

# East Timor

monthly memo  
news

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*Mgt. Balda  
Letter to  
Setubal*

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## MONTHLY MEMO No 2/1990

### 1. EAST TIMOR

#### a. Descriptions of the January 17 demonstrations:

- (i) The following extracts, taken from a letter dated January 27 from a Timorese in Dili who, for reasons of personal security, cannot be named, give a first-person account of the events which occurred in Dili during the demonstration on the day of the US Ambassador's visit on January 17 (described in ETN Urgent Communiqué UC5).

"On the 17th of this month, the American Ambassador to Jakarta came, with his staff, on a visit.(...) In spite of all the check-points and security, about 400 youths succeeded in reaching the hotel where His Excellency was staying. They spoke to him, put across their point of view and he listened to them. Afterwards, the illustrious guest left the hotel to pay his respects to the authorities. Straight away, the police began to attack the young people; 4 went to hospital seriously injured. There were about 200 injured altogether, some with minor injuries and others more seriously hurt. All of this took place around 1.15 pm. By about 4.00 there were about 200 people in the gardens attached to the Bishops residence, which is near the hotel, some lying on the ground, others sitting, receiving treatment from members of the International Red Cross and from two religious.

The Indonesians were very, very upset, not by the courage of the young people, but because of the beating they had received which led to the Ambassador, who was angry about what had taken place, cancelling almost all his plans for the visit - he who had come to see how this country lives in prosperity, in abundance, as peaceful as a cemetery (...)

At 5.00, all those who had not been able to come to the hotel, more than 3000, held a demonstration in the city, shouting and singing. The police limited themselves to accompanying the procession and did not take any action. That night, at about 7.00, all the young people came together at Lecidere, in front of the statue of the Immaculate Conception, and prayed, some with their backs beaten raw, some with heads split open, others with the various injuries they had received when they were caught by the batons.

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Up to now [27/1] the reaction has not begun. But it will come, with detentions, interrogations, tortures to know who was behind it, in this case the person such and such ... But in the end, thanks be to God, they are mistaken. Because it is not necessary to lead and organize, it is the mass of people who do not accept this, who are discontented, who reject it, who are sickened... It is very striking! Those who have been brought up in primary and then secondary [Indonesian education] reject it. The living organism will not accept foreign bodies..." (letter from Dili, 27 Jan. 1990).

- (ii) An Australian tourist, who does not wish to be named, also wrote an account of what she saw on arriving in Dili on the afternoon of the January 17 and of a further demonstration on the following day. This account is included in the Appendix. The photographs taken by this witness show that the demonstrators include a number of young teenage boys and girls.

b. Photographs of January 17 Demonstration:

Amnesty International has published 12 photographs taken by one of the Australian eye-witnesses during the demonstration on the day of the US Ambassador's visit on January 17. These corroborate the descriptions by the Australian witnesses published in ETN UC5 and include a picture of the young students in a "human pile" on the ground, praying, surrounded by baton-wielding soldiers. (Amnesty International, Feb. 1990, AI Index, ASA 21/02/90, Appendix B)

c. Executions during 1989:

A recent FRETILIN Newsbrief gives details of a document dated August 5, 1989, sent by a FRETILIN cadre, Alex David Daitula, from the mountains of East Timor, which relates a number of human rights violations which took place in the rural areas during 1989.

The document names 9 civilians who were killed by the Indonesian military in various villages between March and July of that year. The soldiers involved are described as being from Battalions 328, 131 and 315. In the case of Joaquim Fernandes in Uatu-Bela (Uatulari) on 27.03.89, members of the 131 Battalion cut off one of his ears and pulled out an eye before killing him. They were all accused by the military of collaborating with FRETILIN.

The document also relates how the houses of students and ex-political prisoners in the villages are kept under guard at night by soldiers who listen to what is said inside and if the owners come out they beat them up and take them away for interrogation. (FRETILIN Newsbrief, Feb. 1990)

d. Letter to H. J. Princen from young people in the Bishop's house in November:

On November 6 a group of 30 young people who were taking refuge in the Bishop's house in Lecidere wrote a letter, in Bahasa Indonesia, to H J Princen, Director of the Institute

for the Defence of Human Rights in Jakarta, saying that they were "being chased by the army, to be arrested".

They requested Mr Princen to come to intervene on their behalf. "We will only abandon the Bishop's house if you are present here. (...) Our lives are threatened. We are obliged to leave our daily tasks, either as private workers or as students. We can't do anything for ourselves." (FRETILIN Newsbrief Feb. 1990)

e. Incidents in Dili on Christmas Eve:

On December 24 1989, a group of young Timorese students took over the building of "Balai Perajurit" in Dili, where Indonesian dignitaries were having Christmas dinner. There were some injuries and considerable damage resulted. The students left before the police arrived.

At the same time Becora market was hit by an enormous fire which lasted 5 hours and completely destroyed at least 86 kiosks, most of which belonged to Indonesian citizens. A similar fire in February 1989 in Comoro market in Dili was claimed by FRETILIN groups as an action against Indonesian citizens there. (FRETILIN Newsbrief Feb. 1990)

f. Timorese students attacked in Bali during Christmas period:

A Christmas party organized by Timorese students in Denpasar, Bali was disrupted by a group of Indonesian military on December 26. Of the approximately 275 students present three were seriously injured in the ensuing struggle and one Indonesian soldier is said to have died when his gun went off. A large number of the students were detained in Bali. (Jornal de Noticias, 31 Jan. 1990)

g. Bishop Belo's movements restricted:

Mr H J Princen speaking from Jakarta by telephone said that Bishop Belo is under constant surveillance and his contacts and visitors are controlled by the Indonesian authorities. "He is not a prisoner but he is not a free man."

Mr Princen said that "the Indonesian military presence in East Timor must diminish" and that he had hopes that contact between Indonesia and Portugal, particularly if humanitarian arguments were employed, could improve the situation which at that moment was calm. (Diário de Lisboa 6 Feb. 1990)

h. FRETILIN meeting in Lisbon:

In a recent meeting of the Central Council of the FRETILIN External Delegation which took place in Lisbon from January 29 to February 7, three new representatives were selected. Mari Alkatiri, second-in-command of the FRETILIN External Delegation, was designated Secretary of External Relations for FRETILIN. José Luis Guterres will take over as representative at the UN as well as continuing in his present position as FRETILIN representative in Mozambique. The UN post was formerly occupied by José Ramos-Horta and is not formally

recognized by the UN. Mr Guterres will be present at the UN General Assembly from August to September with logistical support from Mozambique. Alfredo Borges Ferreira has been designated as FRETILIN representative in Australia and the Pacific region.

The communiqué issued from the meeting analysed the political and military events of 1989. It concluded that, in spite of an increase in numbers of Indonesian military in the cities and towns during the year and attempts in official propaganda to suggest that the guerrilla resistance was on the verge of collapse, it was obvious from the number of FALINTIL military successes and the amount of military activity on the part of the Indonesian forces that this was far from the case.

The Council stressed the importance of activity on the international and diplomatic fronts and suggested that an important step in this area would be the formation of a group of "Countries for East Timor" headed by Portugal and with the participation of Brazil and the five African Portuguese-speaking countries to influence the International Community.

i. José Ramos-Horta - "Not a third party":

Speaking at a seminar in Australia, organized by the Australian Association for East Timor, José Ramos-Horta said that his proposal to form an International Secretariat for East Timor was not an attempt to form a third party. He proposed that the secretariat would have on its council eminent people, including representation from FRETILIN, the UDT and Catholic clergy and from this would be drawn a planning group supported by delegations created in Canberra, Tokyo, Brussels and Paris.

Mr Ramos-Horta said that he had the "total support" of Xanana Gusmão, who he said had left FRETILIN in October 1989, and that he also had the support of hundreds of students within East Timor and abroad who were tired of inter-party struggles.

The Portuguese Ambassador to Australia, José Luis Gomes, speaking at the same seminar said that Portugal's position, with regard to the Timor Gap Treaty, is oriented towards "the possibility of recourse to international fora such as the International Court at Hague", in a spirit of "realistic pragmatism" (Diário de Notícias 22 Feb. 1990)

j. José Ramos-Horta - "Perspectives on the roads to follow"

In an article in the weekly "Expresso", José Ramos-Horta concluded that "the conditions appear to exist for new efforts to be made to bring all the interested parties to the discussion table."

The events of the last 6 months in East Timor show that "Indonesia, after 14 years of military occupation, has lost the political battle." Even pro-Indonesia Australian press such as the Sidney Morning Herald, now recognises that the opposition to integration is not just coming from a tiny group of the old guard who want to return to to being a Portuguese colony.

"If Indonesia persists with its present rigid policies, the problem of East Timor will assume more serious proportions. Indonesia needs to concentrate its attentions on managing the crisis which will come with the inevitable succession of Suharto, and the East Timor problem, if it continues unresolved, could cost it dearly." (...)

"Time and the new international situation are moving in favour of the Timorese and Portugal" (...) Accordingly, Portugal should initiate a firm campaign with the aim of "lobbying" the US and its European partners France and the UK to "reduce the sale of arms to Indonesia." "Indonesia's vulnerability lies in its dependence on the goodwill of donor nations" (Expresso 10 Feb. 1990)

k. Documents received:

1. FRETILIN Newsbrief, Lisbon, Feb. 1990, 4p (English), ETN 236/90
2. FRETILIN Communiqué, Lisbon, 8 Feb. 1990, 3p (Portuguese), ETN 237/90
3. "East Timor, short-term detention and ill-treatment" Appendix B, Amnesty International, London, 15 Feb. 1990, 7p, (English) ETN 238/90
4. Letter from the Dili Diocesan Council to the Papal Nuncio in Jakarta, May 20 1989, 2p (Portuguese), ETN 239/90
5. Oral Question N°147/90, from MEP Barros Moura to the February Session of the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the European Parliament, and reply received, Feb. 1990, 2p (Portuguese), ETN 240/90

2. ADMINISTERING POWER: PORTUGAL

a. February 6. Bishop of Setubal speaks out:

On February 6, the anniversary of Bishop Belo's letter to the Secretary General of the UN, the Bishop of Setubal Manuel Martins appeared on Portuguese national TV (RTP) and talked about the difficult conditions under which the people of East Timor live, the imprisonments and the disheartening effect of the fact that up to now there still has been no reply to Bishop Belo's letter. Bishop Martins also made public two letters, one written to him in June 1989 by Bishop Belo and the other from the Diocesan Council in Dili to the Papal Nuncio in Jakarta in May 1989. For more detail regarding these letters please see Appendix.

On the same day, a message from Xanana Gusmão, from a cassette made by him addressed to Timorese students in March 1989, was played on a current affairs program on the radio station TSF. This was the first time that the voice of the resistance leader has been heard on the Portuguese public media and the impact was such that, the following day,

national TV also broadcast excerpts from the tape accompanied by photographs of Mr Gusmão.

The Diário de Lisboa also carried an in-depth article on the current situation in the territory on the same day. The campaign to "revive memories" on February 6 was initiated by Pax Christi and the Commission for Justice and Peace. (Diário de Lisboa 6 Feb. 1990)

b. Hague Tribunal - legal opinions differ:

The Portuguese Foreign Minister, João de Deus Pinheiro, has two received legal opinions regarding the strength of the countries case if it challenges the Timor Gap Treaty in the ICJ at the Hague (see ETN MM 30). Diplomatic sources said that the two legal opinions, one from a French expert and the other from a Portuguese were not "entirely coincident" and accordingly Mr Pinheiro is likely to procure further legal opinion before committing Portugal to this course of action. The Portuguese Government does not intend to initiate any legal case until the ratification of the treaty by Australia and Indonesia. (O Jornal 9 Feb. 1990)

c. IOJ condemns Indonesia:

The formal conclusions of the annual meeting of the International Organization of Journalists, which this year took place in Estoril in Portugal on January 27, condemned Indonesia for the "repression which it exercises on journalists in East Timor". This is the first time that this organization has taken a position on the situation in East Timor. (Diário de Lisboa 30 Feb. 1990)

3. INTERNATIONAL

a. EC Presidency draws attention to ill-treatment in East Timor:

The Irish Ambassador, Michael Lillis, speaking on behalf of his country, which currently holds the EC Presidency, referred to the "worrying news of human rights violations, including torture and ill-treatment, during the course of last year" in East Timor, when speaking in Geneva before the UN Special Commission on Human Rights. Mr Lillis spoke of the hope of the 12 EEC countries that Indonesia would permit international observers to visit East Timor. (Diário 22 Feb. 1990)

b. EC Foreign Ministers reply to question:

The Portuguese MEP, Barros Moura, put an oral question to the EC Foreign Ministers, during their February session on European Political Cooperation. Mr Moura asked if the Ministers were aware of the recent events in East Timor "namely the death, on January 17 last, of two students and a child caused by the Indonesian military who were suppressing a pro-independence demonstration during the visit of the US Ambassador's visit to Jakarta? And are they aware of the fresh outbreak of repression which according to the Timorese Resistance, is aimed at <collective executions> if there should occur a reactivation of military resistance to the Indonesian occupation"

Extracts from the letter, dated May 20 1988, to the Papal Nuncio in Jakarta, Archbishop Francesco Canalini, from eighteen members of the Dili Diocesan Council, including Monseigneur Belo (the two members of the council who did not sign the letter were in Indonesia at the time) :

"With our respectful compliments,

After two meetings, one ordinary and one extraordinary, of Dili Diocesan Council to prepare for the visit to East Timor of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, we the members of the council wish to affirm that:

(...) The priests, the faithful and the entire religious community are praying fervently that His Holiness's visit shall be a pastoral, apostolic and missionary success.(...)

So that the expectations of the faithful will not be in vain (...) we appeal to Your Excellency that all the liturgical celebration be made in Tetum, the language of the people. It is true that a) Tetum was always the official language of the Timor people; b) Tetum is the official liturgical language in East Timor, whose use for the Sacraments and Divine Worship was approved by the Sacred Congregation on April 7, 1981; c. Tetum has been used by in the Liturgical Celebrations during the previous Nuncios' visit, showing that reading it is not very difficult, in fact it can be learnt in an instant; d. The Holy Father, being the polyglot that he is, would not have much difficulty in reading Tetum well.

We, Reverent Apostolic Nuncio, the members of the Diocesan Council, love the Holy Father. Because of this we do not want Diplomacy to weaken the impact of this visit. (...) We would not wish that the Holy Father (...) could not communicate with the members of "his diocese" in their mother tongue, nor that this visit (...) should be a blot on His Pontificate."

"What measures do the Ministers intend to take? What has been the follow-up to the successive resolutions of the Parliament, especially to the Van den Heuvel Report?"

The following reply was received:

"The specific problems raised by the minister were not discussed within the ambit of the EPC.

According to our sources, there were not any deaths resulting from the recent events in Dili. The rumours which circulated in this respect have not been confirmed.

As regards the general problem of East Timor, the Twelve have reiterated their support for contacts between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations which would permit a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution, fully respecting the interests of the people of East Timor" (non-official translation)

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APPENDIX 2

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM  
BISHOP BELO, APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF DILI.

Dili,  
27 June 1989.

D. Manuel Martins,  
Bishop of Setubal,  
Portugal.

Excellency,

Please accept my sincere and respectful regards.

In this letter I would like to thank you for the help your excellency has given to us, the people of Timor. Thank you. We still need your support.

I am writing to ask you kindly if you would be able to obtain from the United Nations Secretary General a reply to my letter of 6 February 1989 since I have not received any answer up to the present moment. The ministers in the Indonesian government have made bitter and humiliating criticisms. The so-called Timorese "MP's", both at the local and the national level, were forced at gun-point to draft and sign a Declaration in which they stated that they accept integration and that therefore the decolonisation process has already taken place. But the majority of the people know all about the manoeuvres of the military and of the Indonesian government.

The Christian people pray, while hiding letters under the statues of the Saints, and hope that the happy DAY will come when they can freely express their aspirations as free men. Excellency please pray for me because from one day to the next I may meet the same fate as Monsigneur Romero.

Your brother in Christ,  
Mgr. Carlos Filipe X. Belo,  
Bishop Tit. of Lorum,  
Apostolic Administrator of Dili.

[N.B. Bishop Belo's letter to the UN of 6 February 1989 was sent to the Bishop of Setubal for transmission to New York]

### APPENDIX 3

#### RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN DILI, EAST TIMOR

##### A tourist's observations

*On January 17, 1990 a pro-independence demonstration by East Timorese students was staged at the Hotel Turismo in Dili in the presence of the visiting US Ambassador, John Monjo. After Monjo's departure, Indonesian security attacked the students seriously injuring several of them.*

*Despite this repression, the demonstrators took to the streets again on January 18 and 19.*

*The following account comes from an Australian tourist, who arrived in Dili on the afternoon of January 17 after the first demonstration but in time to observe the demonstrations that followed.*

*'I arrived in Dili about 1.00 pm on Wednesday 17 January. After a very long delay at the airport another visitor and myself began the 3-4 km journey from Comoro airport to the city. The trip began quietly enough but as we approached the city centre I sensed an increasing level of tension in our taxi. A number of military vehicles carrying personnel cradling automatic weapons overtook the taxi heading in the direction of my intended destination, the Hotel Turismo.*

*My co-passenger and the driver exchanged brief, rapid conversation, causing shadows of concern and apprehension on the until now friendly face beside me. My questions were met with a silencing finger to the mouth and a definite shaking of the head.*

*The driver decided to approach the Hotel Turismo by a back street but was turned away by a group of police. His third attempt, from the direction of White Sands beach, was also unsuccessful.*

*This time an officer came to the car and requested my co-passenger to explain why we were there. As she answered I saw through the rear window helmeted police with riot shields in position advancing slowly forward in a human barricade across the road.*

*I was informed in basic Indonesian that I would be taken to another hotel, the New Resende Inn. I was to wait there until my co-passenger came to take me safely to the Turismo.*

*However, after waiting nearly two hours I decided to make my own way to the Hotel Turismo along the deserted esplanade along the waterfront. I passed only soldiers but then came upon small groups of people huddled together outside what turned out to be the Bishop's house.*

*They were talking quietly amongst themselves while other people pressed against a high mesh fence calling earnestly to people inside the grounds of the Bishop's house. Looking inside I saw countless young people with bandages on their heads and upper limbs. They were being attended to by nuns and lay people. Many of the bandages were blood-stained.*

*The following day, January 18, I came across a large crowd of people in a circle outside the Bishop's house. In the centre of this crowd*

were seated young whom I believed had taken part in the previous day's demonstration. It appeared to be a conciliatory meeting involving the students, a policeman and some nuns and priests. Prayers were said and hymns sung before the crowd voluntarily dispersed.

On the afternoon of the following day, Friday January 19, while returning from a walk, I saw a large and vocal demonstration of some 150-200 people coming from the direction of the Governor's Office toward the shopping centre in Dili.

The participants appeared to be predominantly male and to be aged 16-19. There were also several young women of about the same age and some children about 12 years old and some older males. The leaders and a few demonstrators had concealed their faces with pieces of cloth presumably to avoid recognition.

Standing with a group of silent onlookers I took a number of photos of the approaching demonstrators. Those in the front line held banners some of which were written in either Portuguese, Tetum or English.

Those in English read: 'Timor for East Timorese'; 'Rights and Justice'. As the crowd approached a young masked man stood confrontingly inches in front of me angrily talking in either Portuguese or Tetum. Raising his arms skyward he shook them violently. I was not sure whether he was threatening me or not and was quite shaken. However on looking at the bystanders I received reassuring nods and smiles.

As far as I could see there were only 3 police vehicles in attendance which I found perplexing knowing that demonstrations were illegal. Realising that I had been watched by people in a government vehicle on the opposite side of the street, I decided to return to the hotel as quickly as possible. I feared that if the film was confiscated many of those in the photographs could be subjected to reprisals and that I was putting them at risk by my actions. The film, however, remained in my possession.

17 February 1990