

RECEIVED JUN 3 1993

External Affairs and International Trade Canada



Affaires extérieures et Commerce extérieur Canada

Canada

Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0G2

June 16, 1993

Mrs. Betty Brightwell  
The Greater Victoria Raging Grannies

Dear Mrs. Brightwell:

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, has asked me to reply to your letter of May 4, 1993 regarding the current situation in East Timor.

The Canadian government shares your concerns about human rights violations in East Timor. Canada has taken a clear and definite stand, in actions and in words, on the situation in East Timor. Following the massacre in East Timor by Indonesian troops, Canada suspended \$30 million worth of aid projects intended for Indonesia. We felt, however, -- and are still of the opinion -- that it would be counterproductive to suspend the existing Canadian aid program in Indonesia given that a large part of this program is specifically oriented towards grass roots cooperation with non-governmental organizations directly in support of human rights, good governance and democratic development.

Canada made its concerns regarding Xanana Gusmão known to the Indonesian Ambassador in Ottawa. We urged the Indonesian authorities to conform to internationally accepted standards in dealing with Mr. Gusmão's detention and its aftermath and have urged continued humanitarian treatment of Mr. Gusmão and Fretilin supporters in East Timor.

On May 21, Mr. Gusmão was sentenced to life imprisonment, following a trial that lasted more than three months. He was convicted on charges of separatist rebellion and possession of illegal firearms. The latter carries the possibility of a death penalty according to Indonesian law. Mr. Gusmão has decided not to appeal the sentence.

.../2

Canada neither condemns nor condones the sentencing of Mr. Gusmão. The Canadian government was encouraged by the fact that the trial was relatively fair and open to observers. Western diplomats and the international press were allowed free access to the trial proceedings. Canada attended the trial on a rotational basis.

The International Committee of the Red Cross and a Special Rapporteur of the United Nations' Secretary-General were given access to Mr. Gusmão during his trial. It was determined that Indonesian authorities detained him under humanitarian conditions in conformity with internationally accepted standards.

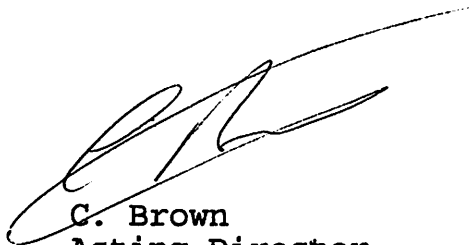
Canada would welcome consideration of clemency for Mr. Gusmão to encourage reconciliation and a resolution of the East Timor issue.

Regarding your concerns about arms sales to Indonesia, Canadian controls on exports of military goods are among the most restrictive of all Western countries and all applications for export permits are subject to intense review. Exports of military goods to Indonesia are restricted to those items where there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population. This restriction is scrupulously observed. In addition, since the early 1980's the Canadian government has not provided any funding in support of participation by Canadian defense product exporters in trade fairs or trade missions in Indonesia.

Export permits for military goods are issued for a twelve month period; a one time only twelve month extension may be granted. Often, export permits are issued but no exports actually made. The 1992 numbers on military goods exports are not yet known; in 1991, only non-offensive military electronic equipment totalling approximately \$28,000 was exported; in 1990, no military equipment was exported to Indonesia from Canada. There are no statistics prior to 1990 on actual exports compared with permits issued.

Thank you for writing to express your concerns.

Yours sincerely,



C. Brown  
Acting Director  
Asia Pacific South Relations Division