

Workshop Reports

Workshop 1: Implications and Perspectives of the APCET on Human Rights and Advocacy Work in the Asia- Pacific Region



1. Human Rights

1.1. Implications/Analysis:

- (a) More and more Asian governments/leaders use the "Western concept of human rights" as an excuse for not respecting human rights; (usually to protect their economic interests)
- (b) Philippine government bullied due to economic reasons, and most countries are "blind" to East Timor due to economic interests
- (c) Most Asian laws today are handed down from colonizers especially National Security Law, used not for people but interest of the few in power
- (d) Many use and misuse Human Rights concept for their interests
- (e) NGO information on human rights do not reached grassroots
- (f) Lack Asian Human rights System Asian Human rights Charter and others.

1.2. Responses / Recommendations:

- (a) We must challenge this view and defend the universality and indivisibility of human rights
- (b) Lobby home governments re: their relation with Indonesia where possible lobby UN for stronger sanctions
- (c) Critical study on National Security Doctrines operating in the region to work towards its repeal in the region
- (d) Levelling off of our human rights (HR) understanding
- (f) Develop Asian Human Rights Charter and Tribunal Court
- (g) Regional Networking - share information, use existing networks to put East Timor on agenda
 - Train East Timor in monitoring and documenting human rights violations (by Asians)
 - Send fact-finding missions
 - Support East Timor exiles return

1.3. Comments/Suggestions

While there are existing HR charters - European, African, it was noted that there is no such system in the ASEAN/ Asia-Pacific region. There are a few HR groups in the region who have worked on these initiatives, and these groups should be maximized, especially to train exiled Timorese in the various aspects of human rights work, i.e. documentation, education, etc.

Re points 1.1. there was a suggestion to substantiate the proposals with real, succinct arguments based on philosophical, anthropological and historical perspectives.

Gus Miclat raised the question of the Philippine groups not just accepting Timorese exiles for training, but also those Timorese seeking refuge.

2. Resource Mobilization and Development Cooperation

2.1. Recommendation to concentrate in the following key areas of work:

- (a) Political and Policy Advocacy
 - Pressure the Indonesian government to open East Timor to NGOs
 - Support the diplomatic initiatives of the CNRM
 - Support the Nobel Peace Prize nomination of Bishop Belo
- (b) Provide and channel humanitarian relief thru the churches (e.g. medicines, clothing, etc.)
- (c) Capacity-building for the East Timor people
 - Send Fact Finding Teams or study groups to East Timor
 - Training exchanges and seminars
 - Technology exchange and services
- (d) Campaign/Action/Mobilization
 - Generate resources: finances, logistics, and people among NGOs in South-east Asia for the Maubere people
 - Influence institutions in Indonesia and East Timor to work for the Maubere people
- (e) Coordination and Linkages
 - Tap the traditionally "non-political" network e.g. adopt a parish movement
 - Strengthen solidarity among the various support groups
 - Coordinate with East Timor Relief Association

2.2. Comments/Suggestions

Re: Proposal to support nomination of Bishop Belo for Nobel Peace Prize Award, there are only three groups recognized to nominate somebody for such award, namely: members of the parliament/government, members of supreme court/judges and previous Nobel Peace Prize winners. Likewise, publicity is not advisable for such.

3. Church Solidarity

3.1. Backgrounder

- (a) Awareness in church circles as outside much greater after November 91
- (b) Problem of dealing with Vatican
- (c) Continuing appeals by Bishop Belo for support and solidarity
- (d) Belo has appealed for visit, assistance (financial, personnel, training)
- (e) Political solidarity

3.2. Task

- (a) Step up support of Bishop Belo and East Timorese Church
- (b) Dialogue
- (c) Verbal and written support from Church hierarchies world wide
- (d) From Protestant churches and progressive muslims
- (e) Conduct visits, delegations
- (f) Financial and material assistance, training for youth

3.3. Comments/Suggestions

The historical experience of the Church in East Timor is such that it became impossible for the church to remain merely pastoral. Rather the East Timor experience has radicalized its priests and religious.

The Vatican, while it has not recognized Indonesian annexation, has neither released formal statements protesting the illegal occupation.

It was also explained that there is a need to rehabilitate the church buildings and infrastructure destroyed by Indonesian invasion and occupation. Financial assistance was called for. Equally needed is the adequate training of East Timorese priests.

4. Women

4.1. Backgrounder

In the workshop on the women situation and women's struggle in East Timor, the participants were two Moro women and four from women's organizations in the Philippines, another from a Filipino NGO, one from Switzerland, Canada, Hong Kong, Australia

They expressed the willingness to disseminate information about women in East Timor and take action in their support whenever possible.

We appreciate the efforts of the conference organizers but unfortunately there was a strong emphasis on the male leadership and the women's situation was not sufficiently addressed.

4.2. Recommendations

- (a) to copy and disseminate the material that is available here at the conference
- (b) to identify someone responsible to collect the material that will be sent to the APCET secretariat and send it out to all participants

Furthermore we demand that in future conferences (e.g., Sept 94 in Germany) East Timorese will be invited to speak on the situation and struggle of women in East Timor

4.3. Solidarity Message

APCET sends its solidarity message to the women of East Timor. We support their efforts for full participation of women in decision-making in society as well as in the struggle for self-determination as women and as East Timorese.

4.4. Recommendations

- (a) Participants willing to disseminate information about East Timor can take action whenever possible
- (b) Demand that in future conferences on East Timor that women be invited to speak on their experiences
- (c) Send solidarity messages from APCET participants to the women in East Timor

4.4. Proposals for Resolutions

- (a) Condemn population control program in East Timor -- part of genocide in East Timor
 - (i) condemn Indonesia
 - (ii) condemn World Bank and IMF
- (b) Because of violence and sexual violence against women, request UN Representative on Torture not only assume that women speak on behalf of East Timor but make specific effort to consult with the women of East Timor

4.5. Comments/Suggestions

There was a suggestion on that preparatory work for the China Conference on women is needed immediately.

The point was raised that because of a cultural background compounded by a painful history, women of East Timor might not be willing to share their experiences. It was reported, however that there is actually no shortage of information about women's experiences in East Timor, and there is a need for them to be made available. Towards this end, this workshop group members have decided to take the initiative of putting together a compilation of materials on the subject matter.

It was added that re the training program for the East Timorese raised by the workshop on church, mere assurances that women's perspective will be taken up is not satisfactory.

5. Indigenous Peoples

5.1. Backgrounder/Sharing

Moro

Roughly six million of the total population of the Philippines are Moro. Moro is a political title for those not subjugated by the Spanish colonizers. Muslim is a term used for people who have embraced the Islam religion. The moro people have been fighting for their right to self-determination since time immemorial (thus the term "moro"). These days there are different factions claiming to be the champion of the moro cause: the MNLF, MILF, Moro Revolutionary Organization, etc.

The East Timorese experience of a genocide war was also experienced by the Moro people during the height of the Civil Conflict in Mindanao under the Marcos dictatorship.

The Moro and East Timorese peoples go on with the struggle for the right to self-determination.

Lumads

Lumad is a Mindanao generic term for Indigenous Peoples. There are 13 ethnolinguistic tribes in Mindanao with the Subanens as the biggest followed by the Manobos then the Tirurays (then the rest...). They used to occupy the lowlands but have been either assimilated by the settlers coming from the north (Luzon) and central (Visayas) Philippines; or driven higher up the mountains or the periphery of the urban and urban-like communities established. Basically they become victims of deceptive land laws (losing their ancestral domain/land in the process) and victims of those who want to exploit the natural resources (forests, mineral resources, etc.). They have now awakened to their plight and NGOs and institutions have been set up by them for themselves. One such institution is the Lumad Development Center, Inc. based in Cotabato

West Papua

Rich in natural resources, West Papua has a current population of 1.5 million. Also an assimilated province of Indonesia found at the Western part of the Island of New Guinea. They consider themselves Melanesian with totally different cultural ethnicity, geographical flora and fauna from the Indonesians. Yet they find themselves victims of "cultural" as well as physical oppression: the transmigration policy of Indonesia, Javanization, genocide, militarization and biological warfare.

They consider East Timor more lucky or in a better situation since support groups have been established and their issue more recognized by the HR desks, organizations and communities.

West Papua is struggling for the right to self-determination. No NGOs exist in there and it is difficult for foreigners to get in. One has to get an internal passport to go from one village to the next.

APCET has not endeared itself to Indonesia because a recognized East Timorese struggle can/will/might open a big trunk of other "Indonesian provinces" struggling and

fighting for right to self-determination.

5.2. Recommendations

- (a) Support East Timorese struggle for self-determination, therefore, we recognize and support other peoples' right to self-determination
- (b) other national liberation struggles
- (c) minorities and indigenous peoples common concern in ASPAC -- joint conference in near future
- (d) development policies not to suppress people's right to self-determination
- (e) condemn all military operations on indigenous peoples

6. People's Diplomacy, Education and Information Campaigns

6.1. The APCET in its attempt at generating worldwide attention to the East Timor issue, does not owe its success to the Suharto-Ramos publicity. Rather, it is the firm resolve of the organizers and participants (local and foreign) to pursue the Asia-Pacific solidarity conference for East Timor and to assert their right to freedom of expression and assembly that is primarily responsible for bringing to the fore the struggle of the East Timorese for freedom and self-determination.

6.2. Recommendations

- (a) Raise the matter anew before the UN Decolonization Committee
- (b) ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting
- (c) Use other UN mechanisms/commissions to bring up the East Timor issue
- (d) IPJET Conference
- (e) Lobby before the Japanese Diet
- (f) Look into the independence of the East Timor Judiciary
- (g) IPJET book on East Timor
- (h) Lobby work in international bodies (inter-GOs, GOs, NGOs)
- (i) UN Decolonization Committee
- (ii) South Pacific Forum
- (iii) APEC meet in December
- (iv) NAM
- (v) Vatican
- (vi) Ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference for Asia
- (i) To request Mdme. Mitterand to take up the issue of East Timor with President and Mrs. Ramos when they visit France in September and next month
- (j) To organize a pool of resource persons for educational campaigns in schools
- (k) Study seriously the viability and practicability of an alternative news bureau for

the mainstream media

(l) maximize already existing networks in Asia-Pacific and elsewhere for information exchange/dissemination

(m) identify targets for information campaigns especially those groups with influence in decision-making

(n) strategize on how to consolidate the gains of APCET for sustained and systematic information campaigns

(o) formation of solidarity groups for East Timor at the national/international and regional (Asia-Pacific) levels

(p) hold regular solidarity activities for East Timor (anniversaries, commemoration) and to hold "protest receptions to visiting Indonesian officials

(q) mobilize international support for the democratic movement in Indonesia

(r) APCET courtesy call to Philippine Congress and Senate

6.3. Comments/Suggestions

Additional suggestions were put to the plenary. One, to get in touch with the following groups for purposes of networking: Cultural Survival based in Harvard; Survival International based in London, and; Katipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas. Two, to coordinate follow-up activities of APCET to coincide with the East Asia Business Conference in Davao, November this year. Preferably, the activity should take place in Davao also.

7. Legal Aspects in East Timor

7.1. The following recommendations are those that can be implemented on the legal front of the East Timor campaign:

(a) Raise the matter anew before the UN Decolonisation Committee

Petitions sent to the Decolonisation Committee seeking for speedy resolution of the East Timor conflict are needed to pressure the committee to act more decisively. Such petitions could be sent through the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET) or the International Federation for East Timor (IFET), both of which have testified before this committee. The committee's next session on East Timor is scheduled on July 12, 1994

(b) Be involved in the upcoming ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting

The meeting shall be held in Bangkok this 1994. With the help of Thai human rights NGOs, the issue of East Timor could be afforded ample publicity and included in the agenda of the meeting.

(c) Utilize other UN mechanisms/commissions

Apart from the UN Decolonisation Committee, other commissions that could be lobbied upon with regard to East Timor, includes the Commission on Hu-

man Rights in Geneva, UNICEF and others.

(d) Take part in the IPJET Conference

IPJET is an international organization of jurists and nonjurists whose secretariat is based in Leiden, the Netherlands. IPJET has an upcoming conference in Isserholn, Germany scheduled on September 30 to October 2, 1994. IPJET is also conducting a contest for the best thesis on East Timor, offering a prize of US\$1,000.

(e) Lobby before the Japanese Diet

A number of Japanese parliamentarians are sympathetic to the plight of the East Timorese and are critical of Indonesia's human rights record. They could yield influence, specially on the matter of Japanese ODA, of which Indonesia is a major recipient.

(f) Look into the independence of the East Timorese judiciary

Human rights violations in East Timor could be lessened if there is a strong and independent judiciary. Its performance could be assessed by independent monitoring bodies.

(g) IPJET book on East Timor

A book on East Timor written by twenty members of IPJET is due to be released on January 1995.

The above recommendations were given with the understanding that any such recommendation is irrelevant if the people of East Timor are not directly involved. They should at least be informed that such initiatives are taking place.

7.2. Suggestions/Comments

(a) IPJET has tried to raise the East Timorese issue in the UN Decolonization Committee

(b) APCET members can attend the IPJET conference in September 1994 in Germany



Workshop 2:

Building Asian Solidarity Links with East Timor

Composition (Organization/s and Country of Origin):

Asia Monitor Resource Center - Hongkong
 Lawyers for a Democratic Society - South Korea
 Free East Timor Japan Coalition - Japan
 Women's Resource and Research Center / South-east Asian Women's Information Network - Philippines
 Amnesty International - Philippines
 South Asia Forum for Human Rights - Nepal
 Popular Education for People's Empowerment - Philippines
 Asia-Pacific Information Desk - Switzerland
 East Timor Relief Association, Inc. - Australia
 NFLP-West Papua Support Group - Australia
 Saskia Kouwenberg - Australia
 Asian Students Association - Hongkong
 Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates - Philippines
 Promotion of Church People's Rights - Philippines
 Leandro L. Alejandro Foundation - Philippines
 People's Council for Solidarity and Peace
 East Timor Action Network - USA
 People's Global Exchange - Philippines
 Notre Dame University Peace Center - Philippines
 Asian Center for the Progress of Peoples - Hongkong
 National Council of Churches in the Philippines-Philippines
 Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace - Japan
 Indian Society of Human Rights/IPJET - India
 Friends of East Timor - Australia
 Helia Hai - Hongkong
 ACFOD - Thailand
 SUARAM - Malaysia

Background

Each of the representatives introduced themselves and their organizations, shared briefly 1) the depth of their involvement in the East Timor issue; 2) the information technology they possess; 3) their capabilities for resource generation; 4) the breadth of their networks; and 5) their needs.

Out of this sharing emerged areas of concern which the group felt should be addressed immediately (drawing categories from Workshop One), namely the following:

1. Information and Education
2. Communication/Networking
3. Campaign Action
4. Humanitarian Relief and Resource Mobilization
5. Political and Policy Advocacy

The workshop was divided into three smaller groups to discuss in more detail the above-mentioned categories. Areas (1) and (2) were fused and assigned to one group which we shall refer to as group A; while (3) and (5) went to group B, with (4) taken up by group C.

GROUP A

An appraisal of the requirement of the existing organizations working in solidarity with the Maubere people revealed the following needs:

1. a survey of the resources available on East Timor;
2. how to effectively disseminate these resources in the regional, national and grassroots levels; and
3. a comprehensive knowledge of existing networks which can be tapped for such purposes.

The following resources were identified:

1. Films e.g. "Death of a Nation", "In Cold Blood", and "Xanana"
2. Books (although a little bit expensive)
3. Indonesian Kit Booklet from Canada
4. A Human Rights module by the Diokno Foundation, focusing on East Timor, from the Philippines
5. Music by East Timor and other artists in solidarity are available in cassette and compact disc formats
6. "Introduction to East Timor" from the USA available thru electronic mail
7. One radio script and audio tapes from the USA
8. Photographs, printed materials, tapes and photos from Amnesty International
9. Paintings by a Timorese artist based in Darwin are also available

10. Plus, of course, resources published or sent thru E-mail by the solidarity organizations present in this conference

11. Resource persons, East Timorese in exile

Suggestions on how to disseminate information include:

1. Materials made available could be translated to the languages of the countries who receive them. Videos, in particular, should be available in all of the formats in existence.
2. Expensive books could be reprinted in countries where printing costs are lower.
3. Twinning, or country to country exchange of materials should be promoted.
4. Cultural exchanges (e.g. cultural groups) should take place.
5. Strengthen the linkages with the Churches.
6. Use the comics form (e.g. Cuba for Beginners) to popularize the issue especially among the grassroots.
7. Issue "Urgent Appeals" - two page documents relaying emergency situations (e.g. arrests, massacres, etc.) thru the network.
8. ETRA should come out with a list containing the resources they have which are for distribution and/or for sale.
9. Put up or sponsor art exhibits by Timorese artists. Contact artist groups in this regard.
10. Produce one or two music videos for V (previously MTV-Asia)
11. Integrate the women's situation in East Timor in order to make other women's networks aware of the plight of women in the country.
12. Increase the East Timor information drive in South Asia (India, Nepal, Sri Lanka)
13. Coordinate an international concert. (Wow!)
14. Follow-up the conference (after this, what?)
15. Information packaging. Show the East Timorese not only as victims but as proud fighters who retain their dignity (especially the women).
16. Integrate the existing Asian Networks into the global network.

Network Building

Some existing networks were identified:

Regional level: Asia-Pacific Human Rights NGO Network
ACCP

Sub-region: Southeast Asia Network for Human Rights
(SEA Net)

East Asia: Korean Human Rights Network (KOHNet)
South Asian HR Documentation Center

Pacific: Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific
Suva and Fiji, Aoetoroa - New Zealand,
Australia

West Asia

Comments on Group A from the body:

1. There are more networks in the region and sub-regional levels.

We have to identify them all.

2. Campaign for Muslim groups to write to Islamic nations/communities condemning the HR violations in East Timor as against being Islamic.

GROUP B

Observing the reports from the organizations reveals the lack of coordination of all our various efforts. Furthermore, past commitments to East Timor, like the Bangkok meeting of NGOs to form an action committee, has not materialized. It is also perceived that campaigns should extend to South Asia, West Asia and the Pacific.

Campaign Action

1. There is a perceived need for regular, widespread, planned and well-coordinated campaigns on East Timor targetting the United Nations, governments, parliamentarians and even the NGOs.

2. November 12 (the date of the Dili massacre) should be regularly commemorated or called as the solidarity day for East Timor. We can send post cards, write letters, organize demonstrations, and sign petitions, at around this time in our respective countries.

3. We should encourage the boycott of Indonesian products.

4. Ask ETRA to send delegates to different organizations, to speaking tours in various countries of the Asia-Pacific.

5. We must know all the upcoming international conferences which will be held in the region. We should use these venues to bring the issue of East Timor to the international community. For example: World Conference of Social Workers, July 1994; ASEAN Human Rights Meeting, July 25-27, 1994; Asia-Pacific Human Rights Conference in the Philippines, January 1995; the Women's Conference in Beijing.

6. We should organize the Asia-Pacific parliamentarians while the publicity generated by this conference is still high.

7. We should organize two missions to East Timor. One, a high level one, which will consist of parliamentarians from Asia, and the second, a low profile one which will

be composed of NGO and human rights workers and churchpeople. The aims of the first mission is: **a) to sustain the high level campaign started by this conference; b) for the parliamentarians to talk with the Indonesian government; c) for the parliamentarians to talk with political prisoners, including Xanana Gusmao.**

The second mission would try to **get concrete information on the inside situation of East Timor and if possible, to provide some training for the local people.**

8. Last, but not the least, we should campaign for, or at the very least, express our support to the CNRM's peace plan.

Political and Policy Advocacy

1. Lobby our parliamentarians to join the mission to East Timor.
2. Do advocacy work for the CNRM Peace Plan.
3. Put pressure to bear on the Japanese and Korean governments - the biggest donors of official aid — to suspend all aid to Indonesia until the situation in East Timor is resolved.

Perhaps, we can pass a resolution calling on these governments to look into the real situation in East Timor.

4. Use the United Nations mechanisms and structures for our advocacy work.
5. Lobby our governments to: 1) write a letter of concern to the Indonesian government and 2) support the CNRM's peace proposal.
6. SAPHUR will send the conference information to all the members of the parliament in their government
7. We should endorse Bishop Belo's nomination for the 1994 Nobel Peace prize.

Comments on Group 2 from the body:

1. We should discuss the ramifications of endorsing Bishop Belo. If this will help, then we must endorse him. If not, we should coordinate an uncoordinated campaign.
2. Regarding the mission, we should organize as much support for the East Timor missions even if we are not allowed in. Our objective is to raise the issue to the UN.
3. Add December 7, the anniversary of the invasion of East Timor as one of our commemorative days.
4. Stress the UN Security Council's resolutions. Call for the release of all political prisoners, an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of troops or demilitarization, a fair and honest referendum, and a UN representative to visit East Timor.
5. Campaigns must be linked to local issues to pick up public interest.
6. CNRM/East Timorese spokespersons, personalities, etc. must be involved in all campaigns, organizing, and must be consulted when we choose priorities for campaigns.

GROUP C:

1. Encourage and ensure projects and support work inside East Timor thru ETRA.
2. Set up a coordinating center in Asia for solidarity work in East Timor. The staff who shall be employed will be funded by sponsor countries whose responsibility for raising funds shall rotate with the other countries every month.
3. Set up a Kamal Bramahadj Foundation to support projects which encourage Asian people to be in solidarity with other Asian nation (focus on East Timor).
4. Support for Bishop Belo's seminary project.
5. Foster a student plan — a family in another country can support a student in East Timor.
6. Help ETRA in its Japan Tour to establish links and possibly extend to South Korea.

Additional points raised in the open forum:

1. Teachers' Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy offers its support to raise awareness on East Timor in schools and at grassroots level.
2. Aotearoa-New Zealand should be included in the campaign forum of the Pacific and Asia.
3. Organizations and people in Aotearoa-New Zealand will also have a great interest in supporting Kamal Bramahadj Foundation.
4. The Asia-Pacific campaign should also target PAX-Christi International in lobby and information dissemination.
5. In Australia, joint production on a drama about East Timor will be produced with the cooperation of Moro artists.
6. If boycott action is to be taken, the target should be more specified in order to make the action more effective.
7. Lobby Japan to pressure Indonesia on the issue of East Timor as part of the conditions of Overseas Development Aid (ODA).

