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Religion and resistance

The Indonesian authorities ascribe the recent wave of rioting in East Timor to 'religious tensions', rather than the impact of their own policies. CIIR's Asia desk officer, CATHERINE SCOTT, reports from Dili on the deeper roots of unrest.

It was horrible,' said Eko. 'They burned the market down and the traders could no longer sell anything. Some of them did not eat for three days'. Eko, an Indonesian immigrant, works as a waiter in the Timorese capital Dili. He came to the territory five years ago, like many of his compatriots, looking for work. Unlike many of them, he respects the East Timorese.

But Eko lives in fear in an increasingly volatile political climate. September saw another wave of what the Indonesian regime misleadingly describes as 'religious tensions'.

Eko was referring to the 9 September torching by East Timorese of Komoro market in Dili, where many recent immigrants from Bali, Java and Sulawesi scrape a living. The trouble flared up after an Indonesian Muslim prison warder in Maliana jail made insulting remarks about Catholicism. When the East Timorese governor ignored the protests of prisoners and Catholic warders, riots spread from Maliana to the towns of Same, Baucau, Manatutu, Viqueque, Watolari and Dili. Rioting youths were met with tear gas and gunfire, and scores were arrested, leading to fears of torture. East Timorese also turned their aggression on Indonesian migrants and shopkeepers, and in Watolari a mosque and a



No place to stay? Burnt out hotel used by Indonesian immigrants, Baucau, East Timor.

Protestant church were burnt down.

This outburst is the latest in a long line. The Indonesian government's policy of encouraging Indonesians from other islands to settle on Timor has contributed to the marginalisation of the East Timorese. Migrants now account for

up to one-fifth of the population. Since the 1975 invasion, the Indonesian military has taken over business – it now controls the coffee and coconut trades, for example – and 'foreigners' have come in and taken the best jobs. Add to that the forced resettlement programmes which

Summary

In September, East Timorese frustration with 20 years of subjection and marginalisation boiled over into protests and riots in the capital, Dili, and other major towns. The anger was directed at the occupying forces – soldiers and police – and also at immigrants from Indonesia who now dominate the Timorese economy. The disturbances, assessed as more serious than those which accompanied the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit a year ago, continued throughout September and October. The Indonesian authorities responded with tear gas, gunfire, and hundreds of arrests during and after the

rioting. In the days leading up to 12 November, the territory became increasingly off-limits to foreign visitors, as the authorities attempted to prevent commemorative actions on the fourth anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre.

This issue of *Timor Link* brings eyewitness accounts of these events, and analyses their significance. We also report on developments in the United Nations. Father Pat Smythe gives his impressions of the Catholic church in East Timor, and we reprint an appeal to the Beijing UN women's conference from the women of East Timor's clandestine resistance.

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have separated countless families from their ancestral lands, the imposition of the language of Bahasa Indonesia and the presence of up to 14 battalions of Indonesian troops, and the roots of East Timorese resentment become clearer.

Indonesian bishops speak out

The Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference (KWI), which has not accepted Indonesia's annexation of East Timor, attributes the trouble to 'a deeper feeling of frustration, disappointment and hopelessness. Many East Timorese feel as if they are being marginalised in their own home.

'There are many deep wounds and traumatic experiences that have made the local population quickly suspicious of all migrants, especially when they see more and more migrants arriving and turning into competitors in the labour market,' says the KWI, which is separate from the East Timorese Catholic church.

The latest round of rioting has provoked a backlash from Indonesian Muslims. More than 1,000 Indonesian migrants decided to leave the territory this time, fearing for their lives, and returned to Javanese cities with tales of persecution. There is now a move among Muslim intellectuals to identify the Indonesian migrant community in East Timor as a disadvantaged minority.

Amien Rais, chairman of Muhammadiyah, a progressive mass-based Islamic organisation with more than 15 million members, says the Islamic community has been too patient. Blaming the unrest on an 'international NGO mafia and mischief makers', he has called for Indonesia to take a tougher line over the Timorese question.

Bishop Carlos Belo of Dili, longstanding defender of his people against aggression and

false accusations on the part of the military, reacted angrily to the latest unrest. Interviewed by *Radio Australia* on 11 September, he said: 'We have been very patient for too long. From 1976, we have been told to wait a little longer. This slogan has no roots, no beginning and no end. For how long does one have to be patient? The Timorese people are treated like chickens and ducks, shoo them here, shoo them there. Policies must be changed'.

The bishop was particularly angry because he had responded to a request from the military to calm the youths and urge them to go home. The military had promised him they would take no further action, but once the youths had gone home, the military arrived to arrest them. Many were tortured and beaten.

As leader of the Catholic community – more than 90 per cent of the East Timorese population – Bishop Belo commands far more respect than any military or civilian figure, and plays a crucial role in attempts at dialogue. The bishop has called for East Timor to be designated a 'Catholic region' – a remark which caused controversy and which he later clarified as meaning a region where Catholicism is predominant but does not exclude Muslims and Protestants. (see interview, page 4)

There will be no progress if the Indonesian government persists in explaining the East Timorese problem as one of religion. And yet with apparently 'religious' clashes breaking out, it will get easier for the regime to do just that. Already, some outside observers are assuming religious conflict to be the source of the East Timorese problem. Yet the violence stems from their rejection of 20 years of Indonesian occupation and aggression, of suffocating interference, physical and mental humiliation, and cultural alienation. ■

crystal clear by what happened at the end of the meeting in Austria [dialogue between East Timorese representing pro-independence and pro-integrationist opinion in June 1995 – see *Timor Link* 33]. All the Timorese present gathered unanimously around their bishop and signed for unity and peace. However, neither the Indonesian government and nor its army want peace. What they want is war.

The government is not interested in peace. It had to encourage disunity and continue the war. That is what is happening now. The events of the past few days have led the older people to remind the younger ones about the destruction of the massacres perpetrated by the very same Indonesian army, in the neighbourhoods, streets and homes throughout Dili from 7 December 1975.

Memories have started flooding back to us of the piles of bodies that stretched along the beach at Lecidere and Tasi Tolu, scene of huge massacres after 1975. Lorry loads of prisoners taken from Balide district and from torture centres in Vila Verde and Santayo were taken to those lakes where the Indonesian army summarily executed hundreds of Timorese men and women.

People said at the time that the waters of Tasi Tolu had turned red. Everything the Timorese feared from the start is beginning to come true: the Indonesian government and army came to Timor to exterminate it.

The people feel that no high-ranking person in the administration is concerned about the real interests of the population.

Here are some recent clear examples: the continuation of systematic sterilisation of Timorese women; the sending of 2,000 new Timorese civil servants, after a short training period, to villages around Java. Many of them are young single girls, aged between 20 to 30. At the same time, however, 2,000 Indonesian civil servants are about to arrive in Timor, like an invading administrative army. This is why the people believe that nobody is concerned about, or capable of, defending their interests.

Meanwhile, additional military forces are disembarking in Timor. Four days ago, we saw four large vessels unloading Indonesian troops.

Furthermore, the Indonesian army has just recruited and quickly trained 2,000 young Timorese, mostly illiterate and apathetic, to be sent to the front of the Indonesian battalions who are hunting the resistance commander in the bush.

Many people here are longing for a UN Security Council decision to send a multinational force, under UN control, to Timor in order to put an end to the banditry of the Indonesian army which, for the past 20 years, has been destroying an entire nation and its culture, while insensitive and irresponsible neighbouring governments have looked on. Please, do not minimise the significance of the heroic protests of our young people. They are the expression of the long resistance of a people who have endured for 20 years an oppressor and unjust invader, many times more powerful than themselves. ■

Eyewitness account

This report on military action in Dili on 12 October was first published on 14 October in the Portuguese newspaper *Publico*. The newspaper could not reveal the name of the source, who is a leading figure in East Timor.

This afternoon, Indonesian forces of occupation unleashed new violence on the civilian population, and particularly upon our young people.

They started by throwing gas canisters, and then opening fire with their automatic weapons and stoning houses.

They went on to force their way into people's homes and, with total contempt and using unrestrained violence, they tortured the families they found inside. People were later taken to what was formerly the hospital in Lahane. It is now

occupied by Indonesian troops. Just yesterday and today more than 40 seriously injured people were taken there, and it is now known that some people were simply murdered in their homes during the raids. This time, one of the military's victims was one of their collaborators, Aleixo Cobra, who used to work for them as an agent provocateur among young people.

Many of the local people, who feel like animals waiting to be slaughtered by the Indonesians, are appealing to the international community. The Indonesians are turning Timor into a hunting ground for human beings.

Destroying hopes of peace

According to the local Indonesian newspaper *STT*, the person responsible for today's bloody operation was the present governor, Abilio Soares, as he is reported to have requested it.

People here are saying that another reason for this violence is that Indonesian leaders want to aggravate the situation in Timor with bloody confrontation, and to weaken the prestige of Bishop Belo. It is as if they are saying sarcastically 'just look at the kind of peace the bishop has arranged'. The truth is that the bishop and the people really do want peace. This was made

A 'second invasion'

This report is from a young couple whose visit to East Timor in September coincided with the recent demonstrations.

A hundred or more young people have been arrested in Dili alone. Independent sources agree that severe beating and torture of detainees is routine. For instance, in the police station next to the main market place in Dili, about 30 young people of both sexes were held from 8 to 11 September, stripped naked, beaten and tortured. A young man who said he had been there had black and blue marks and dried blood on his face.

We saw some with head wounds. One observer said many of those detained had cuts in their faces and broken teeth. Another said: 'Every kind of torture is taking place now. There is no minimum standard of respect for human rights.'

Parents anxiously searching for their children in prisons or hospitals were given no information after days of waiting.

The situation appears to have calmed down, but Bishop Belo said on 18 September that he had received fresh reports of after-midnight arrests of young people. The *Jakarta Post* of 16 September reported claims by the regional military command that they are open to dialogue with East Timorese young people. Bishop Belo said he saw no evidence of this.

Military presence

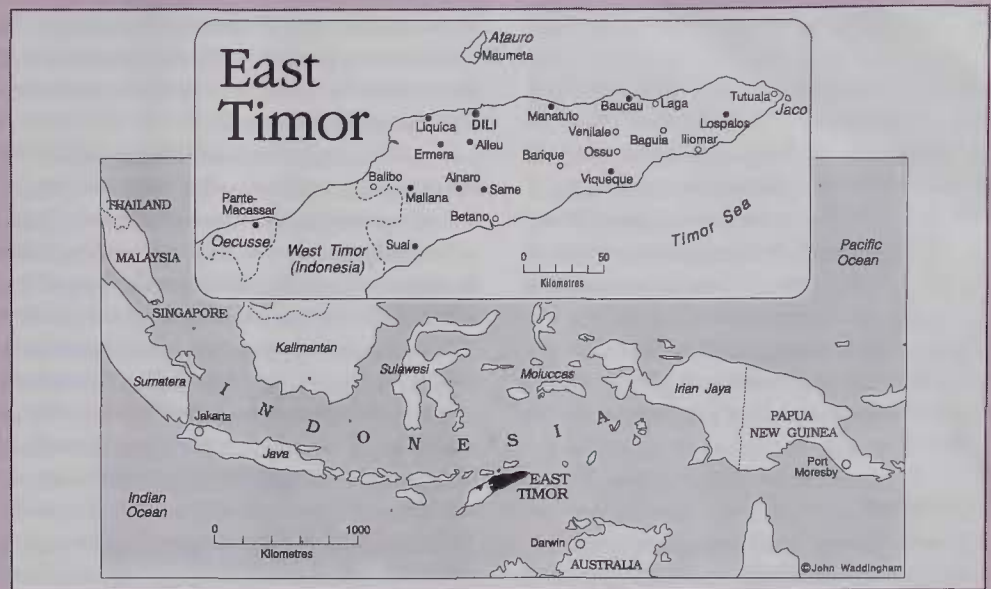
The security presence is pervasive. Truck after truck of heavily armed elite police mobile brigades moved into Dili from the night of 7 September. We saw numerous truckloads of police on 8 September, when tear gas was used to disperse demonstrators in the Becora area.

We saw plainclothes military units armed with machine guns in the back of otherwise empty military trucks near sundown, on 9 September, the day of the worst troubles when Komoro market was set ablaze and tyres were burnt throughout the city. On 10 September the town was virtually shut down, but truckloads of police were still in evidence; about an hour before dark, there was an army truck by the waterfront loaded with uniformed troops, with several wearing ski masks – despite the steamy heat.

Local observers say that military units are often disguised in jogging outfits.

Although many news reports have stressed religious and ethnic factors behind the current upheaval, it is clear that these factors are only the tip of the iceberg, as Bishop Belo and other authoritative observers have emphasised.

They point out the overwhelming economic dominance of traders and other migrants from Indonesia, coupled with the repressive military and police presence and the weight of East Timor's tragic history over the past 20 years. These factors have combined to marginalise



EAST TIMOR: Time for change

Timor, area 7,400 square miles, is one of the easternmost islands of the Indonesian archipelago and lies 300 miles north of Australia, its nearest neighbour. The western part of the island, formerly a Dutch colony, belongs to Indonesia, whereas East Timor was for more than 400 years a Portuguese colony.

In 1974 Portugal decolonised East Timor, whose newly formed political parties began discussing options for the future – federation with Portugal, independence, or integration with Indonesia. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) initially favoured the first option but then joined a coalition with the nationalist liberation movement, Fretilin, to demand independence. A small third party, Apodeti, was used as a vehicle for Indonesian propaganda in favour of integration.

On 11 August 1975 the UDT staged a coup to pre-empt Indonesian threats to intervene if Fretilin came to power. In the ensuing civil war, 1,500 people lost their lives. By September 1975, however, Fretilin was in control of virtually all of Portuguese Timor, following the defection of Timorese colonial troops to the liberation movement's side.

Indonesia, like the United States, was worried by the proximity of an independent state with radical policies and continued to threaten East Timor, despite previous assurances that Jakarta would respect the right of the East Timorese to independence. In September 1975 Indonesia closed West Timor to journalists and on 7 December it launched a full-scale invasion of East Timor with the knowledge of the United States and the encouragement of Australia. East Timor was proclaimed the '27th province' of Indonesia.

The invasion and annexation of East Timor has been brutal: up to 200,000 people, a third of the population, have died as a result of Indonesian rule. But the majority of Timorese have not accepted subjugation: Indonesia has been unable to eliminate the desire of the East Timorese for self-determi-

nation and an armed resistance movement still remains in the hills.

Although the invasion has been condemned by successive UN resolutions, the international community has done little or nothing to implement them, given the major economic and geopolitical interests of the United States, Japan and particularly Australia in the region. Indonesia's crucial strategic location and regional status – it has the world's fifth largest population, and large reserves of oil and other natural resources – have all encouraged the world to downplay East Timor's agony.

In recent years, however, several events have combined to break East Timor's isolation and bring its continued occupation to international attention. In 1989 the Pope visited the territory and in 1991 the planned visit of a parliamentary delegation from Portugal, still considered the administering authority of East Timor by the UN, created huge expectations of change. To great disappointment in East Timor, the delegation was forced in October 1991 to call off its visit.

On 12 November 1991 Indonesian troops shot and killed up to 300 East Timorese civilians during a funeral procession held at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the East Timorese capital, for a victim of repression. Witnessed by foreign journalists, the Santa Cruz massacre provided indisputable evidence of Indonesian atrocities.

The Santa Cruz massacre has forced governments around the world to criticise Indonesia's brutality, injecting new impetus into diplomatic efforts to bring about a solution to East Timor's suffering. Since 1983 the UN Secretary-General has been entrusted with the achievement of a settlement to the dispute; and with the post-Cold War era providing a new international climate for negotiations, Indonesia faces increased pressure to reach a solution with Portugal and the East Timorese under the auspices of the UN.

the majority of East Timorese socially and economically. Together with physical repression, they are central to the current problems. 'The true perspective on the events of the past days', said one observer in Dili, 'is that the East Timorese people do not accept the status quo' of the Indonesian occupation.

The issue of the Indonesian migrants was repeatedly underscored. One observer likened it to a 'second invasion' of East Timor and said that the recent disturbances were like an 'organic reaction to something foreign entering the body'. There are demands for international pressure to stop the entry of transmigrants into East Timor.

Manipulation

At the same time, several local experts say that elements within the Indonesian military and

security apparatus have exploited the widely reported religious incidents. These are said to stem from an insulting remark about the Virgin Mary made by a prison official in the town of Maliana in early September.

In public, the Indonesian military is appealing for calm and tolerance. But there are reports that government officials have been printing and distributing leaflets throughout East Timor that repeat the Maliana insult to the Virgin Mary.

The motive for provoking religious incidents is that they justify the continuing Indonesian military presence and give security forces the excuse they need to crack down on the opposition. Indeed, after the disturbances of 8-11 September, 2,000 fresh Indonesian troops were flown in from Surabaya, thereby contradicting official Indonesian claims that troops are being withdrawn. ■

Bishop Belo calls for dialogue

The following is an abridged version of an interview with Bishop Belo which appeared in the Indonesian weekly magazine *Gatra* on 21 September.

What do you think about the recent unrest in East Timor?

You should direct that question to the governor, the chairman of the local assembly, the military commander and other top officials. They are the ones who know, they will have the answers. *But you have been following developments all the time. Do you think mistakes have been made?*

What I can see, to this day, is that people at the centre and the people here still don't understand the real situation in East Timor. They simply do not understand the true aspirations of the people here. The riots were not just to do with SARA [Suku Agama Ras Antargolongan – 'religious, ethnic and racial tensions'].

What do you mean by that?

Although the people of East Timor are still backward, ignorant and uneducated, they have their own traditions, their own values, their own lifestyle. It may be traditional but it must be respected. People who come here from outside should adjust to things here, not the other way round, that we here have to adjust to them.

So, do you mean that the newcomers must adapt to the native inhabitants?

What we first need to ask is: what do they come here for? Then just see all those who come, the ships that arrive, the planes that arrive. How many East Timorese travel by boat? How many East Timorese travel anywhere by plane? Who is it who travels by plane? This is what makes people here think.

Isn't that the result of East Timor's status as an open region?

Yes, that's a consequence of opening East Timor up. But don't just blame Carrascalao [the former

governor] who opened up East Timor. It was opened up to allow the people here greater freedom of movement, more space to think, greater freedom of speech. It wasn't for the benefit of others. As we see, there have been reactions. Is that bringing benefits?

During the events last Friday, you were busy touring round to calm down the mass of people. But the acts of arson continued. Why?

This was because the agreements we had reached were not kept. What we agreed was that they would all go home. They did as they were asked and went home. But then what happened? The security forces went out that night and arrested these young people.

According to reports, the armed forces behaved very leniently. For instance, there was no shooting.

There's no need for any shooting. What's needed is dialogue. The authorities of course know all about dialogue, especially the people from the regional government and the Korem [military] commander. They should be listening to the complaints of the people here, what their aspirations are, not, as happens now, that the people here come under more and more pressure every time something like this happens.

But isn't it true that there has been no pressure?

The police chief, for instance, said that none of the people who were arrested were tortured.

I don't believe it. They told me that they were tortured.

You said just now that the newcomers enjoy all the benefits. Do you think the riots were the result of social disparities?

That's just one part of it. There are many aspects: cultural, history, religion, and also politics. People are quickly accused of being 'GPK' or in the clandestine. But has anyone invited us to sit down and talk things through together and to discuss the political conditions? If we were to sit down and talk, we could work out the best solution. But this is always avoided.

The government should be willing to listen to demands. If they're afraid to do this, things will never change. Another important thing is that we are here in the interests of the community. There must be a response to the demands of the

community. Don't just make promises. I myself am still in favour of something, which I have already proposed: that East Timor should become a special Catholic region. But this has been turned down.

Isn't there a dialogue under way between the regional government, the armed forces and the church?

There used to be dialogue when Carrascalao was governor. The dialogue used to go on late into the night, until 3 or 4 in the morning. But later, people were called in and questioned by the armed forces: Why did you take your complaints to the governor? What's all this dialogue about?

What about inter-religious dialogue?

Yes, that can be done and it's already been done. But we've talked a great deal in lots and lots of meetings. Lots of decisions have been taken, written up and lots of documents have been produced. But what happens in practice is another matter.

What about the ideology behind the riots. Are they rejecting our Pancasila [state doctrine by which five major religions are allowed], our unifying motto, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika [Unity and Diversity], and so on?

What I find here is that East Timorese don't want lots of people to come from outside. They don't want these outsiders to be in control, especially in the economy.

Disparities are not something special to East Timor. Is there a cultural problem that makes things explode easily?

The East Timorese are very emotional. They can get angry very quickly. Their education and background are from the Portuguese and the Catholic church. They are very straight. If the colour is A, then it's A, not B. They don't speak in a roundabout way like a snake. They are very direct.

There have been cases of blasphemy in other places, like Permadi and Arswendo, but they didn't end up with fighting, burning things down, like here.

That's what people here are like. They feel very afraid because there are groups who enjoy all the advantages. They themselves can't make their voices heard, so that's why you get such reactions.

Is it true that Catholicism here is very orthodox?

I don't agree with that term 'orthodox'. Catholics are all alike. If Catholics in Jakarta are not orthodox, then they're not Catholics. What they call Javanese Catholicism is almost the same as Protestantism. Religion must be orthodox.

The number of Catholics has increased tremendously since integration, far more than during Portuguese times. So how come the issue of Islamisation has emerged?

For me the important thing is that every Catholic should hold firmly to their faith. I always say that if I am surrounded by a hundred Muslims and I am the only Catholic, I am not afraid to love my own religion as long as I have faith.

Why did they start rioting? Why not resolve it by peaceful means?

We've tried what you are talking about for the past 20 years. ■

A message to the Beijing conference

This is an abridged version of a letter from East Timor's clandestine resistance to participants in the NGO Forum of the recent United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

*National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM)
East Timor
6 September 1995.*

Dear conference participants,
Greetings from East Timor!

In the middle of the night amidst a great silence in Dili, I'm thinking of you all, and I imagine how many you must be, how strong you are, how freely you talk to each other, and how wonderful that is! I congratulate you for what you are, and for what you achieved or will achieve in this conference.

Nearly 20 years ago Indonesia invaded my country, East Timor: planes dropping paratroopers from the skies and boats vomiting fire and hatred from the waters of the raped East Timorese northern 'female sea'. We have since known war, rape, violations of the most basic human rights, a regime of military occupation, oppression, imprisonment and death. We have lost more than one-third of our population. And the list of our sorrows could go on.

As women we have gone through everything the military invasion and occupation machine could do: rape, imprisonment and death. In 20 years, an untold number of women went through the horror of Indonesian prisons all over East Timor. Many of us died of starvation and exhaustion in the mountains in the attempt to escape the Indonesian hordes; some were cremated by the napalm bombs; others shot in the battlefield; still others languished in military controlled prisons until they were raped and executed. Many of us carry on our bodies the scars of interminable days and nights in prison. Our men and our children went out one day to fight the Indonesians; many did not come back. Others are still fighting. Many are in hiding, working for the clandestine resistance. As wives and mothers we worry about them all the hours of the day. We have paid, and continue to pay, a heavy price for the liberation of our homeland.

The Indonesian military have done the most terrible things against us. Back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Indonesian military used to kill husbands and children in front of their wives and mothers; they literally asked them to smile and yell 'viva Indonesia', and then bury their own husbands and children. Unborn babies were dislodged from their pregnant mothers with a knife and in the fury of their 'anti-communism' the Indonesian military would smash them against the rocks! It was, it is, and it

remains horror! We were even prohibited to cry! That is the price we continue to pay for the liberation of the 'land of the rising sun'!

We hope for human solidarity and believe in the solidarity of the women of the world. We have survived, and for all these nearly 20 years we have kept the struggle alive and strong, fundamentally because there is total national resistance to the invasion and the military occupation.

Indeed international support has been crucial.

We appeal to you, as women, as mothers, as sisters and as wives, to say a word and to act in your own countries, in all your capacities, power and strength, for the dignity and freedom of the people of East Timor, for the dignity and freedom of all the East Timorese women.

To the Indonesian women in this conference we appeal for courage and for dignity: Indonesia should recognise it has committed a very big mistake, the real mistake of its 50 years of independence. For 20 years out of 50, Indonesians have been killing East Timorese, denying them the most basic human rights; chief among these, the right to self-determination and independence which is also recognised in the Indonesian constitution, as a right of all the peoples of the world, including the people of East Timor. As a great nation that aspires to a place in the community of civilised nations of the world, it is time to say stop to the butchery of innocent people whose only crime is to love their mother, East Timor. It is time to say to your men: respect East Timor; and the best way to do this is to leave East Timor. It is time for Suharto to sit down with Xanana Gusmão, and solve the question of East Timor. And there will be peace, we will be good neighbours. A great nation should be able to recognise errors made and go the right way: Indonesia should leave East Timor.

Your men, your children, your soldiers in East Timor will be doing nothing but killing innocent people, our children. Despite the official rhetoric, that is the crude reality. Remember 12 November 1991, the Santa Cruz massacre! The killing fields are no longer in the rugged mountains alone. For us, the towns and the villages have become battlefields for freedom. For you, they are only killing fields everywhere! Any solution short of the unconditional recognition of the fundamental right of our people to self-determination and independence will be no solution. Our fight for freedom will go on as long as there is no freedom to live as free human beings, as women, as individuals, as a nation and as 'ema' or people of East Timor. Suffering won't deter and discourage us on the road to freedom. Women are the source of life, women are mothers and we will deliver life, we will deliver freedom and dignity.

Dear friends, in the freedom you live in the free world, in the peace of your families, in the dignity of your work in small and big cities, don't forget East Timor, don't forget the East Timorese women, their plight, their struggle and the struggle of the people of the 'land of the rising sun', Rai Timor Loro Sae ■

*On behalf of the East Timorese Women
Ira Lafai Lighur of the clandestine resistance.*

HUMAN RIGHTS

Update

Reports of killings, arbitrary arrests and disappearances continue to emerge from East Timor, with random arrests and violence extending even to supporters of Indonesian rule.

Reuters news agency reported the deaths of two young East Timorese men found in a suburb of Dili with broken necks in early July.

Amnesty International and independent church sources confirmed that on 27 July, in the Bucoli area of Wailacama, a suburb of Baucau, Indonesian military shot dead two young men at around 6pm. According to information received by CIIR, an Indonesian commander in the area had been fired upon earlier that day by unknown assailants. Indonesian soldiers had

Details of the crackdown

This report was received from a protected source on 25 October.

The military and the SGI [army intelligence] are still hunting for members of the resistance in the city of Dili and surrounding areas. Yesterday they took 20 young men from Hera to the POLWIL [regional police office] in Komoro. Twenty taxi drivers have been imprisoned, without charge. The Indonesians are taking prisoners indiscriminately. On 18 October, they went to the house of Luis Barreto, a member of the KNPI [Indonesian youth association]. They did not find him, but they took his young child of 4 years into prison, after beating his wife and smashing the contents of the house. The day before, they had taken Luis' wife and his son aged 2 years to prison for a day. They released her late in the afternoon. Today, Luis presented himself to the Red Cross, and they took him to the KOREM [sub-regional military command].

The same strategy is being deployed widely: the police, the SGI, and the military go around in civilian clothes, armed with machine guns. They break into people's houses in Dili and the surrounding areas, and take prisoners. They must have shed so much blood with every prisoner, that they started going to the shops asking the traders there for new shirts for their prisoners; the bloodied shirts are just burned somewhere. No one escapes this new wave of violence: even Apodeti people, pro-Indonesians. The house of Mr Parada's sister, the local assembly's president, has been ransacked.

The Army is planning a big military operation in November. Its codename is Sapu Rata (eliminate). In the Viqueque area there are elite Nanggala units, four army battalions (nos 327, 328, 413, and 406), without mentioning the KODIM (district regional command). There are also Timorese units backed by Indonesians (Team Saka, Team Seran, and Team Makikit). The Railakan team is operating in Ermera region, supporting five other battalions.

surrounded the village, believing guerrillas were hiding there. They had tried to herd the villagers into one place and keep them there while they searched the houses. But they failed to round up everyone and Marcelino da Silva Belo, a young shepherd returning home from his flock found a soldier in front of his dwelling. After a fight, the soldier shot the youth in the face. He died instantly. Hearing the noise, Augusto Freitas Belo came upon the scene. He, too, was shot in the head. Relatives of the victims were arrested and tortured.

Rioting throughout September and October has led to hundreds of arrests. Indonesian military sources stated on 13 October that 120 people had been arrested. Amnesty International has expressed concern that many would have been tortured. Although some arrested in early September have been released, it is feared that up to two dozen remain incarcerated. Many have been severely beaten, and some have gunshot wounds.

There were unconfirmed reports of five more killings in Dili in the second week of October. ■

DIPLOMATIC NEWS

United Nations

Decolonisation committee

More than two dozen NGOs and human rights organisations presented petitions on East Timor on 12-13 July to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation in New York.

New petitioners this year included Reverend Max Surjadinata, an Indonesian-American pastor, on behalf of a new solidarity organisation in the US protestant churches, East Timor Religious Outreach. Rev Surjadinata spoke of his personal anguish at the effects of the Indonesian 'recolonisation' of East Timor. Another was an Australian nurse, Simon de Faux, who went to East Timor as a volunteer health worker at the request of the Catholic church last February. He treated torture victims, and saw savage beatings of children by the Indonesian military. He estimated that one in three East Timorese women had probably been raped by Indonesian soldiers. De Faux had come to New York after receiving little interest in his testimony from his own government.

Secretary general's report

In September, UN secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali made his annual progress report on East Timor to the United Nations General Assembly. He reported on the talks held over the past year, highlighting the all-inclusive intra-East Timorese dialogue held in Burg Schlaining, Austria in June. According to the secretary general, 'The gathering, the first of its kind, was held in a positive and constructive atmosphere and adopted, by consensus, the Burg Schlaining Declaration, which inter alia, proposed to me that further meetings be held within the same framework' (see *Timor Link* 33, page 2).

The secretary general said he was encouraged

by the result of the intra-Timorese dialogue and that he intended to facilitate a further intra-Timorese meeting after the seventh round of ministerial talks between Indonesia and Portugal. These will take place in London on 16 January 1996. Unfortunately, the Indonesian government has refused to allow the next intra-Timorese dialogue to take place before the ministerial meeting, which had been the expressed request of the East Timorese at Schlaining.

The secretary general noted that in the last ministerial meeting, on 8 July 1995, the Portuguese and Indonesian foreign ministers had agreed to consider in the next round of talks 'substantive issues identified by me regarding possible avenues towards a solution to the question of East Timor'. The ministers also discussed developments since the previous round in January 1995, including the implementation of recommendations in the statement on human rights in East Timor agreed at the 51st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights (see *Timor Link* 33, page 5).

The ministers welcomed the convening of the intra-East Timorese dialogue as a positive effort to help create an atmosphere conducive to the achievement of a solution to the question of East Timor. They also agreed on the need for further such meetings.

Resolution on Indonesia defeated at subcommission

Indonesia's human rights violations were discussed in depth at the August 1995 session of the United Nations subcommission on the prevention of discrimination and the protection of minorities. But the resolution, tabled by expert members from Norway, Chile and the United States, was defeated after hard lobbying of Asian and African experts by the Indonesian mission. ■

INTERNATIONAL ROUND-UP

PORTUGAL

Socialist Party elected

In legislative elections on 1 October, the Socialist Party won 109 out of 230 seats, with 43.5 per cent of the vote. The new prime minister, Antonio Guterres, pledged support for the East Timorese on the night of his election. The Portuguese Socialist Party does not have a good record on this. Newly-appointed foreign minister Jaime Gama adopted a somewhat pragmatic approach to East Timor in the past. With the growth of public concern since the Santa Cruz massacre, supporters of East Timor in Portugal are hoping their new foreign minister will change his tune.

AUSTRALIA

East Timorese boat people denied asylum

Australian prime minister Paul Keating, anxious to mend relations with Indonesia, has refused

asylum to 18 East Timorese refugees. The Australian government has granted them temporary visas, stating that they can claim citizenship in Portugal. This argument flies in the face of official government policy: Australia has recognised Indonesia's annexation of East Timor 'de jure'.

Strains in Australia's relations with Indonesia followed the public rejection in Australia of Herman Mantiri, Ambassador to Indonesia designate, and numerous incidents of Indonesian flag-burning on 17 August, the 50th anniversary of Indonesian independence. It appears that Indonesia had signalled that it would not be pleased if Australia had capitulated to the refugees' requests.

In the meantime, Australia's refugee review tribunal is reviewing the cases. The Portuguese authorities have denied that East Timorese arriving in Australia are automatically Portuguese nationals.

EUROPEAN UNION

Indonesia condemned by MEPs in Strasbourg

A strong resolution condemning Indonesia's military oppression and supporting East Timor's right to self-determination has been passed in the European parliament by 134 votes to 59. There were five abstentions. The resolution expresses shock at a recent decision by Indonesia to implement the death sentence on two 67-year-old sergeant-majors who have been imprisoned since 1965 when President Suharto came to power in a bloodbath. It calls for the release of hundreds of political prisoners and respect for religious freedom in East Timor, where Bishop Carlos Belo has spoken out against forced 'Islamisation' of a mainly Catholic people. Reaffirming a 1991 decision to send a fact finding delegation to East Timor, the resolution urges the Indonesian government 'to refrain from placing obstacles in the way of the delegation'. Among the proposers of the resolution was Niall Andrews MEP.

BRITAIN

The scandal of British aid

Labour MP Ann Clwyd has produced a hard-hitting report attacking Britain's support to Indonesia, calling for some aid projects to be reviewed by the National Audit Office. *British Aid to Indonesia, the Continuing Scandal* accuses the government of promoting business through its aid programme. Projects such as a short-wave transmitter project led by GEC-Marconi Communications Ltd, which was installed with an Aid-and-Trade Provision soft loan of nearly £27 million, is one example. Another is training for the Indonesian National Police, which comes out of the overseas development assistance budget. At least one product of this training programme has subsequently been responsible for severe human rights abuses in Indonesia and East Timor. Indonesia's much-criticised transmigration policy also received a grant of £2.5 million from the British aid budget. Ann

Clywd finds it incredible that 'millions of pounds have been poured into supporting a regime which has been named as the world's most corrupt'.

Five East Timorese seek asylum in British embassy

Five young East Timorese students requested asylum at the British Embassy in Jakarta on 25 September 1995. They had all suffered persecution in East Timor and had fled to Jakarta in recent months. The British Embassy did not eject the youths, who were finally offered asylum in Portugal. The five presented a petition to the embassy, demanding the implementation of decisions taken at the Schlaining talks (June 1995), and insisting on the inclusion of resistance leader Xanana Gusmão in further sessions.

INDONESIA

Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights comments on East Timor riots

According to the *Jakarta Post* of 3 October, the National Commission on Human Rights has attributed last month's religious and ethnic rioting in East Timor to the many unresolved

political and social problems in the territory.

Strained relations between indigenous residents and migrants, poor communication between the government and the people, continuing social conflict and malfunctioning political institutions all contributed to the frustration that erupted between 2 and 14 September, the commission concluded.

The commission also said that in the course of the rioting, there had been numerous rights violations in the areas of religion, personal safety and property as well as the right to be free of fear.

Long term political prisoners released

Indonesia has ordered the release of several political prisoners, including three of the most renowned opponents of the regime, who have been imprisoned since 1965, when the armed forces, led by General Suharto, put down an alleged attempted Communist uprising. Imprisoned Timorese are also said to have had their sentences reduced.

The released prisoners, who were members of the Sukarno government, are the former foreign minister, Subandrio, the former air force commander, Omar Dhani, and the former head of the secret service, Sugeng Sutarto. ■

The 'braving of the church'

FATHER PAT SMYTHE, parish priest in Bentham, North Yorkshire, recently completed an MA dissertation on East Timor and the church. Here, he reflects on a recent visit to East Timor.

'The church is our hope,' Felipe declared, with a conviction born of faith and experience. A senior catechist in one of the mountain parishes in East Timor, he was expressing sentiments which I was to hear repeatedly during my travels throughout the country. East Timorese of all ages look to the church for comfort and courage, for care and protection, for the defence of their human rights as individuals and as a nation.

During all the years of their suffering, the East Timorese have found in the local church a refuge and a source of strength. It has helped them come to terms with the horrors they have known and keep alive the dream of a better future. In pain and grief they have been comforted, in frustration or despair they have been inspired with fresh determination. They have come to regard the church as the one institution which is truly and wholly concerned for their well-being, and the one raft of stability in a shifting sea of uncertainty.

The diocese of Dili and the religious congregations established in East Timor provide extensive education and health care. Special efforts have been made in residential facilities for the many orphans, and for girls, especially vulnerable to personal attacks. To the increasing numbers of young people faced with the prospect of unemployment the church offers technical, professional, and vocational training. It equips many others for a role in the pastoral work of the church, either in the ordained ministry or as lay catechists. Their achievements would have been highly creditable in a situation of stability and economic strength. In the prevailing circumstances of East Timor they demonstrate great faith and self-sacrifice.

Church leaders have been fearless in their endeavours to protect the people from the abuses perpetrated by military and civil representatives of the Indonesian government, and to draw attention to Indonesia's neo-colonial exploitation of East Timor's resources. They have persistently demanded that the East Timorese people be given the opportunity to determine their political status in an authentic referendum. As a consequence they have suffered constant surveillance, intimidation, even physical maltreatment. Agents of the Jakarta regime make continual efforts, both within and outside East Timor, to undermine the authority or to disrupt the cohesiveness of the local church.

Opinions differ within the local church community as to the best way forward. Foreign missionaries and Indonesian religious each have their own perspectives, while the perceptions of

CHURCH

US Presbyterians call for arms embargo

The Presbyterian church (USA), one of the major Protestant denominations in the United States, called in September for an embargo on the sale of US weapons to Indonesia. In a hard-hitting public policy statement on East Timor, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church also appealed to the US government to cease all military aid to Indonesia.

The statement noted that the international community does not accept the legality of the Indonesian conquest of East Timor. It noted that Indonesian 'development' of East Timor has 'marginalised' the Timorese and has weakened their language and culture. The Presbyterians called for the participation of the Timorese in the resolution of their problems with Indonesia, and challenged Indonesian churches to 'stand in solidarity with those who are oppressed in East Timor'.

'This is a real milestone,' says Reverend John Chamberlin, national coordinator of East Timor Religious Outreach, an ecumenical group based in San Francisco. 'To my knowledge, this is the most definitive statement of support for East

Timor ever adopted as official policy by a major US denomination.'

Rev Chamberlin noted that Presbyterian efforts to address the tragedy in East Timor began in 1994, when the General Assembly urged all Presbyterians to educate themselves about East Timor. It also participated in a National Council of Churches sponsored fact-finding mission to East Timor in January 1995. As a result, Rev Chamberlin said, 'Presbyterians were moved to take action. They resolved to be a voice for the voiceless and stand in solidarity with the people of East Timor.'

Support from German bishops

The German Catholic Bishops' Conference marked the 50th anniversary of Indonesia's independence by condemning, in unusually forthright terms, the oppression in East Timor. A statement issued in Bonn by Bishop Walter Kasper reads: 'East Timor continues to live under a regime of terror and fear. Arbitrary arrests and torture persist. The methods of repression and oppression employed by the government and the army are brutal and inhuman. Since the territory was annexed, over 200,000 Timorese people have been killed. Many were killed solely for having claimed the right to self-determination for their people.' ■



Parish church in Viqueque. Membership of the Catholic church has tripled during the Indonesian occupation.

indigenous priests and religious are still influenced by the priorities of political parties that emerged after Portugal initiated the decolonisation process in 1974. The political aspirations of the people may be categorised in simple terms as pro-integration or pro-independence, with the latter in a clear majority. The divisions are exploited by provocateurs seeking to consolidate Indonesian control.

While I was there the situation was very volatile.

New publications on East Timor

East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation

Edited by Peter Carey and G Carter Bentley

260pp; price Hbk £40, Pbk £12.99.

Published by Cassell & Social Science Research Council, New York 1995

These updated papers from two conferences – one organised by St Antony's college, Oxford and CIIR in 1990, and one organised by the Social Science Research Council in Washington DC in 1991 – take a fresh look at East Timor's history, the role of the Catholic church, the impact of Indonesian military occupation, and prospects for a future political settlement. Of particular interest is the verbatim report of the New York conference, which includes Indonesian participants, a bibliography, and a brief chronology.

Generations of Resistance: East Timor

By Steve Cox and Peter Carey

75 black & white photos, 8-page colour plate section
Hbk: £50 Pbk £19.99, 1995

Pictures taken by documentary photographer Steve Cox, with an introduction on East Timor's recent past by Peter Carey, Fellow of Modern History at Trinity College Oxford. Steve Cox stayed among the East Timorese before the Santa Cruz massacre. He captured on film the carnage in the cemetery, which helped expose the explanations of the Indonesian government and corroborate foreign journalists' accounts.

Both titles are available from Cassell Booksellers.
Tel (0) 1202 665 432

The increasing number of transmigrant Indonesians occupying the best land, getting the best jobs, and posing a threat to the cultural and religious heritage of the East Timorese is creating serious social tension. Public demonstrations were taking place all over the country; there was extensive destruction of property and violence towards persons. It was clear that these outbreaks of disorder had been deliberately provoked by people with an interest in maintaining the repressive status quo. But the outbreaks also expressed the exasperation of many East Timorese whose efforts to achieve a just resolution to the present disorder are continually being frustrated.

In the midst of this confusion the church seeks to avoid political partisanship while calling for human dignity to be respected. Essential dimensions of that dignity are the opportunity for genuine popular participation in the political process; control over the use of local resources; and the right to self-determination by the East Timorese people of their political status in the international community. Individual members of the church in East Timor, and the church as an institution, suffer for making such demands.

Young people are arrested 'on suspicion' (without evidence) of participating in 'disruptive actions' (peaceful demonstrations critical of the present unjust order). Once under arrest they are often physically abused, or 'disappear' altogether. If they go into hiding (and church premises might well be their only sanctuary) their families suffer intimidation to disclose their whereabouts; even small children are imprisoned to this end.

The remarkable growth of the church in East Timor under Indonesian occupation is due largely to the service and advocacy the church has offered the people in their trials. This has won gratitude and admiration. It is also the result of an interaction between Catholicism and nationalist sentiment. Of course, it presents a practical challenge: all these new members need adequate education in order to make a mature faith commitment and to be able to participate responsibly in the pastoral life and missionary work of the church.

The church's future

I was impressed by the provisions made for the training of catechists, by the self-sacrifice of the students attending the courses on offer, and by the generosity of families who provide accommodation for the duration of their studies. But it does seem there is some way to go before pastoral ministry is truly collaborative between priests (and religious) and the people, and the laity accept proper responsibility for their spiritual and social welfare. It was pointed out to me more than once that the political disruption and isolation caused by the annexation in 1975 had delayed the implementation of the principles of Vatican II. Considering the time it has taken for the Council's teaching to have effect in the life of the church in the stable conditions of Western Europe, I think the church in East Timor has much to be proud of.

Before I left I invited some young men, already well advanced on their journey towards the priesthood or religious life, to write their reflections on the role of the church in East Timor. Their responses expressed great faith and courage, with one sentiment recurrent: they wished to be in the forefront of work of a church that was openly active on behalf of the poor and oppressed, seeking their freedom, and to preach fearlessly and live generously the way of Jesus, a gospel of justice, love and peace. As one student put it: 'The achievements of the church in East Timor which I regard the most important are: the education of the youth, the refuting of the poor, the defending of the truth, and the justice to the small people.' I asked what evidence there is of the grace of God in the life of the church in East Timor. He wrote: 'The braving of the church to develop, even in the situation here, which is sometimes very dangerous to the church and to the people.' ■

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