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EDITORIAL

AJAR?

In recent years, Indonesia's refusal to open East Timor to visits has been the most potent international argument against Jakarta's record in the territory.

Since Mr Ali Alatas was nominated Foreign Minister last year, evidence has accumulated that Timor's isolation is being reviewed. More invitations — and more significant invitations — have already been issued. In November, some of the territory was made accessible to Indonesians and on January 1st 1989 President Suharto declared East Timor an "open" province.

There is resistance to such changes (however superficial they may prove to be), not least from sections of the army, which benefit militarily and economically from the province. Alatas will have to work hard to establish his more sophisticated strategy for 'ending' the Timor problem.

Nevertheless, sharp issues are raised for critics of Indonesia. We have consistently demanded access for 'independent visitors' and humanitarian organisations. But what is an 'independent visit'?

At one end is fraudulence like that of Mr Nuno Rocha. But what of the trip made by Mr Anacoreta Correia in 1986? Where, along the spectrum, does the recent visit by four Euro-MPs lie? If a group of respectable NGOs is invited to East Timor, on what grounds should they refuse? And if they go, how is their visit to be evaluated?

Any lessening of Timor's security cordon, in fact, will test the credibility and nerve both of the Indonesian authorities and their critics. It is not at all surprising that Portugal and Indonesia have havered more than a year over whether a Portuguese Parliamentary delegation should go to East Timor at the invitation of Indonesia's Parliament. What would Portugal do if the Portuguese MPs found nothing wrong? What would Indonesia do if they found something terrible?

The truth is that there is no such thing as a witness of perfect neutrality. Nor should anyone expect simple truths to emerge — or any truths to emerge easily — from a society which has suffered the brutal violence and forced 'modernisation' experienced by

the Timorese since the mid-1970s. If Alatas implements his strategy to bring all sorts of people to Timor — journalists, diplomats, NGOs, church officials and politicians — it is certain that mixed and contradictory reports will emerge, providing food for thought, ammunition and embarrassment for all sides.

Certain factors must weigh strongly, of course, in any evaluation. Is there any evidence to support conclusions that may be reached? What qualities of judgement and experience do visitors bring to their perceptions? How long did they stay, and how long were they outside Dili? Could they communicate directly with people, in a local language? Did they have any knowledge of East Timor before they went?

The list might be long and very detailed. But it will not change the fact that, if "real visits" begin, a period of simplicities will be finished, to be replaced for a time by greys, by half-certainties harder to accommodate — even if, in the end, new opportunities may emerge to enlarge international concern for Timor's people. ■

Two Tone Diplomacy

In the run-up to Christmas, the talk from Jakarta was all about 'opening up' East Timor. The language was up-beat — as if a decision to raise the exceptional and extreme controls upon movement which have shrouded East Timor in mystery since 1975 represented a favour to the world and East Timor's people. On January 1st, it was finally declared before Christmas, East Timor would become 'open'. Apparently this means that Indonesians will be able to travel on most occasions to most of the territory, and that many Timorese will be allowed to travel in Indonesia. We report on the significance of this 'concession'.

Suharto's visit

The first step was taken before November 1-2, when President Suharto visited the territory for the first time since 1975. It was announced that part of East Timor — in fact the area west of Dili to the border with West Timor — would be 'opened'.

This news spread round the world and it gradually became evident that the new dispensation did not apply to foreigners and did not apply to the Eastern section of East Timor, the war zone.

Eight of East Timor's 13 regencies (administrative divisions) have been opened: the five which are still closed cover about two thirds of the territory.

It was then rumoured that President Suharto would declare all of East Timor to be 'open', some time around Christmas.

In fact, 'openness' came to pass on January 1st — though it is still unclear what the decision will mean in practise for Timorese. Officials, military officers and Governor Carrascalao have made commentaries on the matter — most in the manner of Home Minister Rudini, as if mere banal paperwork was involved. "Declaring East Timor an open territory," he said, "is only a matter of administrative processing." [UCA News, No 480, November 16 1988.]

Identity Cards

The government has announced that it will be issuing Citizenship Identity Cards to all Timorese. Those who possess them will be able to travel elsewhere in Indonesia without restriction. Presumably the cards are also useful to improve certain social controls.

Detentions

The character of Indonesia's new liberalism was set in context, however, when Juliet Rix (writing in *The Guardian* of 12 December 1988) reported that thousands of East Timorese had been arrested in a security clamp-down before President Suharto's visit. Altogether about 3,000 were reported to have been picked up, including some 200 or 300 in the Dili area. Most were released soon after President Suharto left. The Portuguese government made a formal protest to Indonesia on the occasion of president Suharto's visit. Some reports suggested that the UN Secretariat was also irritated by Indonesian insensitivity. For the latest news on these arrests, see the back page of this issue.

Reasons for reform

Why has Jakarta opted to move now? The answer, predictably, is not simple. Competing interests are involved and there is no dominant consensus: what form the eventual policy will take is difficult to determine — not least because *Timor Link* is not well-informed about the complexities of Indonesian power politics.

The army appears to be less positive towards the idea of relaxing controls than some civilian elements in the government. This is understandable: East Timor has been a valuable fiefdom of the military, providing an excellent proving ground for officers and troops, a power base for some military politicians, and good economic returns for those involved with import-export, P.T. Denok, and other military investments in the economy.

Foreign Minister Alatas, on the other hand, has been pressing for more openness. His long experience of defending Indonesia's record on East Timor at the United Nations has made him well aware of what motivates international criticism and he is presumably convinced that the political advantages that would follow from permitting more visitors to go more often more freely to East Timor are worth the risk that some of them will find evidence of dissent or uncover abuses. In the long term, after all, Indonesia must open up the territory to convince international opinion that resistance is at an end.

There are also short-term diplomatic considerations behind Alatas' drive for

openness. The demand for access underpins many sections of the UN resolution which has mandated Perez de Cuellar to convene talks between Portugal and Indonesia. Alatas must also be aware that it will be almost impossible to seduce Portugal to accept a settlement while the territory is closed entirely to independent visits.

The Indonesian Foreign Ministry is still pursuing the possibility of bringing a Portuguese Parliamentary delegation to East Timor during 1989. Even the partial slackening of Timor's isolation will assist Indonesia's diplomats. If Alatas can get his way, one should presumably expect even more adventurous invitations in the future.

Carrascalao

It is interesting that Governor Carrascalao — who is not a politically insignificant figure on Timorese matters — has also spoken out recently in favour of more access. Carrascalao is a protege of Beni Murdani, who recently stepped down as Chief of Staff to take on new responsibilities, and whose association with both military intelligence and East Timor is widely known. Is Carrascalao taking a more independent line? Does Murdani favour a more relaxed regime?

It is probably mistaken to derive too much. Carrascalao's stand in favour of more open government is not new: he has made annual protests against corruption, the incidence of military abuses and the need to give local Timorese more room in their own land. In his recent remarks, he again hinted that privileged minorities close to power — by which he is likely to mean the army — are blocking a decision to normalise movement in the territory. But he has said such things before.

The Economy

What is significant is his tone, which is far more confident — and also the references he has been making to Timor's economy.

Together these suggest that Carrascalao, the civilian liberalisers in the government, and perhaps some sections in the army, now believe that they can "manage" the resistance — confine it in the East and prevent visible disorder in most of the territory. Secondly, it appears that Carrascalao at least foresees a serious downturn in Timor's economy during the next year or two.

His position on these matters was summarised by *Indonesia News Service* [No. 137 of September 21 1988] which quoted from a *Tempo* reporter, Susanto Pudjomartono. "*Carrascalao is more worried about a possible big*

'crisis'. For example, racialism. Jobs are at a premium. Unrest can occur. Two weeks ago there was a demonstration, possibly the first in Dili, when some 300 lower secondary school students protested at not getting places in upper secondary schools. So it's understandable that Carrascalao is talking tougher than before."

Unequal Treatment

In the same issue, *Indonesia News Service* reports a *Tempo* interview with the Governor. It is worth quoting him at length:

"There is no reason now to keep East Timor closed. If we want to develop the area, we have to trust that the government can provide work for everyone . . . It's true that the East Timorese people are unhappy right now because of the constraints. But compared to two or three years ago, they are happier. People don't understand what can make someone happy. We're not asking for anything special, we don't need anything special. We only want a normal life. Normal in the sense of free, independent. I really know what people here feel. Integration with Indonesia is not a problem anymore. That's not the issue. They

only want equal treatment with other Indonesians... [M]ost people here feel they're not in Indonesia. The real Indonesia is good. Across the border...is the real Indonesia. And that's what everyone wants.

Excessive Security

"I think that now there is excessive security. the situation is better than people imagine. I travel at night by car to other towns. Nothing has happened to me. And nothing has happened to anyone else. Not a rock is overturned. Not a bridge is damaged, including those that it would take one minute to blow up. On Proclamation Day last week — also in the past general election — there were also no disturbances.

"Now East Timor is stagnating. The trend is for the situation to decline in the coming two or three years. We will face a crisis if problems aren't solved. And before that happens, I want to tell Jakarta. What kind of openness do I want? Openness like the other provinces, no special terminology. Opening East Timor will bring in newcomers. Competition will emerge. 'Adventurers' will also come. Now there are many newcomers, especially from South Sulawesi. They control

trade. If the East Timorese can't compete with the dominant newcomers, racial problems can arise. And that can happen in not too long a time . . .

"The people ask, why can others come here but they can't leave? People living in Jakarta can't feel this. I myself wouldn't have felt it if I hadn't listened to the people. If we just chat with them, we will hear questions like this. When we were colonised up until 1976, we could move around, but now that we're independent, why can't we move around?

"I knew that my proposal to open East Timor would cause difficulties. There are people who tell Jakarta I'm wrong. I'm 100 per cent sure they do this... Who are they? They're a still quite meaningful group who can influence the decision makers. There are also East Timorese among them, but the strongest are not East Timorese. They are those who have profited until now from a closed East Timor . . .

"I don't think this proposal will go on being rejected. Maybe there will be a postponement, for example, a year. I know I won't be the one to decide this matter. I have to be ready to hear a reply of 'Yes' or 'No'. But if I feel I can't do my job, I will ask to resign." ■

Birth Control Controversy

In previous issues of *Timor Link* we have alluded to criticism of the implementation of Indonesia's family planning policy in East Timor. [See *ETL* 3, October 1985.] After debate,, the International Association for Planned Parenthood took up the issue with its Indonesian affiliate. *Em Timor Leste a Paz é Possível* has examined the statistics that have been sent back.

It appears that ten times more is spent in East Timor compared with Indonesia on birth control per couple. There are relatively more staff in East Timor than in other regions, but these staff give fewer basic education and information courses and make many fewer visits to community leaders and families.

The figures are clearly odd — and increase rather than reduce concern when it is remembered that East Timor does not suffer from over-population, but is recovering from very severe loss of life since 1975. The population density is only about 30 people per square kilometre, whereas Java — one of the most densely populated islands in the world — supports a population of 700 per sq.km.

Depo-pro

Em Timor Leste a Paz é Possível [Issue 25, May-June 1988] drew attention to the frequent use of Depo-provera, a long-action contraceptive which is injected by a nurse rather than self-administered by the woman concerned. No less than 57% of the Timorese women currently on the official family planning programme use Depo-provera; 29% take the pill and 10% have intra-uterine devices.

Figures supplied by *Diário de Notícias* in November 1985 suggest that the proportion of women on Depo-provera in East Timor is out of all proportion. In Indonesia as a whole in 1985 only 5% of women taking contraception were administered injections, whereas 65% took the pill and 27% were fitted with a coil. [*East Timor News Monthly Memo* 15, October 12.]

Several factors may lie behind the discrepancy: one that suggests itself immediately is that East Timor is a war zone, and for Indonesian personnel working under physical risk a 'long distance, hands off' contraceptive like Depo-provera has obvious advantages. This would also explain why there are relatively fewer

family visits and perhaps also why there are more staff.

Whatever the reasoning, however, the figures need to be challenged, because there is clearly a *prima facie* case for believing that women may be vulnerable to being injected with contraceptives either unknowingly or without proper supervision. Timorese are clearly concerned themselves. The same issue of *A Paz é Possível* reported that "Information from two different camps/villages, Txauluturo and Lore II suggests that men were arrested and tortured for having protested at the birth control and declared that it amounted to a new way of exterminating the population."

The controversy blew up again in Australia at the end of October, when the new Foreign Minister, Mr Evans, asked Labour MP Mr Tony Lamb, convenor of the Australian Parliamentary East Timor Group, to provide hard evidence that birth control abuses are occurring. Forced birth control was one of the issues that were brought to Mr Lamb's attention when he visited Lisbon in June with Lord Avebury and Mr Satsuki Eda of the Japanese Diet [See *ETL* 14, July 1988]. ■

Visit by MEPs

When four members of the European Parliament visited East Timor in August last year, there was considerable controversy — not least because it was apparent that the Indonesian authorities saw the occasion as an opportunity to influence opinion in advance of the vote on East Timor in the European Parliament [See separate article in this issue]. Six months on, and in view of the Indonesian government's announcement that East Timor is to be 'opened', the visit provides an interesting example of what may lie ahead.

The four MEPs — J.L. Janssen van Raay (Netherlands), Beate Weber (West Germany), Guy Guermeur (France) and Bryan Cassidy (Britain) — travelled at the invitation of the Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament, Lt.-General Kharis Suhud, and spent three days in the territory from August 16 to 18.

The team was led by Mr van Raay, who was born in Indonesia and whose family has lived in Indonesia for generations. He had earlier visited East Timor in July-August 1987 and January 1988.

They met Governor Carrascalao, members of the local assembly, departmental chiefs in Dili, Mgr Belo — but not military commanders.

Outside Dili, they flew to Baucau, Viqueque, and Atauro. On their return, they made public a short report, which all four MEPs signed.

The Report

The report is not in itself particularly significant. Its language is emollient, and might be described (according to perception) as offensively pro-Indonesian or diplomatically appropriate, considering the fact that the delegation was hosted and funded by the Indonesian authorities.

It is nonetheless interesting. The MEPs emphasise the need to solve the Timor problem and argue that the EEC should assist Portugal, Indonesia and the UN (but not Timorese representatives) to reach a "just and equitable solution". They also recommend that Indonesia should grant East Timor a "maximum degree of autonomy".

With regard to access, the delegation said that freedom of movement within East Timor as well as the right of Timorese and Indonesians to travel within Indonesia should be restored.

They say that the Indonesian common law should apply within

Timor and that persons should have "— more precisely — the right to request civil justice in cases of ill-treatment by the authorities."

They further recommend that special units of the armed forces should be withdrawn and that the police should be responsible for law and order.

With regard to access and development, they praise Indonesia's achievements, argue that significant government expenditure on East Timor should be sustained, and that international development agencies and NGOs should be encouraged to enter and support projects in the territory.

Cutting edge

These points are, in fact, far from anodyne. There are some sharp edges — especially in view of the fact that the delegation leader is frankly supportive of Indonesia's position. Several factors no doubt influenced the approach that was taken.

First of all, the report probably reflects what a broadly conservative-leaning delegation considered European political opinion would stand for. It is significant, in this sense, to count the issues on which 'Europe' and 'Indonesia' still differ.

Secondly, the delegation's report surely mirrors the spirit of the briefings it had received from senior officials and Governor Carrascalao — many of whom feel that the time has come to ease the controls in Timor. Six months before President Suharto declared Timor 'open', the MEPs were hearing the arguments that led to that decision.

Testing experience

Most interesting of all, several incidents during the visit led the delegation to challenge the official view that was presented to them.

The first incident occurred during the delegation's flight by helicopter to Viqueque. It became apparent that the pilot was going nowhere near that town. When the MEPs challenged him, the pilot landed and it was only after strong protest that they continued the journey. In Viqueque they found far more signs of military activity than they had been led to expect.

This almost certainly led the delegation to make a rather sharper recommendation in favour of removing special units of the armed forces from the territory. The delegation was also uneasy about the visit it made to the Hotel Flamboyant — a well-known interrogation centre in Baucau. On this occasion the MEPs asked to visit the centre without prior

warning — and again, there were delays in acceding to their request. When they did arrive, the Hotel was empty except for members of a family who said they were there as part of a development project. Subsequently Mgr Belo informed two members of the delegation that abuses had occurred recently at the hotel.

Though neither of these experiences are described in detail in the report, they generated a definite sense of disquiet — even though the delegation was badly briefed and had not negotiated terms of reference permitting it easily to assert an independent view.

All those concerned about East Timor have good reason to fear the influence of a stream of such conducted tours. Yet Jakarta too has cause to be anxious. Given that this visit took place on terms that were particularly favourable to the Indonesian authorities, it fell far short of a propaganda triumph. ■

João Martins

East Timor News reported in October the death last June of Mr João Martins, who had been a leader of Apodeti and held several important posts in the Indonesian administration. At different times since 1975 he headed the secretariat of the provincial parliament, the department of education and culture, the social services department. He was also a member of the provincial parliament.

After 1980, nevertheless, Mr Martins spoke out frequently against abuses.

He died of a sudden illness which began during a ceremony organised by the Social Services department. Apparently, rumours circulating in Dili claim he was poisoned. ■

New paper

East Timor News reported on October 12 that a new weekly, *Suara Timor Timur — The Voice of Timor* — will shortly hit news stands throughout Indonesia. Its editor will be Paul J. Amalo, it will be directed towards the business world, and it has the support of the administration. The Governor, Mário Carrascalão, was quoted as saying that "this new media element will be an integral part of local government politics as a vehicle for its positions and as a way of implementing a certain social control over the population." ■

THE CHURCH INSIDE

Bishop Belo features strongly, as usual, in news about church affairs inside East Timor. He was consecrated as a bishop on June 19, and is clearly pushing ahead with programmes designed to increase the church's institutional resources. New schools, new seminaries, new churches are being planned and opened. In this issue, we are more precise about Bp. Belo's exact status — quoting at length from an interview he gave in *Asia Focus* in August — and we report reports about church-state relations.

Mgr Belo's status

In our report about Mgr. Belo's consecration [ETL 14, July 1988] we inadvertently misrepresented his exact status. He described it precisely in an interview with *Asia Focus* (August 20) which was also printed in the UCA News Dispatch No. 467 of August 17. In Mgr Belo's own words:

"I am not the bishop of the Diocese of Dili, but remain apostolic administrator. But now my apostolic authority is strengthened through episcopal consecration.

"An apostolic administrator can be a priest without episcopal consecration or a titular bishop. In the latter case, he gets a 'titulum' — or title — from another diocese. In my case, it is from Lorium diocese."

Lorium is in Lazio in Italy.

Mgr Belo also commented on the reason why a bishop was not named for Dili. *"The major factor is politics as regards East Timor," he said. "The East Timor issue is still being disputed at the United Nations, and the Vatican is carefully observing the process towards a final political solution."*

Consecration

In its headline, *Asia Focus* emphasised that Belo had accepted Indonesian integration, quoting remarks he made soon after the service of consecration. The ceremony itself was a major event, being attended by numerous senior government and church officials and some 30,000 Timorese Catholics. Its political significance to the government is also suggested by the fact that the ceremony was broadcast nationally on Indonesian television.

The words Belo used were: *"I am willing to co-operate with all concerned in developing the East Timor region as part of Indonesia."*

In speaking of Dili's diocesan relations with the Indonesian Bishop's Conference (KWI), Mgr Belo indicated, nevertheless, that no short-

term change is likely. *"If in the near future, the Vatican and local Catholics want it, certainly we would join the KWI as a full member. But till now, Dili diocese has not been looking forward to union with the KWI,"* he is reported to have said.

for example, have divided their two parishes at Baucau and Lacló into eight — and it has even been reported that before long a new diocese may be created in Baucau, to ensure that the needs of parishioners are met more adequately.



President Sukarto's wife, Madame Tien Soeharto (centre) flanked by Bishop Belo and the Governor's wife Mrs. Carrascalao, at the altar of the new Cathedral in Dili, East Timor. The Cathedral was built at a cost of over Rp 1,02 billion (about US\$ 596,491.20). The Central Government and the Armed Forces of Indonesia contributed over Rp 428,366,000 (US\$ 250,506.40) for the Cathedral. Another Rp 350 million (US\$ 204,678.40) came from the provincial government of East Timor and the remainder was from catholic/non-catholic people and organisations.

Growth of the Catholic Church

In the same interview, Mgr Belo also reported on the church's efforts to respond effectively to the rapid growth in the number of Catholics in the territory. There is a great shortage of priests. In addition to the minor seminary at Lahane (130 students in 1989) another is to be established at Bekora. There is no major seminary in East Timor, but Mgr Belo reported that 29 students are enrolled in the Malang seminary in East Java and in Flores. Lay involvement is also being encouraged: among other initiatives, the catechists' school in Baucau has been re-opened.

Elsewhere, it has been reported that the Salesians — the order to which Mgr Belo belongs — wish to re-open the Salesian college (closed by the war) and printing press.

The increase is indeed, huge. Mgr Belo reported a rise from 280,000 in 1983 to 540,000 today. This represents the great majority of the population. The demands placed on the clergy are immense. The number of parishes has been increasing faster than priests can be found to fill them. The Salesians,

The attraction of Catholicism

During his interview, Mgr Belo spoke at some length on why the Catholic church has proved so attractive. He suggested that it was *"due mainly to large-scale conversions of former adherents of local mysticism [ie animism — which used to be practised by the majority of East Timorese Eds.]. Divine works play the major role in such conversions, but sociological and pastoral factors have also helped."* Among those he cited were *"the opening of new settlement areas with good transportation to rural areas [which] helps bridge the mystic adherents to Catholic parish centres throughout East Timor"* and *"last but not least, the promotion of Pancasila."*

Pancasila, Indonesia's state ideology, enjoins everyone to profess one of five officially recognised religions — Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Protestantism or Catholicism. Why do Timorese animists choose Catholicism? Mgr Belo's answer was: *"They find that there are many similarities between Catholic rituals and their former mystic rituals. Such awareness enables us to dialogue with*

them during their preparation for baptism."

Then he went on to say something which makes little sense outside East Timor's political context: "*The East Timorese also have a strong feeling of their common identity. They regard it as their duty to defend this society — united in tradition and religion as well as in their way of life.*"

Why should animists regard Catholicism as the best way to defend tradition and religion or their way of life? It was the colonial religion under Portugal, and was certainly not the religion of the people. As in almost all his recent public statements, Mgr Belo was speaking here at several levels.

Political sensitivities

Though some recent reports suggest that his authority is no longer contested to the same degree by some of his clergy, the bishop is clearly still under great pressure. One senior church official recently described his job as "one of the most difficult offices in the Church anywhere in the world" while another priest who knows him well likened him to a man "who is damned if he speaks and damned if he does not".

The latest rumour against him, reported by an *Agence France Presse*

reporter in August, suggested that Mgr Belo had been negotiating the surrender of guerrillas against guarantees of their safety. This report was promptly queried by the former Apostolic Administrator, Mgr da Costa Lopes, and by Fr Bernard, Superior of the Portuguese Jesuits [*East Timor News*, No 8, October 12 1988], and was denied by Fretilin representatives in Lisbon and by the Timorese National Convergence.

While priests are certainly in a position to speak with people on both sides of the conflict — and many have consistently acted to protect individuals from violence and abuse — Mgr Belo is most unlikely to have got himself into a position where he would seem to be operating on behalf of the Indonesian authorities. As one knowledgeable person commented recently, it is still true that as far as Indonesian officials are concerned, "their first enemy is the Catholic Church, and their second is Fretilin." Although the Government is offering the Catholic church very large sums of money — no doubt in hope of taming its independence — observers inside continue to say that church leaders will not change their thinking and will continue to respect the feelings of the people. ■

New Timor Newsletter

If you are interested in East Timor, and particularly if you live in the Asia-Pacific region, you will be interested to know that the Social Responsibility and Justice Committee of the Uniting Church in Australia will now regularly publish news and reports about East Timor.

This initiative grew out of the Asia Pacific Consultation on East Timor held in Manila in 1987 [See ETL 12/13 of April 1988]. Readers will also remember that in 1987 the Uniting Church published an important report on East Timor. [See ETL 11, November 1987].

The first issue, titled "The Church and East Timor", came out in October 1988. It contains reports about the size of the Catholic church in East Timor, a UCAN interview with Mgr Belo, reports of conflict inside East Timor, the text of a letter to Mgr Belo from the Commission for Mission of the Uniting Church, the statement of concern made by the US Catholic Bishops in 1987 and the speech made by the Portuguese bishop Dom Manuel Martins at the Fourth Christian Consultation on East Timor in Lisbon. There are poems by Fr Francisco Fernandes and it concludes by reprinting the PGI's pamphlet *East Timor, A Bird's Eye View*, which is reviewed in this issue.

The *Church and East Timor* can be acquired from the Social Responsibility & Justice Committee, Uniting Church in Australia, 130 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000, Australia. ■

Human Rights: New Approach

In a recent report, summarised in *East Timor News* [no.14, 13 July 1988], *A Paz é Possivel em Timor Leste* has analysed human rights statistics in a fresh attempt to assess the scale of abuses.

Their approach is obviously controversial, because it departs from the well-trying methods of international human rights bodies, which rely heavily on individual cases and detailed case reports.

Because East Timor is isolated from proper inquiry, *A Paz é Possivel em Timor Leste* argue that such methods are inappropriate. The Indonesian authorities can more easily claim levels of abuse have fallen — whereas the fall may really be due to censorship and difficulties of communication.

A Paz é Possivel's method is to compile a statistical list of abuses, eliminating all instances which are obviously doubtful, but broadly trusting the information sent out

secretly by informants inside the country. Those figures are set against information which Indonesian official sources have released. The two groups of reports are then compared to produce an overall estimate.

Such a method cannot produce "proven" or provable results. (But the standard approach does no better, in many cases.) Nevertheless *A Paz é Possivel's* results are thought-provoking. If their inductions are right, and approximately one quarter of the cases of abuse in East Timor come to be reported, they calculate that in 1985 and 1986 altogether some 4,400 cases of abuse may have occurred. "This would mean that in 1985 and 1986 one Timorese in every 125 was arrested, tortured, raped, killed or disappeared'."

For further information about the analysis, contact *A Paz é Possivel em Timor Leste*, rua de Campolide 215-4d, 1000 Lisbon. ■

Eukumindo

In a previous issue [ETL 12/13, April 1988] we reviewed a report on East Timor prepared by EUKUMINDO, a federation of missionary societies and organisations in Europe which have relationships with member churches of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI).

Readers may like to know that the report, titled *East Timor — the problem of human rights violations*, is now available in English. The translation incorporates changes to the text that were introduced after discussion of the original draft in German.

It can be obtained from the British Council of Churches, Inter-Church House, Lower Marsh, London SW. ■

The Bird or the Worm?

East Timor as seen by the PGI

In January 1988, the Communion of Churches in Indonesia — representing the majority of protestant churches in the country — published for private circulation a short pamphlet titled *East Timor — A Bird's Eye View*. Interestingly, although no reference is made in the short bibliography, the new pamphlet's design and presentation strikingly resemble that of *East Timor — A Christian Reflection* which participants in the Christian Consultation on East Timor published in February 1987. [See *ETL* 9, March 1987]. Robert Archer reviews the new pamphlet below.

The Communion of Churches makes clear at the outset that its aim is to set out the Indonesian protestant churches' understanding of the East Timor issue for the benefit of churches overseas. It has done so because of the volume of requests for information. "The Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) is continuously deluged with questions in respect of East Timor, from National Councils of Churches, Churches, Christian Groups and Christian individuals abroad . . . The Member Churches of PGI themselves exclusively receive many letters questioning this issue." (p.1)

Any attempt to respond publicly on such a sensitive matter is obviously to be welcomed. It would be wrong to underestimate the extreme difficulty which the PGI faces in trying to render an account that is compatible with the values and expectations of international partners and acceptable to domestic opinion and the Indonesian government.

Nevertheless, it has to be said that *A Bird's Eye View* does not measure up to the need.

It is betrayed first of all by poor translation. To treat so delicate a matter, clear robust language is essential. Unfortunately, the English of *A Bird's Eye View* is often crude and, in some places, not clearly intelligible. This is a pity. The PGI is to be applauded for making the effort to prepare such a report, but should at least do itself and readers justice by presenting its views in a professional manner.

The pamphlet's principal fault, however, is that it fails to address the main issues. In some cases, it does not refer to them at all. In others, they are

not examined with the seriousness that is required.

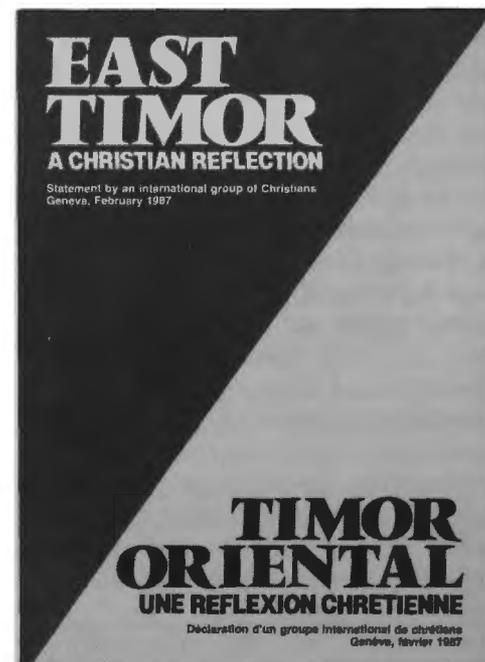
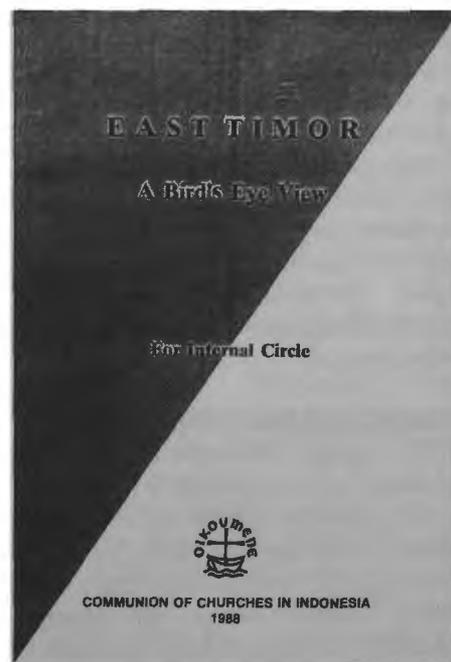
Imbalance

In effect, much of the text selects from the historical record to support a partisan view. The charge of "special pleading" is of course frequently levelled against those who criticise Indonesia's record in East Timor — and the authors of this text are also guilty of this (see p.14, p.18, pp. 19-20). We have no desire to pursue a fruitless polemic. But the PGI's case is certainly not aided by the feebleness of much of its argument — which stands, for example, no comparison with the careful descriptive history that begins the 1987 statement by the United States Council of Churches. [See *ETL* 10, July 1987.]

Later on, the PGI spends no less than six pages describing and defending its own record in East Timor. In all, just three pages in the entire pamphlet look at human rights, cultural rights and economic development during the period of Indonesian rule.

Superficiality

Even when the issue of human rights is treated, it is on the basis of superficial assumptions. There is no mention of cases, of judicial practise, of the prosecution of violators, or even provision to assist victims. The PGI merely says that the Indonesian Constitution includes clauses protecting human rights (as if Constitutions do not do so wherever they are written) and goes on to



The problem emerges most clearly from the allocation of space in the pamphlet. In the Preface, the PGI declares that "the questioned issues are not generally concerning the political legality of East Timor as the 27th Province in the Republic of Indonesia anymore but more about human right violations." *Timor Link* for one would contest this statement. But one would expect, on the basis of it, that the PGI would privilege discussion of human rights issues.

Not so. No less than half the main text (12 of 24 pages) is devoted to a detailed description of events before 1976. Just one paragraph on page 18 examines human rights explicitly.

conclude: "*The main attention of the Indonesia Government and community, including the government and community in East Timor should be paid to the immediate settlement of transitional issues as commonly found in all nations, frequently not free from various types of conflict and tension. Such effort together with greater improvement will diminish transitional problems and eventually eliminate the accusation of human rights violations.*" (p.18)

These two sentences are almost empty of meaning. They will certainly not allay international concern about the widespread, gross and unpunished violations of human rights that have

been consistently reported from East Timor since 1975.

Nowhere in the text is sympathy expressed for the sufferings of individual East Timorese families as a result of government or military abuses. Only once, in one sentence on page 20, does the PGI appear to concede that any such violences have occurred. The sentence concerned is at the end of a paragraph in which Western human rights organisations are roundly condemned for Eurocentrism and the Indonesian government praised (albeit faintly) for its record. *"The attention of the Indonesian government towards the dignity of East Timor is significantly bigger than that of the Portuguese colonial government. However this does not mean that violation against human rights or unjust treatments did not take place at all."* (p.20)

Blind spots

Three central blind spots are apparent in *A Bird's Eye View*. They are not new and, while they remain, a dialogue between the PGI and its international contacts in the churches will continue to be difficult.

The first is a persistent tendency to identify church with state, and conflate the concepts of government, nation and people. This is one of the main reasons why the pamphlet so often speaks with vague generality. Here is a particularly evident example: *"The outside world frequently forgets that the most apprehensive group in relation to human rights and justice including the issue of East Timor is the church. Churches and Christian people are an integral part of the nation and therefore should be fully responsive to the community, people and state in Indonesia. The Indonesian nation is a nation loving peace and freedom including human rights and justice is (sic) manifested in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, stating that . . ." etc.* It is perfectly possible to distinguish the church's obligations and moral responsibilities from those of the state, without impugning the latter's sovereignty. While the PGI fails to do this, it cannot meaningfully dialogue with other churches, which take such distinctions for granted.

Bird's View

Secondly, and in this the PGI again follows a pattern set by the Indonesian government, *A Bird's Eye View* frequently assumes that economic development either is productive of justice or will create conditions under which justice will be achieved.

Rather simplifying the argument,

the PGI implies that East Timor is backward because of colonial rule, is resistant to the discipline necessary to economic modernisation because it is backward and will achieve harmonious integration with Indonesia when it has 'caught up' with the rest of that country.

This view, which is certainly prevalent within the Indonesian government, is repugnant to most Timorese, who find it offensively condescending.

It is also an approach which is profoundly at odds with the basic assumptions underlying the thinking and practise of most church development agencies and independent NGOs. These consider that 'economic development' should not be imposed from above or from outside but must involve the participation of local communities. Imposed development has been found to be both destructive of communities and economically ineffective. Here again, the PGI's conflation of church, state, people and community is exceptionally unhelpful.

The pamphlet refers — with justifiable pride — to the unifying value of possessing a single language and the non-discriminatory language of the constitution's political ideals. But one cannot conclude that the rights and individualities of minorities are being respected in practise because the constitution is free from discriminatory language, any more than one can say that the presence of clauses protecting human rights ensures that people in East Timor are never abused.

What about the Worm?

The six pages devoted to the PGI's own work refer repeatedly to the PGI's contribution in aid and financial support. It is implied that this is what the people of East Timor really want.

This simply cannot be assumed, however. It is precisely because no-one knows what the people of East Timor want that the churches abroad are so concerned. While nobody would claim that aid and financial assistance is not necessary or helpful, they do distinguish between the fundamental aspirations of Timor's people and their standard of living. The defence of PGI's record that is presented in *A Bird's Eye View* is greatly weakened by the absence of such a distinction.

And this is the third and fundamental blind spot. Nowhere is the voice of East Timor given a place. Nowhere is it intimated that the PGI — or indeed the Indonesian government — may not speak in a fully representative way for East Timor's people.

Fundamental issue

Yet this is the fundamental political issue, the difference of perception that lies at the heart, not only of the international controversy surrounding East Timor, but of the war itself. Reading this pamphlet, it remains painful to realize that after 13 years of disaster and suffering, the PGI can still demonstrate such basic insensitivity to the experience and feelings of the Timorese themselves. It speaks volumes about the ground that has still to be covered before any resolution will become possible.

Conclusion

"The snapshot of events already illustrated above will indicate that the East Timor community through various suffering and struggles have found their identity as an integral part of the Indonesian nation and communities. For the Indonesian people and state the issue of East Timor has been settled. It is the task of all parties including the churches in Indonesia to develop the community and people of East Timor leading to a just, prosperous, preserved as well as advanced community in a Pancasila state.

The people of East Timor in the midst of the diversity of Indonesian people will constantly maintain their identity, typical character in the course of Indonesian nation and community on the whole in entering a better common future."

A Bird's Eye View concludes with this string of 'idealisms' which, like the rest of the pamphlet, beg most of the major questions. It must be hoped that reaction to this document will not be too negative, and that the PGI will be encouraged to prepare a more substantial presentation of its views. A document that had more intellectual and moral weight might indeed carry dialogue forward. Until then, the PGI's candid request in the Preface should have little impact:

"PGI shall be grateful as the international ecumenical agencies such as World Council of Churches (WCC), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), as well as Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) do not make any statement on this matter before obtaining any complete information from PGI." ■

Decolonisation Committee

Hearings on East Timor took place as usual this year, and once again a sizable contingent of speakers came to New York to put their views. In all, 21 petitioners spoke at the Hearing.

One highlight was the contribution by Bishop Patelisio Finau, from Tonga, representing the Pacific Council of Churches. He spoke not merely with the moral commitment of his church, but as a citizen of another small, but independent island able to identify with the frustrated aspirations of Timor's people.

Papua New Guinea's Catholic Justice & Peace Commission was also represented, by Martin Enda

In addition to the diplomats who spoke on behalf of their governments, other speakers included three Portuguese parliamentarians, a member of the Japanese Diet, an Australian MP, two representatives of the Timorese Convergence — Rocque Rodrigues from Fretilin, and Moises do Amaral from the UDT — and members of human rights and solidarity organisations in Portugal, France, West Germany, Holland, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and the UK.

General Assembly

On October 5, the Portuguese Foreign Minister J. de Deus Pinheiro spoke strongly on the East Timor issue in the General Assembly. His conviction was in marked contrast to Portugal's supine performance in past years.

Addressing one of the principal charges laid against it by the Indonesian government, namely that Portugal was responsible for the disorder in Timor in 1974-75, Mr Pinheiro was refreshingly clear:

"Portugal does not reject its share of responsibility for the difficulties and troubles which affected [the decolonisation] process in its beginnings, but we cannot under any circumstances accept that such events legitimise the invasion and occupation by Indonesia and the subsequent denial of the fundamental rights and freedoms of its people, above all their inalienable right to self-determination, since no circumstances can justify the relentless repression in the territory, with its intolerable toll in human life and suffering over the last 13 years. [. . .]

"Portugal, I repeat once again, has no design whatsoever on sovereignty over the territory of East Timor. We want self-determination for East Timor

and cannot understand the reason why the occupying power, which constantly invokes the benefits which its 'administration' has brought to the well-being of its inhabitants, fears subjecting itself to the result of a free act of self-determination. If . . . their hearts have been conquered, why fear the expression of the will of the people?"

For the sixth year running, no resolution was tabled.

[Source: *East Timor News*, 16, October 5 1988; *Tapol Bulletin*, 90, December 1988.]

Secretary General's report

This year Mr Perez de Cuellar's annual report on East Timor dealt mainly with the proposal to send a Portuguese parliamentary delegation to the territory, invited by the Indonesian parliament. [See ETL 12/13, April 1988 and 14, July 1988.]

Mr de Cuellar states that the visit has been accepted in principle by both sides and that it remains to draw up "mutually acceptable terms of reference." Earlier, during a visit to Lisbon in September, Mr de Cuellar said he was in favour of the visit going ahead, because it would increase the amount of information on East Timor available to the Portuguese public. [East Timor News, 16, September 1988.]

Negotiations regarding the conditions of any visit are likely to start early in 1989 in New York. There is now thought to be a real chance that a visit will eventually go ahead. *A Paz é Possivel em Timor Leste* [No.26-7, July-October 1988] has reported some of the conditions (not so far made public) that the Portuguese parliament has set. Among other things, the Portuguese Parliament has apparently made clear that its delegation would affirm the right to self-determination of East Timor's people, and would wish to go directly to East Timor (and will not visit Indonesia). The exact conditions of the trip will be negotiated, but Portugal is expected to ask for a long visit, complete freedom of movement, and access to the resistance movement. They are expected to invite journalists and to ask for a UN representative to accompany the delegation.

EEC

As reported [ET Link 14, July 1988] the EEC reached a common position

on East Timor earlier this year and this was put forward to the UN Third Committee during November, in the following terms:

"Concerning the situation of human rights in East Timor, the Twelve remain disturbed at the continuing information on violations provided by different sources, including the victims who testified before the Commission on Human Rights and Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and protection of Minorities. We express the hope that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of East Timor will be rapidly restored and fully ensured." ■

NAM Says No

Indonesia withdrew as a candidate for the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in September when it became clear that it would not win in an election.

President Suharto is believed to have been keen to mark the last years of his rule with international recognition, but once again East Timor stood in Indonesia's way. Though opposition was led by the Portuguese speaking countries of Africa, as in previous years they had the sympathetic ear of many members.

Nicaragua, another contender, was also sidelined and the choice fell upon the compromise candidate, Yugoslavia. ■

Brazil

East Timor News reports (issue 16, No 9, 1988) that Brazil has shifted its diplomatic position on East Timor. Brazil's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Abreu Sodré, speaking in a press conference in Lisbon, declared that Brazil had abandoned its neutral position on the issue, and was "prepared to help" Portuguese diplomacy in resolving the problem. ■

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTES ON ET

On September 16, the European Parliament voted strongly in favour of a resolution critical of Indonesia's record in East Timor, and supportive of East Timor's right to self-determination. The vote marks a new level of interest in the issue, following the report prepared by Ien van den Heuvel [see *ET Link* 12/13, April 1988]. It is significant above all, however, because Indonesia lobbied very heavily before the vote (as did a number of European NGOs on the other side). The final tally — 164 votes in favour of the resolution, 12 against and 15 abstentions — constitutes a real snub to Indonesian diplomacy, which was probably counter-productive in seeking to exploit the findings of a recent visit to East Timor by four MEPs [see elsewhere in this issue].

Tapol, which was among the most active NGOs during the run-up to the debate, reproduces most of the Resolution in its issue of December 1988 [Number 90]. We quote below from sections that call for specific action to be taken by members of the European Community.

The European Parliament:

9. *Calls on the member States of the European Community to undertake political action with a view to securing a withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor, as an essential precondition for ensuring respect for the fundamental rights of the people and for the exercise of their right to self-determination, including the right to independence, and to support the efforts of the UN Secretary General aimed at achieving these objectives;*

11. *Calls on all governments in the Community to halt the sale of military equipment to Indonesia until the illegal occupation of East Timor is brought to an end;*

12. *Requests the Council [of Ministers] to take measures aimed at reaching an agreement of cease fire and enabling a referendum to be held after a transitional period, to be defined by the interested parties, with the people being allowed freedom of choice on the future of East Timor;*

14. *Urges the [EEC] Foreign Ministers meeting in European political co-operation to maintain a concerted diplomatic action in order to guarantee the exercise of the right of the people*

of East Timor to self-determination and to establish contact with all parties involved in the conflict, including representatives of the East Timor community, and to report to parliament on the progress of its initiatives;

15. *Calls on all the EEC institutions to bear in mind the present colonial situation in East Timor and the terms of this resolution, when considering relations between the EEC and the ASEAN countries;*

16. *Requests the Commission to take account of the situation in East Timor in its contacts with the Indonesian authorities;*

17. *Urges the Commission, in cooperation with the Portuguese authorities and international competent aid organisations, to grant adequate and direct aid both in East Timor and in the refugee camps in Portugal and Australia;*

18. *Requests the Commission to give a progress report within six months;*

19. *Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, UN organisations, the conference of non-aligned nations, the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Australia. ■*

US Senate and Congress: 229 Sign Again

As the United States' government makes its transition from Reagan to Bush, two politicians who have long been concerned about US policy towards East Timor circulated new letters for signature among their colleagues. From small beginnings, Senator David Durenburger and Representative Tony Hall have watched support for their views grow steadily. No less than 47 US Senators and 182 Representatives from both major parties signed their most recent letters, which are a timely warning to the incoming administration that East Timor remains a live political issue.

Both letters expressed concern about torture in outlying areas of East Timor, the Catholic clergy's lack of freedom of expression, the continuing military conflict, food shortages and the Indonesian government's refusal to grant humanitarian and human

rights organisations full access to the territory.

US responsibility

The Senators' letter went on:

"In the past, some of us have called for a peaceful resolution of the East Timor conflict that recognises the interests of all parties. In recent months, there have been signs in various parts of the world that seemingly intractable conflicts need not remain so indefinitely. We believe that the United States could help bring the parties involved in the East Timor conflict to the negotiating table to begin a process that could end this 13-year tragedy. We hope that the United States, whether directly or indirectly, will agree to play such a role in the interests of peace and stability in that part of the world."

The Representatives' letter also emphasised the signatories' belief

"that the United States should work with Indonesia, Portugal, and other interested participants to help facilitate a peaceful and just solution to the conflict in East Timor... We support strong and friendly relations with Indonesia. It is our belief that these ties will be strengthened by prompt attention to the humanitarian and human rights problems of East Timor, as well as by negotiated efforts to secure an authentic peace for the territory."

Both letters were addressed to George Schultz, the outgoing Secretary of State, but on their release Senator David Durenburger emphasised that "by sending this letter now, my colleagues and I want to ensure that the East Timor tragedy receives increased attention, both from the Reagan Administration and its successor." ■

PET: Membership Drive

Parliamentarians for East Timor, founded last June by Lord Avebury (UK), Satsuki Eda (Japan) and Tony Lamb (Australia) [see *ET Link* 14, July 1988] has started to sign up members.

It is understood that many MPs in Australia and Japan will join because those countries have already formed parliamentary caucuses, to which Tony Lamb and Satsuki Eda belong, in support of East Timor's cause.

Many Portuguese parliamentarians are also expected to join and letters inviting support have been sent to MPs in all the EEC countries.

Membership is open to all parliamentarians who subscribe to the founding statement of the group: this can be sent to any parliamentarians or to interested individuals who write to:

Parliamentarians for East Timor
244 Upper Street
London N1 1RU, UK. ■

Philippines

Two Timorese women, Lurdes Pereira and Isabel Guterres, visited the Philippines over the summer period.

Isabel Guterres participated in the CCA Youth Conference in June. East Timor was discussed and it was agreed to initiate further activities on the issue during the next year.

One hope was to organise local meetings in Asian countries, with the aim of raising awareness in the region.

PNG

A start is already being made in PNG, where in August Christians organised a seminar on the issue as a follow-up to the meeting held in Manila last November [See *ET Link* 12/13, April 1988].

New York

Those who spoke at the UN Decolonisation Hearings in August — including a representative from PNG — met afterwards to share experiences and plan work ahead.

The initiative to form PET (Parliamentarians for East Timor — see elsewhere in this issue) was applauded at this meeting, which saw

great opportunities in an effective international network of parliamentarians.

Australia

Predictably, however, PET's appearance has not gone unresisted. Tony Lamb was cornered by the Australian government on his return and challenged to produce documentary proof of reports that children had been poisoned in an East Timorese hospital. The report was referred to by PET following interviews with Timorese refugees in Lisbon, and it is virtually impossible to confirm.

Once again, however, it meant that the visit to Indonesia of the new Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, was surrounded by controversy.

In October, Fretilin representative Rocque Rodrigues toured Australia.

While he was there a large meeting for the Timorese community in Australia was held in Sidney, on October 14. Some 200 people attended, including João Carrascalao from UDT and José Ramos Horta from Fretilin. The Portuguese Ambassador to Australia, José Luis Gomes, was a guest. ■

TIMOR GAP: PORTUGAL PROTESTS

Attempts by Australia and Indonesia to demarcate the undersea boundary line between East Timor and the Australian coast have long been controversial. The sea bed at issue is believed to contain very sizeable reserves of oil, and both governments have negotiated keenly. In addition, their negotiations are illegal. They assume Jakarta and Canberra have an established claim whereas in fact much of the seabed concerned belongs to East Timor. This territory is not only in dispute but, under international law, is under Portuguese administration. Recent developments indicate that Lisbon may be ready to "go to court" over Australian and Indonesian attempts to secure Timor's mineral wealth.

At the beginning of September, after nine years of discussion, the Australian and Indonesian governments announced that they had reached an interim agreement to set up a 'zone of co-operation' covering the Timor Gap. It provides the

framework under which petroleum and mineral exploration companies will be able to prospect and exploit mineral and oil reserves.

The area is believed to be rich in oil.

According to a report in *Tapol Bulletin* (No.90, December 1988) the contested area has been subdivided into three sections. The most promising central area will be worked jointly, while adjoining areas to north and south are respectively attached to Indonesia and Australia, which have engaged to pay each other a proportion of the revenue that may accrue.

Formally at least, it is still an interim arrangement. According to *East Timor News* (October 5 1988), quoting Australian reports, the Australian and Indonesian Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Natural Resources consider the agreement to be "*the best way of ensuring that both countries share in the exploitation of potential resources in the region, until it is possible to mark out, in a permanent*

way, the limits on the sea bed." The agreement was also described as diplomatically significant, marking a closer relationship between the two countries.

Portuguese reaction

The Portuguese government reacted sharply. The Portuguese Ambassador in Canberra released a statement stating that Australia's approval of the agreement "would constitute clear disrespect for international law". Reminding the Australian government that "Portugal is the internationally recognised administering power" over the territory concerned, the note stated that Portugal would take appropriate action in accordance with international law "in defence of the legitimate interests in question".

Fretilin and UDT offices in Australia also repudiated the agreement. They said Australia and Indonesia have no right to negotiate "what is not theirs". [*East Timor News* 5 October 1988.] ■

Mgr Belo Condemns Ill-treatment

On December 10, Mgr Belo issued a Statement which, he said, "should be read in Church after the sermon and studied and discussed." He criticised the religious practices of certain sects in East Timor, some of which — like the Association of St. Anthony — are also linked to anti-Indonesian activity. Members of these groups were among the hundreds arrested by the Indonesian security services before President Suharto visited in November. Mgr Belo said that such groups "turn their spirit towards God but falsify true religious feeling by useless and superficial practices."

He then condemned the ill treatment of those detained in extremely forceful language.

"Before and after the visit of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, General Suharto, many people were

taken away for interrogation. After these interrogations some were detained and others, as well as being detained, were slapped, beaten and tortured. As a matter of principle, when a person is suspected of a crime, they are summoned and interrogated according to law. However, it is no longer normal when the interrogation is preceded or accompanied by slaps, kicks and beatings. This procedure, which has become normal in Timor, is a procedure reprehensible under civilised law and Christian morality. We hereby make known our dissent from this abuse of the fundamental rights of the person and the dignity of people as men and women. We do not agree with this barbarous system and we condemn the lying propaganda which claims that there is no abuse of human rights in Timor."■

Solidarity Meeting

The next meeting of East Timor solidarity groups will take place on February 11 and 12 1989 in

Copenhagen.

It will be hosted by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).

For further information, contact Andrew Gray, the IWGIA, Fiolstraede 10, DK 1171 Copenhagen K, Denmark (Tel: 01 12 47 24).■

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Notices

We apologise to our readers for the uneven delivery of *East Timor Link* during the past year.

We will try to ensure that issues appear more regularly in 1989.

We would also like to thank all those who answered our request for information about what they liked and did not like about the newsletter. You said some very nice things. And almost all of you asked . . . for more photographs.

We would love to include more illustrations. Around the world, many people must have pictures of Timor — from before 1975 and afterwards. If you have any, please send them, marking clearly the date on which they were taken and, where possible, the location. If you wish to be credited say so. Please do not send any original prints of which you have no copy: we cannot return them.

Black and white prints are preferred. Thank you in advance!

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If you do not want to receive further issues of *East Timor Link* please let us know. You will help to reduce our costs and protect yourself from the irritation of receiving unwanted mail.

East Timor Link would like to wish all its readers — especially all those in East Timor — a new year full of hope.■