missing and; f) public apologies to the families. In addition, the Indonesian government invited a representative of the United Nations Secretary General to visit East Timor.

The report of the military investigation issued in February indicated that six senior officers, eight junior officers, and soldiers of other ranks will be subject to military discipline for their part in the shootings. In June, a number of court martials and trials of demonstrators were held. Sentences of soldiers, which were around one year, differed markedly from sentences given out to demonstration organizers -- around ten years. The reason was that the military were on trial only for losing control and going beyond authority and not for murder, whereas the demonstration organizers were on trial for subversion, which carries severe penalties according to Indonesian law -- up to life imprisonment. In July, a military report on people missing concluded that 19 were killed, 90 were still missing, some of them could be dead for a total up to around 50. Investigations are still underway.

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CANADIAN POSITION

Canadian dismay at these shootings was conveyed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs during her meeting with the Indonesian Foreign Minister in Seoul on November 13. These concerns were also expressed to the Indonesian authorities by the Canadian Ambassador in Jakarta and to the Indonesian Ambassador in Canada. They were raised during the session of the Third Committee of the current United Nations General Assembly.

On December 9, Canada suspended the approval of new development projects for Indonesia (\$30 million) and gave an immediate grant of \$150,000 to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) for humanitarian assistance in East Timor.

Last February, the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Commission of Human Rights worked successfully to achieve a strongly worded consensus text registering the concern of the international community regarding the human rights situation in Indonesia and urging the Indonesian government to take appropriate action on the situation in East Timor.

Canada saw as a positive development, the conclusions of the interim report and the response of the Indonesian government in taking action on a number of the recommendations in the report. Canada considered also as positive the decision of the Indonesian Government to invite a special representative of the United Nations Secretary General to visit East Timor (Canada has encouraged the Secretary General to make public the results of this visit).

Canada, however, has not lifted its suspension on new projects when the Consultative Group for Indonesia (CGI), which periodically gathers development assistance donors to coordinate aid pledges, was held in Paris in mid-July. Therefore, Canada made no pledge and attended the meeting as an observer only. This is because Canada had continuing doubts, specially about the fairness of the judicial system in light of discrepancies in the sentences given to civilians and military personnel involved in the Dili incident and by the continued presence of the military in East Timor. In addition, the latest report issued by Amnesty International renewed Canadian public concerns about the human rights situation in Indonesia. This was clearly expressed by the State Secretary for External Affairs when she met her Indonesian counterpart in Manila in the context of the PMC meeting.

*Canada lobbied  
to have  
a strongly worded  
resolution watered down  
to the less severe  
resolution finally  
adopted*