

## TRANSLATION OF INTERVIEW BY ROBERT DOMM WITH SHANANA GUSMAO

27 SEPTEMBER 1990

## SIDES ONE AND TWO

RD: Interview with Mr Shanana Gusmao, Thursday 27 September 1990, East Timor. This is Robert Domm reporting for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation from the Military Headquarters of the Armed resistance to Indonesian occupation of East Timor. The Headquarters is situated deep in the hills of East Timor, and for the first time in 15 years since Indonesia invaded in 1975, I'm talking to the commander of the Falantil, the armed forces of the Resistance.

Good evening Mr Shanana.

SG: Good evening.

RD: My first question to you sir is, if you are able to do so simply, describe the current military situation in East Timor?

SG: In the current situation the guerillas try to minimise their great difficulties. After 15 years, obviously everyone understands that without any support from outside, Falantil cannot think about great military successes against the enemy. The current situation on the enemy's part has been constant military action to suffocate the Resistance. What we do is to try to neutralise, to accommodate each coup that the enemy unleashes against us. This is something of a lesser military impact. This is the current situation, in which the guerillas try to soften the attacks of the enemy. We note that the impact of the enemy's engagement is not so strong as before.

RD: So you are saying that the scale of the military activity by the Indonesians has been reduced in recent years?

SG: Not exactly the activity. What has been reduced is the impact - this has been lessened.

RD: Can you explain what you mean by the effect has been reduced? Are you saying that they are meeting more and more resistance from the Timorese people, and therefore being less effective?

SG: When we refer to effect we mean the level of difficulties that they cause. The more we feel that the situation is difficult that's what we mean by effect being bigger. This is to say that the effect means that the more difficulties the Indonesian troops impose on us the more the impact we feel from their activities. The less the difficulties, the

less impact they have.

RD: May I ask you some basic questions. How many Indonesian troops are there normally in East Timor?

SG: Normally we count between 10 and 15 battalions. Previously, when they wanted to launch a major offensive, they would then increase the number of troops, depending on the level of the offensive. So, at this moment we could count between 8 and 10 battalions.

RD: How many is that who are under arms?

SG: Ten to fifteen thousand. When they want to launch a big offensive they increase the number of their effective troops, depending on the level of the offensive.

RD: The number of Indonesian troops in East Timor now, how does that compare to before? Are there less troops now than before?

SG: Indonesian troops as such, no. If we consider the term "Indonesian troops" as Indonesians as such, then I must say, no. If we add the number of other military forces we could say then that they have been kept in the last 2 to 3 years at the same level.

RD: How do the Indonesian troops conduct their operations against the Resistance?

SG: It depends on the nature of the offensive. Obviously, every type of offensive which the enemy launches is aimed at our extermination. It does not have any other purpose. If we go back to the period which we consider to be essentially the guerilla warfare period in 1981, Indonesia launched an offensive in which it used almost all the people of East Timor. This is one type of offensive. In 1983-84 they launched another type of offensive with their entire armed arsenal - war ships, tanks, airplanes, mortars, cannons - in battalions which we counted and we simply got tired of counting. Later, in 1986 to 87 they used elite troops, special forces in counter insurgency warfare, when they began to practice, as Benny Murdani said, 'territorial guerilla warfare'. Such a strategy does not involve a great number of military personnel, but well defined planning and well defined periods of time. It involves a complete spreading out of their forces, which they reduce to small groups. From 1988, they launched a new offensive, again with a big military force. Since then, from 1989 until today, Indonesia has reduced the number of military personnel, and as a priority, it uses Timorese troops for counter insurgency.

RD: How, in fact, did they use the population?

- SG: To occupy all the terrain. They cover an area with the people, and then attack another area. Then they move and in this way they practically cover everywhere. The population is used to cover the terrain, so that they push us into the Indonesian forces. The Indonesian troops are ready. They are covered by the population, they push us, they force us to clash with the troops. If we enter into their circle, then we would not be able to leave safely in time.
- RD: Are you saying to me that the tactics the Indonesians use was to forcibly relocate the population to areas where Fretilin support or Falantil support was strong, and then they would surround the population with troops? Is that what you were saying?
- SG: Men, children, the elderly ...
- RD: When you say forcibly, what would happen to the population if they resisted the Indonesian tactics of relocation?
- SG: The offensive I wanted to describe is this: for instance, if they think we are in this mountain, they mobilise all the population of the local concentration camps and they make a ring from the concentration camps and they all begin to advance from there. The Indonesian troops then begin to push, and if we don't know how to escape in time then we clash with the Indonesian troops.
- RD: Asks Shanana to continue explaining the forcible relocation of the population.
- SG: I would like to explain the forced mobilisation of the people into military operations. This is different. The displacement of the people in favour or against - against in one sense, because they think they don't participate in the areas under the control of the guerillas. These are the 2 aspects of the policy of forcing the population to participate directly or indirectly in the extermination of the Resistance. When Indonesia mobilises the population into military operations, we say that this is a direct participation where the population, which does not want to be involved, is forced to be. Another aspect is the displacement of the people into the areas controlled by the guerillas.
- RD: What are the current tactics applied by the Indonesian troops? How do they conduct their operations now?
- SG: Now they are using territorial counter insurgency, based on this: they launch small groups which go in every direction in a particular area. They spread into small groups throughout all the terrain, so that we are constantly in armed clashes with these small groups. Moreover, from time

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to time, they use larger forces. They spread out by zones, in each region. Where there are bigger Falantil forces, it's there that they apply bigger numbers of troops, supported by counter insurgency troops. This is the current military situation, the current tactic that the enemy applies. If you want to better understand counter insurgency, I would say it has the following purpose: it spreads out throughout a large area; it has a fantastic capacity for mobility, so that they can detect very quickly the presence of the guerillas. This method makes it very difficult for the guerillas to take their own initiatives, because we don't have a permanent, a fixed enemy, it has no real volume or quantity, and we don't know what to confront. We feel that the enemy is everywhere; we even say that we carry the enemy in our bags. They have improved their technical knowledge of guerilla tactics, and at the slightest sign of the presence of the guerillas they chase them until they provoke an armed clash. This is different from the previous tactics where they used big numbers of troops within a fixed period.

RD: So, are you saying that the tactic is to keep the Resistance forces continuously on the move?

RD: What is the behaviour of the Indonesian troops? In Australia we heard many reports of atrocities being committed by Indonesian troops in the past. Did the Indonesian troops adopt those tactics in your experience?

RD: repeats last question.

SG: Yes, particularly against the Resistance, we must say that the Indonesian troops do not behave in any other way. They chop off the heads of the guerillas, they torture them on the spot. For instance, if a guerilla is wounded and captured, he's killed; recently, at the beginning of September, a guerilla in the eastern sector was wounded and taken to a village and killed.

RD: How do the Indonesians use the local Timorese in operations against the Resistance?

SG: As I said, in reality they use local forces in their operations, and throughout all this war. There are a number of local forces - battalions 745, 744 and lately, 746 and 721. They are prepared for the task of searching for the Resistance. There is another type of forces - local security, or Kamsips. They are used to support operations in a given area, while large operations are going on in other areas, conducted by the main forces. Therefore there are two types: military and para-military. The military are used in search operations against the Resistance, and the para-military are used in constant patrols outside the concentration camps, not only with the

objective of providing security to the camps, but also to provoke clashes with us. Lately the Hansips are being regrouped into new battalions. There are 1,000 more, this adds up to 2 to 3,000 already in operation. So these Hansips are now receiving military training. They are also called Tentaras.

RD: Now these native troops as you call them, or local troops - Hansips - do they join the Indonesian army voluntarily or are they conscripted?

SG: This is a very delicate question. We cannot say that they volunteer, in as much as we cannot also say that they can refuse. Hence, all the Hansips, whether old or young, if they have some prior experience then they are recruited. There is no question, whether they want to or not, they are conscripted. The underground organisation asked us if we could nominate particular people to join the Hansips voluntarily. But the fact is that when they volunteer, they are not accepted.

RD: Can you explain to me, sir, what types of military equipment the Indonesian troops use against the Resistance?

SG: Lately, we have not seen the brand name which we saw earlier on all the equipment and weaponry. On all this equipment we used to see the brand name of NATO. They also use Bronco OV-10s, Skyhawks, Tigers and other types of armaments. The Indonesian troops use these. They use M16s and AR15s, we have these weapons but they are not here at the moment.

RD: I might just explain for the tape that Mr Shanana is showing me an automatic rifle and it's been captured from the Indonesian troops, and on the side of the rifle are the words: "Property of the US Government, M16A1 Calibre 5.5 6mm and the serial number is 532 0896" and the rifle is made by Colts Firearms, Colt Industries, Hartford, Connecticut, USA. Actually, this is a semi-automatic.

SG: Lately they use this one, not AR15, it is similar, but it's an M16, the others are AR15s. This is what the Indonesian troops use.

RD: Is this gun also US manufactured?

SG: Exactly, one is M16, the other is AR15.

RD: question re skyhawks etc, then re tanks etc

SG: Some of the weapons are Soviet made, but the most modern ones are not Russian, I think.

RD: Long preamble, then: What are your current strategies for

fighting the Indonesian troops?

SG: In our action plans, in reality we have adopted corresponding strategies to the Indonesian strategies. When they use big military forces, we opt for a form of action which allows us to be re-supplied with weapons and ammunition. This strategy has been quite successful. This is what led Djakarta to change its military strategy. Lately, with their counter insurgency strategy, we are adopting a strategy to save men and materials. This means that today we are only trying to neutralise our adversary's attacks. In the course of the years we haven't changed our strategy very much, but we could conceive two fundamental strategies if we look at the whole 15 years war. The first phase was a defensive position, in fact we were defending positions, it was a positional war. We lost our support bases in 1977-78, and then we changed some plans. Initially with the large number of troops we tried to take advantage of it by resupplying ourselves by capturing weapons and ammunition. Lately, we have only been trying to save men and equipment.

RD: So, what you are saying, sir, is that your current strategy is not to confront the Indonesian troops, but if an opportunity exists for you to be successful and capture some equipment, you will do so?

SG: Yes. And this could not happen when they used a lot of forces. Not now, because they use small groups spread out, we have not only one enemy, we have many enemies. The difficulty is the same always: to the extent that the enemy soldiers come with only one round of ammunition, and we have only one bullet in the gun. The difficulty is very much the same always. Obviously, when we go out and search for an opportunity we are better prepared to achieve some successes. We have the conditions well prepared, both as regards the terrain, as well as the choice of men and their disposition. We can then set up an ambush with never less than five and never more than ten, with two sections, a platoon or two companies. So, when we take an initiative, we have to take at least five arms. So when we go with 5 or 10 arms, and therefore we have the conditions altogether, we go out to search for an opportunity.

RD: I have noticed in your camp here, a significant number of soldiers, all with Indonesian guns. Many, many of them with Indonesian guns, captured weapons. Is that where most of your weapons come from now? From the Indonesians?

SG: The majority of the weapons - G3 and Mauser - which were from the Portuguese, are now greatly reduced, since we don't have the capacity to get ammunition for them. That's why our main attention goes on to the semi-automatic weapons which the enemy gives us, because they are the

constant weapons that they use.

RD: Mr Shanana, what effect does the war between your troops and the Indonesians have on the civilian population?

SG: I would say a horrendous effect, a horrendous impact, since the war has caused many deaths, so much suffering to our people. All the atrocities you hear about outside are only a very, very small part of what actually happens in East Timor. It is really difficult to tell you the extent of the impact. But since we say that the peoples' resistance continues, this is the true effect of this war.

RD: What is your estimate of the numbers of civilians who have been killed in the last 15 years?

SG: We would not say a figure. I would say that the truth will surface one day after the war.

RD: My last question on this point. There have been reports in Australia that maybe 100,000 civilians have died through fighting and through famine or disease?

SG: I believe that it is more than 200,000.

#### SIDES THREE AND FOUR

RD: You have given me an estimate of how many civilians might well have died in East Timor since the Indonesians occupied in 1975. Can you give an estimation of how many casualties the Indonesian troops have suffered during that time?

SG: I cannot give you an exact figure, because we cannot count the number of Indonesian soldiers. MISSING SECTION. We don't know where they are buried. To make an estimate, we could say that between 25,000 and 30,000.

RD: Between 25,000 and 30,000, and you can estimate that from your experiences, fighting them, and also the number of people in the cemeteries - Indonesian troops, is that correct?

RD: Your estimation 25/30.000, is based on, are you saying is based on the number of Indonesian troops in the cemeteries. And also your own experience.

SG: It's essentially based on our experience over 15 years.

RD: Well, conversely what have been your casualties in your operations against the Indonesians?

SG: We must say that we enormously feel our casualties. Obviously, everyone understands that we are a small, weak army. If I say a number which is lower, obviously no one



will believe it, and if I give a bigger number people will also say it's not true. All I can say is that we feel very deeply our casualties.

RD: Sir you have commented before on your military strategies, in the current situation, but could you comment in a bit more detail on your offensive capabilities. For instance do you have the capacity to mount attacks in towns in East Timor?

SG: Militarily, we are very realistic, we don't dream of very great military offensives; we cannot do them. Our strategy is conditioned by the occupiers' strategy, that's why our motto is: "To resist is to win", and not to annihilate them is to win.

RD: You have waged a guerilla war now for 15 years, do you see the guerilla war continuing to be a protracted one, a long drawn out guerilla war in East Timor?

SG: I would first explain that if the world understands guerilla warfare as an armed confrontation that is wrong.

RD: The Indonesian government is anxious to say to the world that the fighting in East Timor is now finished. Can you comment on that, and also give a general overview of the extent of military confrontation between your troops and the Indonesian armed forces?

SG: The enemy propaganda has always been since the loss of our bases in the mountains, that the situation is much more stable. That's the reason why it promoted the policy of 'openness' in East Timor. It's a pity, Mr Robert, that you are not able to go to some other parts of the country not far from here and see the following day a battle. It's a real pity and we understand that this is one of the difficulties of our struggle. In a general appreciation or survey of the situation, I must say that the war continues from Tutuala to the border regions. In Los Palos, there is an intense presence of battalions Tu Jampa Humat 744 with Indonesian forces, as well as a company of local troops, who cover the entire area between Leuro, Lauten, and Iliomar and Lore, and in the area between Lore, Ililapa, Moptia and Tutuala, and then another region southeast and in part of the north, on the road that leads to Tutuala and Ilalafae which then descends to Con there is also a strip where there is intense enemy military activity. Closer to here, to the west, we have enemy activities, but under the command of the Baucau region with two local companies, called Rai Lakan and Sierra which normally operate in the region between Luo, Laivai, and Laga. On the road between Laga and Baguia there is also the Resistance as well as Indonesian forces. More to the east of Matebian, between Quelicai, Uhatulari, Viqueque, on the road to Uhatulari and

Viqueque, climbing up to the north east side where there is a concentration camp which links up Mareca and Moibobo and Venilale, there is also a zone of big military activity. Then there is a stretch between Baucau and Viqueque where we have a big zone, also divided into 2 sectors, apart from Venilale, Baucau, Vemasse, Laleis, Rae-Wea, which covers Kribas, and Barique in joint actions with Indonesian forces placed in Manatuto. To the south there is also a force of local troops, which covers part of Viqueque, from Ossu to Radeoma and right to Barique on the sea. This is the part that belongs to the eastern sector of Viqueque. Because the Indonesian forces are mobilised suddenly from one place to another in response to Falantil actions, we cannot determine exactly how many battalions there are in each sector. For instance, now in Barique and Fatuberliu there are three battalions which cover the area from Fatuberliu, Solbada, Laclubar, Turiscas, and Same. The two actions are being intensified in the regions between MaFahed, and Daoloroc which arrives at Mount Sarim, and has been intensified with a lot of military action. There are three battalions on the terrain now: the Harsips, who went to receive instructions and have returned, are dominated by Tentara Bero, they rotate and support operations in that area. We have had fights every day, and it's a real pity that we cannot provide Mr Robert a trip there so that you can assess the situation yourself, to witness some combat, or to other areas. Even in the first day you will be able to witness combat.

RD: Mr Xanana can you describe for me the difficulties of conducting a war of resistance in East Timor, given the communication problems which you have and the problems associated with the difficult terrain, the mountains?

SG: The question is interesting, in the sense that really the communications factor is very important. The guerillas in East Timor do not have any means to enable us to quickly have a view of the evolution of the military situation throughout the country. Even in 1983-85 and part of 1986, when we had an enormous capacity to take initiatives, we in fact suffered from this problem. We use several groups of guerillas for communication purposes, with all the difficulties inherent in this method - delays because of lack of food, delays because there are battles along the way, delays because of diseases acquired along the way etc. Or because the enemy attacked the point where 2 groups planned to meet. Militarily, this has been our big problem, but we somehow managed to overcome this, by allowing each group within general planning, within a single thinking, unified for all the groups from the border region to Tutuala, obeying the particularity of each group to take their own initiatives according to the conditions prevailing there. So we must say that we are able to overcome the difficulties of this nature. Lately, we have

had even more difficulties because of the nature of the enemy's activities, that is the territorial counter insurgency - the launching of small groups in all possible directions in a given zone. But the clandestine organisations have been able to warn us in advance. We must be the only guerilla army in the world with so many difficulties in all aspects - our own subsistence, in health, in our own capacity to maintain an adequate human resources necessary. But we must state it is our political motivation that sustains us in this war, it is too great for us to lose, our morale is unshakeable, and it is this morale that allows us to overcome all these difficulties. In such a small territory which you can hardly see on the map, with a tiny air space and sea surrounding us on all sides and with a naval blockade imposed by the enemy, I believe that everyone understands the difficulties faced by Falantil. The fact that we have resisted for 15 years now and we are still able to cry out that we are determined to win, it's because our people demand this, our homeland asks us. I believe that everyone would understand that for us the great difficulties are not really felt, they only strengthen our unity, our determination to search for new methods to face up to these difficulties. Without sanctuaries, our guerillas are very mobile, in the whole sense of that word. Without even the minimum capacity to supply ourselves with weapons and ammunition, without the capacity to create production zones to supply ourselves and which we can defend, without the minimum conditions to create some piece of land, a small factory to make our own clothing, you can understand our great difficulties. These great difficulties, Mr Robert, you cannot see here because my men wear good civilian clothing which is sent by our parents, brothers and sisters, our children who are in the underground resistance. Mr Robert, you could see one of our clinics where we have syringes and medication and all the materials necessary for this camp, and you could also see the difficulties we have to transform it into the energy needed to pursue this war, and that through the years they have not become permanent facilities. Hence, for someone like me who has spent the entire 15 years in this war, the difficulties of Falantil have been felt from the very beginning, and if you go back to the beginning you can say that at this moment the greatest difficulties are these: we don't have factories and Djakarta has factories.

RD: Does the resistance have a political organization, and if so, can you describe to me the nature of that organization?

SG: Politically speaking the resistance is essentially a patriotic organisation. All our efforts were to maintain alive this flame in the consciousness of our people. All our efforts were made to secure more and more the participation of our people in this war. Their contributions, of any nature, are the conditions necessary

to guarantee the continuation of the armed resistance. Hence, in the political plane, we turned our attention to strengthen Maubere nationalism and for popular participation in the resistance.

RD: But how do you do that, how do you say going to a town or village do political work?

SG: It is difficult to describe, because if I were to do so it would take away our capacity to continue, because afterwards the enemy will know. But we might even admit that the enemy already knows how we manage it, which is through our contact with the people.

RD: Are you saying that in the areas where the Indonesians have control, you conduct political work on a clandestine basis? On an underground basis?

SG: Yes.

RD: What is your organisation's political philosophy? Some people have claimed that you are communists? Is this true?

SG: No, it is not true. However, it is true that years ago we took up a Marxist ideology, but to say that we are necessarily communists today, I don't think so, because at the right time we revised our thinking. I cannot deny facts that are already in the past, that Fretilin at one point might have taken up the communist ideology. Today we all declare that this belongs to the past. I myself created a Marxist-Leninist party, transforming the Fretilin movement into a party, but very soon I became conscious that that ideology did not serve us. That's why we annulled our previous thinking. Thus we enabled Fretilin to reacquire its early nationalist character, and today, not being a member of Fretilin myself, I believe that the differences between the nationalist parties are not that great. In that sense, at this time, if you ask what my political philosophy is, I would answer that my political philosophy is only the liberation of my country. I understand at this moment that politics in a large sense, in the sense of the political nature of the resistance, is taken up by all the children of East Timor. The political philosophy of Falantil is a patriotic one, is a nationalist philosophy.

RD: What are your relations with other Timorese political groups, for example the UDT, and what is your opinion of Governor Mario Carrascalao?

SG: The relations with other political groups, UDT and Fretilin, are relations of struggle, relations forged in the war for the liberation of our country. We don't have today purely ideological relations, we have political

relations in the sense that I understand politics for the resistance and that is the liberation of our country. Mario Carrascalao in my opinion is a simple lackey of the Indonesians, and worse than that, he does not even realise his role. Even he's not convinced about his policy of 'winning hearts and minds' to influence the Maubere people. But I am convinced that he is on the other side of the road of the Maubere people. I should only add that he's a lackey, a puppet, a clown, which Djakarta uses in its propaganda in East Timor for integration. Djakarta believes in the influence he might possibly exercise on the Maubere people.

RD: When you say big thief, can you explain in more detail, what you mean.

RD: So, are you saying that the Indonesians hoped to use Mr Carrascalao to influence the Timorese, but that is not the case?

SG: For the policy of winning hearts and minds that he started.

RD: How much power, real power, do you think the governor has? For instance, can he tell the Indonesians what to do in East Timor? I'll rephrase the question sir. Do you believe that governor Carrascalao has the real power to make important decisions, in East Timor, or do you believe that he acts in a way that the Indonesians want him to act?

SG: Let's place the decision making capacity at 2 levels: at the level of whether the governor can implement Djakarta's policies, I believe he has the real capacity; at another, higher level, his capacity to make decisions about the war, what he would say is on orders from Djakarta. So for us, in everything concerning Djakarta's opinion, he's an Indonesian. We don't think he has a decision making capacity. What he decides is what already has been decided in Djakarta. For instance, he has been saying to the Portuguese press that he has doubts about the East Timorese representatives. For example, he said that I am only supported by those who follow me in the mountains. I would bet with him that in regard to the war ... Missing section?

RD: Mr Xanana what is your relationship with the Indonesian controlled Timorese administration?

SG: Missing section?

RD: How well organised is the underground in the towns, the resistance underground and how does it work?

SG: We could not define with clarity how the underground organisation works, since this would harm the resistance. But we can say that the underground organisation at this

moment is at an unsurpassed level, at a level for which we've been striving for the past 15 years. There are popular organisations at every concentration camp. I would say that even in Oe Cusse there are organisations, at Suai, Bobonaro, Maliana, Liquica, and Ermera, areas where at this time we don't have a military presence, but we have underground organisations. In all of these camps, we have a popular organisation. When we talk about the concentration camps we mean the small villages that are further into the countryside, and also the towns and even Dili. Dili is a centre of clandestine activities - the engine of underground activities, and the enemy knows this, it is not a secret. The level of the underground organisation enables us to affirm once again that if Djakarta continues to be inflexible the war will not end so soon. Hence, in general terms, this is the state of the underground organisation.

#### SIDES FIVE AND SIX

- RD: Can you explain how important to you are the Timorese students? Can you describe how they are organised, and can you indicate the importance to you of the recent demonstrations which they've organised?
- SG: For the struggle the role of these students is of great significance, especially the group that has graduated, which has the intellectual capacity that allows them to see the problems. They did not abandon the Maubere people. I am saying that the Maubere people are not disappointed with the position taken by their children - their sons and daughters. Their importance resides essentially in the fact that they can better understand the foundation of the peoples' problems. The way they are organised is not very convenient for us to talk about. What we can say is that they are completely organised. All of them live up to their responsibilities to their homeland, and they are mobilised to enable them to take practical actions in the struggle. The importance of this practice of the struggle is based on the manifest expression of their patriotic consciousness. A consciousness which is in the blood of the Maubere people. Because it's in our blood it's a consciousness that's not lost, and I think the whole world can understand the phenomenon of Maubere nationalism. It is not a phenomenon which is our propaganda, it's not an ephemeral, temporary phenomenon but it is part of our unconscious, it is part of the soul of the Maubere people which is transmitted from parents to the children, and its importance resides precisely in the continuation of this Maubere consciousness in the soul of the people.
- RD: What do you think of the attitude of young Timorese, that is, those who may have being born just before the Indonesian invasion or subsequent to it? Do you feel those

young people are pro-independence?

SG: Yes, as I said earlier, the blood of the Maubere people goes from parents to children, and it could not be otherwise. The children of yesterday, at the time of the invasion, also directly suffered the horrors of the war, they saw their parents being massacred, they saw their mothers being maltreated, their relatives, their friends, they also felt the weight of the war against our people. Many of them lived in the mountains for many, many years, for the first 3 years. Others from the very beginning were under enemy control. It's inevitable that a youngster that sees his father massacred should feel hatred towards the assassin. It is obvious that a youth who witnessed these atrocities around him cannot dissociate and alienate himself from the whole situation in which we all live. He is directly or indirectly affected. Obviously, the children born before the invasion live the war, and they continue to participate in it. The students today are organised from year 3, 4 or 5, and they already participate in clandestine organisations. It's impossible that in the course of so many years the new generation would not have felt that it was their duty to participate in the struggle for the liberation of their homeland. As to those who were born during this criminal occupation, the situation might be a bit different, in that they did not witness the horrors of the war like the others, in the sense that they might not have witnessed the bombardments, or the battles, the long marches made in the forests of the mountains. But the war did not end with the loss of our bases in the mountains. The difficult situation in which the people live under enemy control necessarily has to create in the children that were born after this occupation a perception of the injustice of the situation, of a criminal situation, which affects their own relatives, their neighbours and friends. And they are listening and understanding that in the final analysis it affects the entire Maubere people. It is really difficult to say that they are not in favour of independence, when everything that feeds this struggle is the liberation of our country. The youngsters, both those born before that invasion and those since, are children of the people, they are not children of one people and children of another, they are not children of the transmigrants, they are children of these people, who under 400 years of Portuguese domination always knew how to keep alive the patriotic consciousness. This is so clear, so evident in the last 15 years of rough repression, of cruel oppression which could only teach the children to better love not only their country, but each other as a nation, their culture and identity, their Maubere soul. The schools established by the Indonesians deny them their own language, their own culture, their traditions, their way of seeing things. The Indonesians tried to impose on them a way of thinking which they know is not theirs, yet they

receive a transference in terms of continuity, a transference of their Maubere identity and culture, customs and traditions. A Maubere goes to a school in the Bahasa language, where they teach another history, another way of seeing, another concept of life. Evidently, a people which knows itself cannot be reduced, cannot be subjected. They are a people which is conscious, which wants not to be alienated, and this is the case of the Timorese youth, and this is the fundamental problem of the war. If Indonesia thinks that by exterminating Falantil the war will end, they are wrong, because we would say that in other words the war will start again.

RD: What role does the Catholic Church play in East Timor today? And do you see the Church as being important to the resistance fight?

SG: It is important, even though from outside it might be difficult to fully appreciate it. The Catholic Church in East Timor has played an essentially moral role, as well as a political role, and it is involved in the popular resistance. This almost unseen action of the Church is felt deeply by our people, because this situation also supports our resistance. The clergy plays an indirect role in reality, but with a very engaging character, in the sense that the action of the Church has strengthened the popular, patriotic consciousness and helped the people see they are the Maubere people, and we have nothing in common with the Indonesians. The Church has not spoken out openly, the clergy has not acted in a public or indiscreet way, but with intelligence in order to continue on the peoples' side.

RD: Follow up question on the influence of the Church?

SG: We consider that it's an indirect role in the sense that the clergy is inhibited from speaking too openly to express their opinions. Their indirect role is in their concern to keep our people with a consciousness of the struggle, so it's indirect in the sense that they support what our people do. So the Church has an enormous influence, and increasingly the people have an enormous trust towards the Catholic Church. The people feel that it is not isolated from their suffering, but in solidarity with their suffering and respects their interests and will. Many priests have been threatened with shooting, for example Father Joao de Deus. Father Locatelli has been interrogated and beaten up many times. Very recently we learned that a priest was interrogated and then the clergy adopted an indirect role in the sense that they don't participate directly in action, but advise about action.

RD: What is the attitude of the Indonesian government towards the Church's role?



SG: I think that the Indonesian government has not many solutions for this, it can only act in such a way as to prevent the clergy from continuing their positive role in relation to our peoples' resistance. The Indonesians have been trying to find out which priests are more actively engaged in the defence of the interests of the people of East Timor. I think that the Indonesians know each of them individually. The problem that they face is to catch one priest in 'flagrante delicto', and they are searching for every piece of information to hunt down, or discover the truth, to get all the information collected by their intelligence. They then study this information so that they can investigate the priests individually. We don't think they will be able to remove the priests, or force them to quit this responsibility which they took on themselves vis a vis God and the Homeland. We say this because we don't think that the Indonesian government could convince the Vatican to expel all the Timorese priests. What we think they can do is to join Indonesian priests to the Diocese, and limit the range of contacts between the Timorese priests and the people. Recently, we learned that there was a petition by the priests - a protest - because of the very ambiguous position of the Bishop. We don't have much material information about this, but we think that the clergy are very much united, very strong and only a radical position by the Vatican would allow Djakarta to gain the advantage. I don't think that will happen because if it did, a lot of water will move the wind mill. The Indonesian government can't do much more to persecute the priests, our people are not frightened of torture and threats, so we believe that the priests cannot be frightened by such threats, and they have proven this.

RE: Can you describe life under Indonesian rule?

SG: The life of the people under Indonesian domination falls into several periods, which allows us to classify the level of this domination. Today, the situation is a bit different. Essentially, we must say that in regard to freedom, the ability to express their opinions, the capacity to meet, move, to circulate, it's still almost at the same level. On the economic level, the situation is a reflection of a political opening, if we could say that, which allows the so-called 'opening' of East Timor. But we cannot say that the people of East Timor live very well, that the Maubere people do not feel as many restrictions as before on the political plane. The persecutions, threats and fear of repression are still maintained. We verify that in the Indonesian controlled areas the people are not healthy, not because they don't have a little to eat every day. They are not healthy as a result of the constant fear in the face of the Indonesian presence, of their loss. In general we could define this situation as essentially in a political plane, in which the people feel their repression,

they are still tied up, they continue to feel that they cannot do anything, they cannot speak out, or free themselves from the fear of one day being arrested, beaten and interrogated. So this is more or less in general the situation in which the people live under Indonesian control.

RD: What have been the main ways traditional life has changed?

SG: I would say that there have been a lot of changes, a lot of difficulties for the people to continue their customs and traditions. The Indonesian occupier has been exploiting what it sees as Maubere identity, presenting folk lore to tourists and foreign delegations. They think that the Maubere identity only resides in cultural manifestations. This is a failed policy, because the traditional way of living of our people changed radically in the sense that it was radically prevented. Our people are essentially rooted to their culture and traditions, they have their own concepts of life, of existence and live to realise them. They are impregnated spiritually and existentially with the concept, they conceive their passage through Mother Earth as a temporary time, ephemeral, in which they have to realise their traditional concepts. Our people are fondly attached to Mother Earth, all their acts, cultural manifestations, and even life, are destined to consecrate, to honour, to worship Mother Earth as life. There haven't been a lot of changes to this. What happened was a lot of obstacles to the realisation of these traditions. We can establish 2 levels: one situated in Dili, where there are less difficulties, people are better off on the economic plane, but more susceptible to be detached from their traditions. But the Maubere people are entirely in the country, and there they feel that they are prevented from realising, from living, from practicing their traditions, their customs, and this is what essentially offends our people.

RD: The Australian government has claimed that human rights in East Timor have improved considerably in recent years. Would you agree with the Australian government and can you outline what you think have been the worst abuses of human rights in East Timor?

SG: If we consider improvements in terms of numbers, figures of victims, yes we must say that there have been less abuses, but I think human rights cannot be classified in the context of more or less numbers of violations. I think that the worst abuses of human rights are not the atrocities as such, but the right to life. It is a fundamental right of the individual, alive he has other rights, dead he loses the right to have any rights. The worst abuse of human rights is the denial of the right to life. If the situation has improved a little bit in

regards to some other rights - to free expression of opinions, to organise, to be heard, to be defended and defend oneself, freedom to circulate and move, however, the expectation of the loss of these rights is very much alive.

RD: Do you disagree with the Australian government when it says the human rights situation has improved?

SG: There are two points of view, two perspectives, corrupted by the interests of the Australian government. For the Timorese in general, if things have improved in the sense that they can buy a piece of clothing, this does not mean that the situation has improved for the majority. They are still malnourished. More interesting is that many schools are losing students, because the parents have no possibility to keep their children at school. They go for the first 3 or 4 years and then they can no longer send them. Materially, the foreigners might see some light in Dili. If they think East Timor is Dili, then maybe materially some Timorese are better off, but if they think East Timor is not only Dili, then materially the people still face a lot of difficulties to survive. Economically, if we take into consideration the interests of the Generals in Djakarta, for instance, General Benny Murdani has an interest in the exploitation of coffee. If we look into the proliferation of people coming from Djakarta, our people cannot keep up with the prices that the occupier imposes. The impact is negative on the majority of people, because they are unable to accompany the incrementation of an economical plan, which the government of Indonesia has put in place here. The Maubere people are limited to a small piece of land to cultivate, which is not capable of providing a proper existence. Certainly, Mr Robert, you will have noticed that there are beautiful houses, good houses, which are the product of the peoples' effort. The occupier distributed rooves for instance, but they charge them for it, and our people are angry, resentful, revolted. If they gave us the zinc to cover our rooves, and now they want us to pay, how are we going to do that? What they have introduced does not satisfy our people, and does not conform with the earlier economic life of our people.

#### SIDES SEVEN, EIGHT AND NINE

RD: ... better schools, better roads, better housing, improved farming methods and improved health facilities. Do you believe that this is true, and that the Timorese are pleased or satisfied by such developments.

SG: This is the enemy's strong propaganda point and we hear them talking about this quite often in international forums. We cannot deny that there have been some improvements in those aspects that you pointed out. What we must say is that but for Indonesia itself, and for its

desires to help the unhappy East Timorese, this would not have happened. We have been following that even Australia has been giving millions of dollars for health and all the American policies have been in the direction of alienating our people through these developments. So often we have heard from the Australian government that economic rights should prevail over political rights. This is a strategy of the powerful who have been supporting Indonesia, to give away some money in order to charge more. Let's look at the case of Australia, and let's look at the Timor Gap Treaty. Therefore we can see that there never was any real concern on the part of the Indonesian government to help the East Timorese. This is a strategy by Indonesia to subjugate the people, that's why we don't see any real material benefits which could compensate for their sacrifices. As I've already said, our people have a concept of life, which they want to realise while they are alive, in the context of its traditions and customs. That's why a paved road and some houses have no value for them. The Maubere people have their own sense of honour and pride of their own selves. The material benefits they want are only to satisfy daily needs and are not an end in themselves. But not only do our people not feel they have benefited from these improvements, the improvements are contradictory with their own concepts of life, with their way of living in the economic field. So asking if our people are happy with the improvements at these levels which you are talking about, we must say, for example, that they say there are better schools; they are for students to create 'new men'. But those who go to the schools, supposedly to acquire knowledge, they say that these schools are not good for them, and what they want is a country. In regard to better methods of agriculture, I cannot understand this because our people do not benefit from these methods. They continue to use wooden sticks to cultivate corn, and tapioca. In regards to health, some people are even afraid to go to buy medication or see a doctor, and they resort to traditional medicine. We see there a confrontation at all levels of these improvements.

RD: If the Timorese do not benefit, who does?

SG: I would say the Generals themselves. It is said often that General Benny Murdani has economic interests here, and in so many other shops and businesses. These are the first people to benefit. Secondly, those who come to occupy most of the civil servants jobs. Dili is full of Javanese exploiting economic conditions, while they are civil servants. Thirdly, the transmigrants are themselves poor people, they themselves say 'we are poor' and they say 'it's our government that sent us here', although they are happy to come here. They even say that if Fretilin wins they don't want to leave. The government gives all the facilities to these people, the so-called new method of

agriculture is for them. If a foreigner comes to East Timor and doesn't find transmigrants in the villages, this does not deny the fact that this policy did not benefit the people. The transmigrants are put into very fertile areas, whose real owners are Timorese, who have been forced into concentration camps for security reasons. When these transmigrants come, and are put in the most fertile areas, they sell the produce and it benefits them. So they have benefited enormously from this. They can travel freely on paved roads, they can move freely in the thousands of cars that were brought here. In summary, the first beneficiaries are the Indonesian Generals themselves, the second are those who came here and are in Dili, looking for better conditions and economic life to occupy the civil service jobs, and thirdly, are the transmigrants, to whom the most fertile land is offered.

RD: Projects in East Timor have been financed by aid money from Australia and other countries. Given your last answer are you suggesting that the aid money in fact benefits Indonesians themselves?

SG: This is so obvious. The commanders of the battalions themselves used to sell army food rations in front of their own houses. If they steal from their own government, we can see how they have their eyes always on money. If we had money we would buy Benny Murdani and President Suharto to give us independence, but because we are poor we cannot do that. There are so many cases that we could tell you of how the Indonesians use this war to enrich themselves. Before the Maubere people had to use surat jalangs for travel, and they had to get the signature on the surat jalang of the Indonesian soldiers. But even before the poor East Timorese was in their office they would pull the draw open and if the Maubere didn't put some money in, then he would be told he could not have the travel paper. If he put in only a small amount of money it would take a week, if it was enough the paper would be given immediately, even if he was a well known Fretilin supporter, the Indonesians only had eyes for the money. We do not think that Benny Murdani is a saint.

RD: ... in the Indonesian administration, and many people have complained to me that often they have to pay a considerable amount of money to Indonesian officials in order to gain employment. Are you able to comment on this?

SG: Certainly, if they didn't behave like that they couldn't secure transmigration, which is essentially to improve their economic conditions. We believe that many civil servants in the Indonesian occupation belong to the class of transmigrants. This aspect, those who have completed their high school or university studies and are not able to work have to pay to obtain a job. This reveals that what

is widely seen by our people of corruption: the Javanese have their eyes glued on money. If he gives a job to a Timorese because this Timorese paid him everyone feels that the policy of restricting the admission of Timorese into the civil service is about obtaining for themselves money from the Timorese. It would take too long to describe fully Indonesian corruption. This is what happens throughout the country, and I think that apart from a policy of benefiting Djakarta and the transmigrants, the improvements only benefit themselves, not the Timorese. Besides, there is also this aspect to corruption. The Javanese in pursuing their government's policy they call upon themselves the capacity to obtain money. In regard to this subject, this development follows this intention. The people feel that the economic rights they talk about are not what we want, in the context of what I said earlier, about their concept of Mother Earth, of life. So all the economic improvements do not benefit us. We wouldn't deny that in the Western countries, there is supremacy of political rights over economic rights. But they consider that in East Timor economic rights should prevail over political rights. We consider that they are treating us as animals to be fattened. We are human beings like all others in the world, we don't think that politics is a question of being able to read and write, but of feeling that freedom is a natural right, something that always existed, so we cannot agree with this point of view, and our people have demonstrated that inspite of these developments and the claims that they are happy with them, for us the most important are political rights.

RD: What has happened to traditional Timorese culture?

SG: We can say that Timorese culture is dead in the sense of practice. As I said last night, the occupier has been exploiting the Maubere culture to make propaganda that they respect the Maubere culture. This is a farce, because it is only for pictures and for the entertainment of those who come here to defend Indonesia's position. Maubere culture is practically dead in the terms of activities, because they cannot practice it openly. The enemy restricts all the acts that are genuinely Maubere because they are afraid that the people will use these cultural acts to organise themselves, to increase their consciousness in regard to the strangers. In fact, we have nothing in common, culturally speaking. In their language, customs, and cultural manifestations, the Maubere keeps latent the desire to maintain their culture. This is one of the aspects of their resistance, a front that is not manifested openly, but only in a situation of trying to maintain activities, so that they do not change their character, their basis, their objectives. The people keep in their soul their culture. Indonesia has been exploiting the question of cultural identity, so-called 'respecting' the

Mauhere identity such as dances, and songs. But, for instance they even forced the people to change the words, the expressions, the cultural meaning of the words of the songs. So what we are witnessing today is a situation of our culture being kept at home. It is not manifested outside the houses.

RD: It's said that women suffer more than men in East Timor. Can you comment on that, and on the role women play in the resistance?

SG: The difficulties felt by the horrors of the war, are felt particularly by the women, obviously because of her difference in relation to men. We must say that Timorese women lived through so many difficulties - I don't know whether I even should say difficulties. The Timorese women felt even more oppressed than the men, there are so many cases we could describe, and it would be too long. Of the number of cases of disrespect in regard to Timorese women - violations, abuses, threats - they are generally known, and they take place from Tutuala to the border region. Many women gave their lives for their honour, others were subjugated by force. An entire platoon raping a woman, sexually abusing her until she died. Many gave their lives, others preferred a bullet to dishonour, while others who were weaker or pursued by a large number of troops, they could not resist. We can see a bestial attitude, they are assassins, inhuman and what for them is Mauhere is to be destroyed, violated oppressed and killed. This is the situation of Timorese women. To specifically define the role of Timorese women in the resistance would be like defining two very distinct fronts of struggle. We could only say that the only thing we do not allow is for our Timorese women to carry arms, because we still have men. But at the same level with the men, they have contributed in the most dangerous years of 1979 to 81, and other difficult periods like from 1983 to 85, when the enemy's reprisals were against men, and the Timorese women knew how to respond, they were the last stronghold of the resistance when the men were not allowed to move about and then it was the women who assumed the full role in the most difficult moments. So today we cannot say clearly what is the role of women as such, but they participate at an equal level with men.

RD: Question about international events, especially the changes in Eastern Europe?

SG: I think that the impact will be positive. The changes taking place in Eastern Europe strengthen humanity's aspirations for democracy and freedom. It is an undeniable proof that the universal values must be respected by everyone, everywhere. I think also that we are going to witness shortly even more significant changes. We can see

in the Third World a positive trend towards democracy and human rights. The confrontation between East and West caused the division of the world into two camps. The Iron Curtain is now destroyed and I think that the Iron Gates that continue to separate people without freedom in the short run may also be destroyed. The Cold War was replaced by a climate which strengthens dialogue, and in this regard, my personal opinion is that the world is really moving towards an era of peace, a new era of freedom, justice and democracy.

JD: Question about the Gulf crisis.

JG: In my personal view, obviously with some deficiencies, I must say that what emerges is the concern by the international community to put an end to this disrespect of universal principles. Of course, we have to take into account certain interests related to the case, but we see here a demonstration that it is possible to hope for a more concerted effort on the part of the international community in regard to the destiny, the fate of the people of the world. I think that apart from these interests, what is important is the prompt disposition on the part of the international community to condemn energetically and immediately a violation of international, universal principles, which the United Nations advocates and the international community shares.

JD: If we can turn to other areas of the world, what do you think of the Cambodian situation, the recent peace settlement that has been negotiated in Cambodia?

JG: I think that the solution that is being searched for in Cambodia is realistic. Considering the diversity existing between the various belligerent forces, I think that a United Nations role is the best way out. I think that is still a situation of pre-solution which is already pointing towards a new form of conflict resolution which we are following with some interest.

JD: Are you saying, sir, that you see a possibility in the Cambodian settlement for a settlement in East Timor?

JG: Yes, yes. I cannot deny that this would be a viable form for East Timor, because it stems always from a process of dialogue, and this is what we are looking for. Only dialogue will allow us to arrive at such a conclusion.

JD: You indicated that the peace settlement in Cambodia represented a new form, a new role for the United Nations in resolving conflict in the world. What role do you want the UN to play in East Timor?

JG: In principle, the UN must have as a basis the right of our



people, from there, yes, we could consider a UN role in this case.

RD: What are your opinions on events in South Africa?

SG: I think that it is essentially the struggle for the rights of all peoples. There we see the black majority reject everything that the racist minority might offer in economic terms. If they do not have freedom to live as human beings, this is really an offence against humanity, a crime against humanity. The role President de Klerk is playing in changing South Africa is really notable, and we think that in South Africa there may emerge peace and not confrontation, a situation in which the racial differences should not be utilised, and manipulated in order to negate the fundamental rights of men. We are hopeful about that. It is important to point out this fact in the sense that South Africa is a country where we all feel that humanity cannot accept that a whole race have all its rights taken away completely, which belong to every person.

RD: Do you believe that the South African government is playing a positive role in South Africa now?

SG: Yes.

RD: Can we turning to the Baltic republics - Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia - which are seeking independence from the Soviet Union? Can you comment on that situation?

SG: We think that there is some similarity in that situation on questions of principle, because if principles are universal, then they must benefit everyone. It is also a question which is demonstrating to the world that the phenomenon of nationalism is a fundamental political question belonging to the peoples. We have been following to a certain extent that situation, and we understand really that in the Soviet Union it is difficult, in the face of the threat of dismembering the Union. But obviously, Moscow cannot suffocate, and suppress, cannot continue to deny the nationalist desire for independence on the part of the Baltic republics, as well as other groups in the south west of the Soviet Union. We can only comment on the question of principles, and only on the universality of rights, and we must say that it is another proof that the universal rights defended by the international community must be respected and implemented, otherwise there would be no people that could feel free. For example, the Kuwaiti people would feel coerced into allowing others to decide their own destiny. We think that this is what's important. We should look at the question of Baltic nationalism, and other republics in the Soviet Union, in the context of the universality of principles and rights, which assist all peoples. I think that we can only

talk about this in the context of the principles that we mentioned. Nationalism is a phenomenon that exists because of the existence of each people, each nation. The principles must contemplate the rights of these peoples.

RD: Does your movement draw inspiration from developments in South Africa, the Baltic republics and Cambodia?

SG: Yes, we wish that the struggles for freedom throughout the world reflect the wishes, the anxieties of the rest of humanity. We do not separate our people from the rest of the struggles, and anything that happens in favour of the rights of these peoples is also of benefit to us. Our war is essentially in defence of universal principles. In this regard, the inspiration which we receive from these struggles is reciprocal, in the sense that we also inspire people in other parts of the world.

RD: What do you think of international attitudes towards East Timor? Firstly, the superpowers - America, the Soviet Union, China and Britain?

SG: Some of the attitudes are ambiguous, others are irresponsible. In regard to the United States we think it is an attitude of selfishness. We understand that this derives from the economic interests the United States has in Djakarta. The United States considers itself to be the bastion of defence for universal values and human rights, yet it makes a distinction between peoples and rights. Today the position which the United States takes in regard to Kuwait is totally contrary to its position on East Timor. The Soviet Union in our view behaved on the basis of its own world interests. In regard to East Timor, for the Soviet Union the United States was not a problem, so it was not even a case to be considered. In regards to China, which in principle supports the liberation movements, they also adopted a position which is somewhat inconsistent and incoherent about East Timor. The United Kingdom has a policy which is just duplicating the policy of the United States, and whatever the Americans say, is what Margaret Thatcher does. And that's how we see the great powers in regard to our rights, which rights they say they defend. This is because of their interests which they don't want to lose.

RD: What about the attitude of Australia towards East Timor?

SG: We have to say that Australia has taken an attitude of accomplice in the genocide perpetrated by the occupation forces. Accomplice because the interests which Australia wanted to secure with the annexation of East Timor into Indonesia are so evident. The best proof is the Timor Gap Agreement. It is inconceivable and unacceptable that a democratic country with a Western way of life, a country

which claims to be a defender of human rights should profit from the blood of other people, a small neighbouring people which does not forget the important role it played in the defence of Australia when many Timorese died so that the Japanese would not invade Australia. So it is an attitude of true betrayal. We feel hurt, we feel betrayed that a country with Western values should help the Indonesian propaganda, covering up the tragedy and then participating in this rapacious exploitation in the Timor Gap, something that is in fact legitimately ours.

RD: You referred to the Timor Gap Treaty. What is your attitude towards the Australian-Indonesian agreement to exploit Timorese oil and gas reserves, the so-called Timor Gap Treaty?

SG: I think that it is a unilateral, illegal decision, illegitimate and criminal, in the context that we are being exterminated by a party to this agreement. Australia, with this Treaty becomes an accomplice. Australia talks loudly about international law, but we can only explain this agreement as a disrespect for principles. There is a principle which says that no acquisition by force is legal. As far as I know Australia is also a signatory to this principle - that no acquisition by force should be accepted as legal, and Australia denies this with its agreement with Djakarta. It shows the dirty, cynical and criminal policies practiced by the Australian government in regards to East Timor.

RD: Can I ask you, sir, to comment on the attitude of the Vatican towards East Timor?

SG: I think that it is an attitude which betrays a corruption of universal principles. We see the role of the Vatican in the policies of Djakarta. We all know about the expulsion of Monsignor Lopes, and the expulsion of the Portuguese priests and we expect that one day Monsignor Belo will also be expelled. I think that it is an immoral attitude on the Vatican's part and that the Vatican is also acting in this world in the interests that move the attitudes of politicians. The statement by Father Tucci ? who came to prepare the visit of the Pope is very revealing of the Vatican's attitude. When he disagreed that the Papal mass should be in Tacitolu he merely stated that the Vatican should not sacrifice its interests only for the sake of a few hundred thousand Catholics. I don't think that is the most correct attitude. We continue to feel the influence which Djakarta has on the Vatican and in consequence the influence the Vatican exerts on the Church of East Timor. If the Church of East Timor rejected its role, its mission to defend the oppressed, to defend those who want justice and peace, I think that the Vatican would have had a very, very negative role in East Timor. What we said yesterday

about the role of the Church in East Timor also comes up here, in the context of the Vatican's pressure on the Timorese clergy. The Vatican on many occasions intended to take up the role of mediator in the East Timor problem, and even today we can say that the Vatican maintains this position. For us, it is a position not at all dignified.

#### SIDE TEN

RD: Mr Shanana, many people may argue that while what has happened in East Timor is unfortunate, it is now impossible for East Timor to be independent. Realistically, can you achieve your goals, and how long are you prepared to suffer the deprivations of a guerilla life in the bush?

SG: Realistically speaking I think that it would not be appropriate for me to tell you here whether I think it is possible for us to achieve independence. We are geared towards the defence of our rights, and realistically all nations desire that. If many people argue that it is impossible for East Timor to be independent at the moment I think that they see the question in a very simplistic way. The problem of East Timor is not a simple question for Indonesia and the rest of the world. We consider that we have that from good sources. We are prepared to continue to resist for as long as necessary, as long as Djakarta does not adopt a more flexible attitude, more just and more responsible. We already stated that we are prepared to accept our own extermination, as long as Djakarta thinks that there is only one way to solve the problem, that there exists only the use of force to make us surrender. Surrender in terms of our people, in the sense that the problem is resolved through war, is only to resolve an important part of the resistance. We are prepared for as long as necessary, as long as Djakarta does not change its attitude. In this sense, it is only after Djakarta shows more flexibility that I would more realistically comment on how we could achieve independence.

D: What are your proposals for a solution in East Timor? Would you be prepared to compromise, for instance to gain autonomy within Indonesia?

G: I cannot comment on that since I am only one person, and because in the leadership of the struggle we have Falantil, as well as the nationalist parties. Many proposals have been sent to the world, none was responded to. I can only say that I'm interested and ready to debate and discuss any project for a solution without preconditions, under UN auspices, because the situation in East Timor is a very specific one. Obviously, nothing could take place here if there was no cease fire because there would be physical threats to us, so therefore the essential condition to discuss proposals for a solution would be a ceasefire.