

East Timor

monthly memo
news

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1. EAST TIMOR

a. Disturbances in Dili:

You will have seen that we included an ACFOA memo, dated Oct 22, detailing the events in Dili and particularly in the schools there, as a stop-press addition to the appendix of last month's ETN.

A Newsbrief from FRETILIN, Lisbon gives some of the background to the build-up in tension in Dili in September and October. It describes how the wearing of T-shirts, shorts and a black necklace is sufficient for a young Timorese to be detained, interrogated and beaten by the police, because these are said to symbolise allegiance to the resistance.

There have been various reports of off-duty Indonesian soldiers, disguised as civilians, attacking young Timorese. On September 10 a group of 12 such soldiers stabbed Domingos Mau Radi (30) to death in front of the "Escola China" building at 7.30 in the evening and left the scene in 2 taxis. On September 19 another group of 25 soldiers, armed with knives and pistols, stormed a kiosk at Matadouro, Fato Meta, where young Timorese meet. The following day the Indonesian police went to the kiosk and arrested Agostinho Pereira (21), a student at St José High School. (FRETILIN Newsbrief (1) Oct. 1990)

Robert Domm (see below) was told of the formation in Dili of a "Ninja" death squad who dress in black hoods and come at night to abduct Timorese suspected of resistance sympathies, from their houses. (ABC Radio Oct. 28 1990)

The most recent reports received indicate that the number of arrests arising from the disturbances at the Fatuhada School on October 8 and Paulo VI School on October 15, was between 32 and 43. These are said to include adolescents, young peasants and local government officials. "The situation has never been so terrible, so tense" according to Catholic Church sources in Dili and it is said that the 120,000 inhabitants are now under a virtual curfew after nightfall.

General Warouw, Commander in Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces in Dili, told the France-Presse news agency that there had been 32 people detained for interrogation and that 14 Timorese "who had defied the law" had been put under custody for a weekend. The general said that the FALINTIL leader Xanana Gusmão had sent messages on cassette to the students telling them to "boycot Indonesian education".

Visiting diplomats from a number of European and Asian countries, who happened to be in Dili at the time, are said to have reported back to their governments that the situation was extremely grave; one is quoted by the "Diário de Notícias" as describing Dili as a city "bathed in rebellion". The diplomats included representatives from France, the UK, Germany, Holland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand and Malasia. (Diário de Notícias 30 Oct 1990; Publico 29 Oct 1990)

b. Interview with Xanana:

Robert Domm, an Australian trade union official, entered East Timor as a tourist in the middle of September and went to a secret rendez-vous with Resistance Commander-in-Chief Xanana Gusmão where he taped about 13 hours of interview with the guerrilla leader. As well as the taped interview Domm also took back to Australia a written interview which Xanana had previously received. The taped interview was subsequently published in the Australian and on the ABC (Australian radio) and the written interview appeared simultaneously in the Lisbon press. (We include some extracts from the former in the appendix)

Referring to the position of Portugal, Xanana said in the course of the interview that it "cannot continue as the administering power of a territory over which it does not have the least control. There must be a revision of the (present) interpretation by the interested parties, because if the UN interpretations are specific and stipulated, applying universal values to the principles, then the Maubere resistance to the military occupation of East Timor supports the proposition that it is the people of East Timor that is the legitimate party to negotiate the end of the conflict and never Portugal"

"I have already stated that I am in favour of discussion, without preconditions, of any project, under the supervision of the UN, directed towards a solution (...) but with the prerogative of a cease-fire." (Diário de Notícias 25 Oct 1990)

The Portuguese Foreign Office refused to give an official reply to these statements by Xanana. However, sources within the FO said that Portugal would continue to discharge its function as Administering Power of the territory in line with the Portuguese Constitution, the position maintained by the UN and "the moral, historical and political responsibilities we assumed towards the Timorese people" (Diário de Notícias 27 Oct 1990)

Robert Domm spoke of a highly organised operation both on the part of the underground resistance in Dili and also the guerrillas in the mountains which involved the participation of about 200 Timorese in the planning and execution of his secret trip to the mountains to interview Xanana (see appendix). (ETN 318,319)

c. Military actions:

According to FRETILIN reports, the FALINTIL 2nd Unit has registered 16 combats in the west of Baucau and East of Viqueque, causing losses of 60 Indonesian soldiers. During the same period the 3rd Unit and company B of the 4th Unit registered 7 combats in the areas of Soibada, Turiscai, Alas and Fatuberliu, resulting in 40 Indonesian losses.

In June, the 2nd Guerrilla Detachments, commanded by Venancio, killed 25 Indonesian soldiers in an ambush on Kablaki mountain. In the same month Company B of the 4th Unit fought the 315th Indonesian Infantry in the areas of Caicassa, Manehat Kik and Alas resulting in the capture of two Herstall weapons.

In July, members of the 1st Unit killed 12 Indonesian troops at Los Palos and seized their weapons and claimed a further victory in August at Uatulari, killing 20 and seizing military equipment during clashes with the 408th and 521st battalions.

On August 31, 15 battalions commanded by General Prabowo (President Suharto's son-in-law) succeeded in encircling Xanana Gusmão, the guerrilla leader, at Rota Laran on the south coast. However the guerrillas succeeded in breaking through the Indonesian troops on the following day and made their escape. (FRETILIN Newsbrief (1) Oct 1990)

d. Governor speaks out:

Governor Mário Carrascalão has given a number of interviews to the press in recent weeks. He is quoted by NY Times journalist Steven Erlanger as saying "I'm not so optimistic. Life is better here now, but only in relation to the situation in the past. But it is not a good situation here..it's not" (New York Times Oct 21 1990)

In an interview with France-Presse on October 30 the Governor said that he blamed "the Government and the armed forces" for a poor approach to the Timorese.

Mr Carrascalão said that a change in policy was necessary if the people were to regain their dignity. "We have to change. We are wrong and they (the people) do wrong because we did wrong"

Far from advocating autonomy or independence for East Timor, Mr Carrascalão stressed the need to improve education for young Timorese. He said Indonesia had built roads and schools in the territory but there were not enough jobs for the young. "It is

necessary to eliminate bureaucracy and corruption. Five to fifteen per cent of Government investments don't reach their target"

Furthermore, the lifting of restrictions on travel to East Timor in January 1989 had not brought the expected results "The opening has not brought employment for the Timorese and investments have been slow in coming." He said the opening-up had benefitted the army and Indonesian businesses but not the Timorese people. (France Presse Oct 30)

In the Indonesian "Suara Pembaruan" newspaper the Governor is quoted as saying that he is not in favour of a parliamentary visit by Portuguese MPs because he doubted the objectivity of their conclusions and because "there will not be any alteration in the situation in East Timor, which has become the 27th province of Indonesia, regardless of the evaluation of the Portuguese parliamentary delegation" He saw the presence of UN observers as being "more positive" and giving greater objectivity. (Diário de Notícias 18 Oct 1990)

e. Maubere or not Maubere?:

Bishop Belo, in an interview with TSF radio during his visit to Portugal, criticized the use of the term "Maubere" by FRETILIN and the Portuguese President, Mário Soares when describing the people of East Timor. According to the bishop "Maubere, in the Mombar language, is a person's name. In colonial times there were servants to Portuguese military families (...) that they used to refer to as Mauberes. When you call us Maubere you are insulting us because Maubere means stupid or "Zé Ninguém" <the Portuguese equivalent of John Smith or John Doe.(BW)>. "And we are neither stupid nor "Zé Ninguém"."

The bishop also responded to some of the criticisms of foreign clergy which have come out of the diocese of Dili (see ET MM 39). He, for his part, praised the dedication of the Indonesian and other foreign priests who "are often viewed negatively" by the lay Timorese. (O Jornal Oct 26 1990)

The origins of the use of the term Maubere in a wider sense, to describe all the people of East Timor, was explained by José Ramos-Horta in the "Diário de Notícias" three days later. It had been used by him in a letter written to a diocesan newspaper in 1972, during colonial times. The newspaper was subsequently shut down by the Portuguese for having printed the letter. The letter was an appeal to the ordinary Timorese worker and peasant and finished with these words:

"Maubere, my brother.
The sun is rising high.
Its rays are for you too.
The time has come. Rise up"

Later, when the Social Democratic Party was being set up in East

Timor, after the overthrow of fascism in Portugal in 1974, the founders used the term Maubere to symbolize the culture and identity of Timorese men and women. Later, Xanana Gusmão had used the term in this positive sense, speaking of "Maubere nationalism", and of "the multifaceted Maubere identity... the Maubere soul". Thus the name came to be reclaimed from the derogatory sense it had acquired during colonial times.

According to Ramos-Horta the name today is a symbol of "pride, national identity, resistance and emancipation" throughout East Timor. He goes on to criticize Bishop Belo for vacillation and asks "if he does not wish to involve himself in politics why does he then oppose a symbol that is eminently political and which has been the ensignia of the cultural renaissance of the Timorese people?" (Diário de Notícias 29 Oct 1990)

f. Documents received:

- 1) "Report from the mountains of Timor" ABC Radio, Australia, 28 Oct 1990; ETN 318
- 2) "First Contact: an Australian visits Shanana's camp", Mark Aarons (Oct 1990); ETN/319
- 3) FRETILIN Newsbrief (1) Oct 1990, Lisbon; ETN/320
- 4) Neon Metin, Special Edition, East Timor, 20 Aug 1990; ETN/321

2. ADMINSTERING POWER: PORTUGAL

a. Update on UN visit to East Timor:

It is now reported that the projected UN visit to the territory (see ETN MM 39) will only take place when Portugal and Indonesia have agreed on the details of the later visit by a Portuguese Parliamentary Mission. As yet no agreement has been reached between the two countries. (Público 12 Oct 1990)

3. INTERNATIONAL

a. International media attention:

The events of September and October in Dili have received considerable coverage in the international media, possibly on account of the recent visit by foreign diplomats to the capital (see 1a). (BBC World Service 9 Oct 1990; New York Times 21 Oct 1990; Guardian Weekly 28 Oct 1990, Le Monde 1 Nov 1990; Reuters, Jakarta 25 Oct 1990).

Meanwhile the US magazine, The Nation, revealed confidential minutes of a 1975 meeting which indicate that the US had given Indonesia indications that it would not object if the latter invaded East Timor (at that time controlled by FRETILIN). The

meeting of US State Department officials, presided over by then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and attended by Lawrence Eagleburger (currently President Bush's Deputy of State) was called by Kissinger to suppress the information that Indonesia had made extensive use of US military equipment in the invasion (which took place on December 7 1975, one day after President Ford and Kissinger had concluded an official visit to Jakarta). (The Nation 29 Oct 1990)

4. INDONESIA:

a. Benefits of Timor Gap Treaty questioned:

Professor Johannes, former rector of Gajah Mada University criticized the Timor Gap Treaty as being too favorable to Australia. The professor was addressing a public hearing of the Indonesian House of Representatives and he called for the treaty to be renegotiated.

The Minister for Mines and Energy, Ginajar Kartasamita, in reply, said that the treaty was beneficial to Indonesia and that it "is looked on as a recognition by the Australian government of East Timor's integration with Indonesia." (Indonesian Observer 22 Sep 1990)

b. Ali Alatas hits out at Portugal:

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, called a press conference, on the day after the interview with Xanana Gusmão was published, in the Australian press. Mr Alatas strongly criticised Portugal and the foreign press for a campaign of "slander and misinformation" and accused them of trying to "make it appear that East Timor is in turmoil and upheaval". On being questioned about the Xanana interview he said that he was not aware of it. (Sydney Morning Herald 26 Oct 1990)

East Timor News is a service which publishes information in three forms - the Monthly Memo (MM) and the occasional publications, Subject Memo (SM) and Urgent Communique (UC). It can also make available, on request, copies of all documents mentioned in these publications. It is produced by two Portuguese NGOs, CDPM (The Commission for the Rights of the Maubere People) and "Peace is possible in East Timor". The annual subscription is 100\$US. The text in East Timor News may be freely quoted but in the event of the quotation of a significant portion of its contents, ETN should be credited.

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Aust playing dirty, says rebel leader

EAST TIMOR

The East Timorese rebel leader Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao, in his first interview in 15 years, has accused the Australian Government of practising "dirty, cynical and criminal policies" in regards to East Timor.

Xanana, who heads the Falintil guerrilla movement based in the mountainous jungles of Indonesian-occupied East Timor, said that Canberra's decision to sign the Timor Gap Treaty in December 1989 made Australia an accomplice to Indonesia in its attempted extermination of the Timorese people.

"There is a principle of international law which says that no [territorial] acquisition by force is legal," Xanana said, referring to the treaty which allows both Australia and Indonesia to exploit oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea. "But with its agreement with Jakarta, Australia effectively denies this principle.

"It shows the dirty, cynical and criminal policies practised by the Australian Government in regards to East Timor."

The Xanana interview, translated transcripts of which were made available to the *Herald*, took place in a mountain hideout on September 27. It was conducted by Mr Robert Domm, an Australian trade union official, who sought out the elusive Falintil leader on behalf of ABC Radio National's *Background Briefing* program. The interview will be broadcast on Sunday at 9.10 am.

Xanana (pronounced Shanana) has been on the run from the Indonesian authorities since December 7, 1975, when Jakarta invaded the former Portuguese colony of East Timor after a brief civil war following a sudden



Xanana ... realistic, but there'll be no surrender.

Portuguese decision to relinquish its 400-year control.

Indonesia subsequently sealed the province for 13 years and only opened it to tourists and journalists in December 1988.

Between 100,000 and 200,000 people died from 1974 to 1980 in a brutal civil war and the consequent invasion — through combat, execution, disease and starvation.

Swamped by transmigrants and bureaucrats from other parts of the crowded Indonesian archipelago over the past few years, East Timor's population today stands at about 700,000. The capital of Dili has about 120,000 people, at least 20 per cent of whom are now non-Timorese.

Prodded by local and international criticism of human-rights abuses, the tone of official behaviour has recently changed, with an

emphasis on reconciliation, development and progress.

Despite Indonesia's considerable efforts at development, Timorese remember the harsh years after the invasion of December 7, 1975, when thousands of peasants fled to the parched mountains and tried to survive a military that suppressed all resistance.

Keeping alive that flame of resistance is the 43-year-old Xanana, who still wears a set of Portuguese jungle greens captured from the military stores when Lisbon pulled out 15 years ago.

The strength of Falintil is now said by officials to be severely reduced, to perhaps as low as 300 fighters, although resistance leaders claim that there are as many as 3,500 guerrillas and many more willing volunteers.

Falintil, once the military wing of the Fretilin party which briefly

held power in East Timor, is now independent but pursues the same aims as Fretilin.

Indonesian government officials say they are reduced to robbery to feed themselves, and the problem is no longer security, but social and political development.

The following is an edited transcript of the Xanana interview:

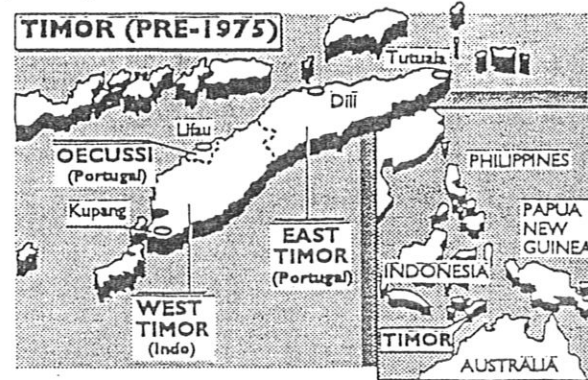
Robert Domm: My first question is if you are able to do so simply, describe the current military situation in East Timor?

Xanana: After 15 years without any support from outside, Falintil cannot think about great military successes against the enemy. 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 to time, they use larger forces ... We feel that the enemy is everywhere. They have improved their technical knowledge of guerrilla tactics, and at the slightest sign of the presence of the guerrillas they chase them until they provoke an armed clash.

Do you have the capacity to mount attacks in towns in East Timor?

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.

The Indonesian Government is anxious to say to the world that the fighting in East Timor is now finished. Can you comment on that. 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, 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. In a general appreciation or survey of the situation, I must say that the war continues from Tutuala to the border regions. 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. Without even the 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 chance to cultivate some piece of land, a small factory to make our own clothing, you can understand our great difficulties. Hence, for someone like me who has spent the entire 15 years in this war, the difficulties of Falintil 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 Jakarta has factories. 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.

How well organised is the underground in the towns, the resistance underground and how does it work? 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. 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 Jakarta continues to be inflexible the war will not end so soon.

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? They chop off the heads of the

guerillas, they torture them on the spot. For instance, if a guerrilla is wounded and captured, he is killed; recently, at the beginning of September, a guerrilla in the eastern sector was wounded and taken to a village and killed.

What effect does the war between your troops and the Indonesians have on the civilian population? 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 people's resistance continues, this is the true effect of this war.

Can you describe life under Indonesian rule?

We cannot say that the people of East Timor live very well. 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.

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 guerrilla life in the bush?

We are prepared to continue to resist for as long as necessary, as long as Jakarta does not adopt a more flexible attitude, more just and more responsible. We have already stated that we are prepared to accept our own extermination, as long as Jakarta thinks that there is only one way to solve the problem, that there exists only the use of force to make us surrender.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Extracts from "First contact: an Australian visits Shanana's camp" :

The guerilla officer pointed vaguely and said encouragingly, 'we're very close now, it's just up ahead'. The Timorese knew that his Australian companion was just about done for. For the past 20 kilometres the security unit had insisted that they travel at a forced march. The rugged mountains were literally teeming with Indonesian troops patrolling the dense jungle. They knew that the resistance leader, Shanana Gusmao, was in the area and desperately wanted to capture or kill him.

By then Robert Domm was already exhausted, dripping with sweat and covered in a thick coat of mountain dust. Domm squinted into the late afternoon light and silently groaned. He looked up and all he could see was 'this mini-Mattahorn' covered with jungle. It seemed totally inaccessible. From where the small group was standing at the foot of the mountain it was impossible to tell that anyone was there, let alone how to get up it. 'For the guerilla to say it was just up there made it sound very easy. But getting up that mountain was no easy task', Domm recalled a few days later. But they did it, and eventually arrived at Shanana's well hidden and constructed base camp. The first direct contact in 15 years with the Timorese military leadership was made just before 6.00PM, Thursday 27 September 1990.

A few hours earlier, Domm and his battle hardened bodyguards had met just outside a tiny Timorese hamlet. Domm's first impression was that they were a somewhat rag-tag band. This was the security unit assigned to escort him through the mountains and protect his life. 'They'd arranged a welcoming reception in the form of a formal military stand to attention and presenting of arms. I have to say frankly that my first impression was that they were somewhat sloppy.

Once out in the bush, Domm quickly realised that his initial impression of the guerillas was quite wrong. In the mountains, they rapidly demonstrated their skills as a guerilla army. 'They don't march up and down in military parades, they're not like the Indonesian army which is trained like that', Domm reports. 'But in terms of being able to get through the mountains at great speed, take the best vantage points, liaise with the local people and seize the initiative from the Indonesian troops, they are a formidable force.'

The inhospitable terrain is in fact the guerillas' best friend. When he reached their camp on top of the 'mini-Mattahorn', Domm could not see it, even from about 10 metres. 'Suddenly Shanana Gusmao emerged, and one of the guerillas said "there's our leader". I looked up and realised we were there. So you can see how difficult it is for the Indonesians to find them.' The last stretch was very steep, and by then he was on his hands and knees. He struggled to his feet, shook Shanana's hand and said: 'it's been a long time, sir, 15 years'. The guerilla legend smiled shyly and simply replied, 'yes'.

The thing that struck Domm most about his host was how out of place he seemed in his surroundings. 'He doesn't seem to belong in the mountains, he's not the type of person you'd expect to spend 15 years there. You'd expect to find him drinking coffee and discussing politics in a sidewalk cafe in metropolitan Lisbon. He's clearly a well read man, and his knowledge of world events was very good. He was gentle and humorous, but also a very hard and strict man. His army is a strict hierarchy and he's the head, his word must be obeyed. He seems to be cut in that mould of the classic, charismatic Latin guerilla leader. What struck me was that combination of intellectual and soldier.'