

Paramilitary Violence in East Timor

Testimony from a briefing by the
House Human Rights and Progressive Caucuses
and a hearing of the
Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights
of the International Relations Committee

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East Timor *Action Network*/U.S.

Overview

Lynn Fredriksson, East Timor Action Network (ETAN)

Good afternoon. Among the guests testifying today are several survivors who are also true heroes. They have come to Congress at great personal risk to tell you of the almost unimaginable brutality they have witnessed in East Timor, a country that has lost over a third of its population to a 23 year Indonesian military occupation, but also a country whose people have never stopped struggling for their basic human rights to peace and self-determination.

You will hear from Francisco, who witnessed a massacre in his village of Liquiça on April 5 and 6 of this year. Others you will hear include Vicente, an East Timorese human rights advocate whose name appears high on a list of civilians marked by paramilitaries for assassination; Manuel, who helped secure Indonesian military documents that prove the Indonesian military supports paramilitary death squads; Aryati, who has traveled to East Timor with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to document cases of torture and other abuses; and Arnold Kohen, a tireless advocate for East Timorese human rights and U.S. representative of Nobel Peace Laureate Bishop Carlos Belo.

On April 6, in village of Liquiça, Indonesian troops sprayed tear gas into a church crowded with 2,000 refugees, driving them outside to face the guns and machetes of a paramilitary unit. Over 57 civilians were slaughtered with Indonesian military assistance. Some were killed in the home of the local parish priest, Fr. Rafael, who has publicly testified alongside Bishop Belo about the premeditated mass killing of his people. Francisco is an adopted son of Fr. Rafael and lived through the horror at Liquiça.

Eleven days later, militia leader Eurico Guterres ordered the "clean-up" of Dili. 1500 paramilitary foot soldiers took over the streets of the capital city, attacking and burning the homes of those on a "hit list" of more than 275 civil servants, resistance

members, and advocates of reconciliation. Among those targeted was a prominent reconciliation leader, Manuel Carrascalão. In the compound of his home were sheltered 130 refugees, including some from the Liquiça massacre. The paramilitaries invaded Manuel's home and shot and stabbed to death at least 18 more civilians, including Carrascalão's son Manuelito. Indonesian military and police stood by providing water and cigarettes to the paramilitaries, refusing to halt the violence.

Journalists in East Timor have been repeatedly abused and threatened. Bishop Belo and Xanana Gusmão, the East Timorese leader under house arrest in Jakarta, have received multiple death threats. The Indonesian-appointed governor of East Timor, Abilio Soares, has forbidden people in Dili to describe recent atrocities and warned he will prosecute those speaking to the press. Many East Timorese have been driven into hiding; countless others have been "disappeared." Over the last week, threats of assassination and other violence have focused on church workers and clergy. The Catholic Church has provided the primary sanctuary for the people of East Timor throughout the occupation, but not even the Church can provide safe haven now.

The buildings of Yayasan HAK, the well respected human rights and legal foundation, and the newspaper Suara Timor Timur (both of these receive U.S. AID funding) have been destroyed by paramilitaries. HAK director Aniceto Lopes and his assistant Jose Luis have received repeated threats and are in grave danger. This further exacerbates the human rights crisis as HAK has been the main source of information and documentation on killings, arrests and torture, and the only outlet for legal redress in the territory.

In response to the April 17 massacre, Indonesian foreign affairs spokesperson Dewi Fortuna Anwar told Reuters, "It's true, it's our [Indonesia's] responsibility because we are the only ones here."

On April 15, General Wiranto, Head of the Armed Forces of Indonesia, joined the military commander of East Timor,

Suratman, at a meeting where militia attack plans were discussed. Less than a week later, Wiranto claimed credit for brokering a peace plan in Dili, signed by East Timorese resistance leaders, the heads of paramilitary units, the governor of East Timor, Suratman, and others. Unfortunately there has been little subsequent effort to enforce the document's commitment "to guarantee the effective implementation of this accord by their respective supporters."

In reality the short-lived "peace agreement" designed to placate the international community provided a very brief PR cover for the Indonesian government but did nothing to stop paramilitary killings: within a day more than 18 civilians were slaughtered in three separate militia attacks in the northern coastal area of Suai. The military command provided a base of operations for the attacks and roadblocks were set up to stop anyone whose name appeared on a blacklist. In recent days sources in East Timor report dozens of rotting corpses washing ashore near Suai, pushing the death toll for 1999 to over 138.

Australian military analyst and former army officer Bob Lowry cautions that we must judge the Indonesian military by what they do, not what they say: "In the old days, ABRI [the military] would have dealt with [people] openly. But it's harder to do that these days, so the militia came out." Lowry argues that the pro-Indonesia militias are fundamentally an extension of the armed forces, and would be unable to function without military protection.

According to an Amnesty International report on the April 17 atrocities, "If there was ever any doubt about the complicity of the Indonesian military in the pro-integration paramilitary activities in East Timor, its refusal to act to stop the attacks this weekend confirms its role." Human Rights Watch called on the international community and the World Bank to halt further installments of billions of dollars in loans to Indonesia until that government stops the paramilitary violence. The U.S. Catholic Bishops sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Cohen calling on the Pentagon to push the Indonesian

military to demand an end to paramilitary violence in East Timor. Twenty-eight U.S. Senators and Representatives sent a letter to Secretary of State Albright on April 12 urging the U.S. administration to insist the Indonesian government disarm and disband the paramilitaries, and allow international monitors in East Timor.

On January 27, President Habibie stated that if the majority of East Timorese were to reject Indonesia's proposed "autonomy" plan (which Indonesian and Portuguese diplomats at the UN have come to a tentative accord on), the Indonesian parliament would consider East Timor's independence. To reject or accept autonomy, the East Timorese people must be consulted in a free and fair ballot, but the terms for such a consultation have not yet been determined. Also unclear are the terms of a UN presence in East Timor to prevent further human rights abuses, to monitor a genuine withdrawal of 21,000 Indonesian troops, and to supervise the vote on autonomy. Clarification of these measures is crucial to assure a free and fair ballot and to stop the killing. A final UN-sponsored agreement is due this week.

It is widely assumed that in a just vote the vast majority of East Timorese would reject Indonesia's limited autonomy plan. After 23 years of brutal occupation, which has killed over 200,000 people, the option of leaving control of their military, foreign policy and finances in the hands of Indonesia is understandably unacceptable to most East Timorese.

But the Indonesian military is undermining international diplomatic efforts to help bring about a peaceful transition for East Timor. For years Indonesian government officials have cried "civil war" in response to human rights arguments for East Timor's self-determination, claiming that East Timor will descend into chaos if allowed its freedom. Now the Indonesian government and its military appear to be doing everything in their power to make that cry a self-fulfilling prophecy – by manufacturing and arming paramilitary gangs, and bribing and threatening several thousand young, desperate, unemployed men into serving the Indo-

nesian military's ends. This is not civil war, this is death squad terrorism.

An East Timorese civilian recently remarked, "We're very afraid, and because of that, for the moment, we have agreed to support autonomy. When the UN peacekeepers come, then we will be able to say we want independence." Nobel Peace Laureate Bishop Belo said this week that the mood in East Timor is too violent for its people to vote freely in a planned ballot on their future status.

Yesterday President Clinton said: "We should support a meaningful UN presence in East Timor so its people can make their choice in safety and peace." The U.S. State Department issued a statement on April 17: "We urgently call on the Indonesian security forces in the strongest possible terms to bring the pro-integration militia groups under control and to fulfill their responsibilities to protect all persons in East Timor. Moreover, we look to the Indonesian authorities to bring the perpetrators of these violent attacks to justice." ETAN is heartened by these strong statements from the President and the State Department.

But the question remains:

How many more will be tortured, raped and killed before the U.S. government takes substantive measures to force Indonesia to dismantle the ABRI-supported paramilitaries? ETAN calls on our government to act now, before there's more bloodshed. The U.S. government should cease all remaining military assistance and weapons transfers to Indonesia until this daily brutality is stopped— for good. In addition the U.S. government should halt all financial support to Indonesia until East Timor is opened to a continuing UN presence, international human rights monitors, medical relief teams and the press. If Indonesian President Habibie feels his government cannot control the paramilitary and military violence in East Timor, he should allow the international community to take over the vital job of securing the safety of a people on the verge of self-determination.

For the U.S. legacy in this 23-year atrocity is a shameful one. From providing over

90% of the weapons used in the bloody invasion of 1975 to the JCET training provided to KOPASSUS special forces until last year, the Pentagon has given the Indonesian military and intelligence forces the hardware and training they needed to perpetrate genocide in East Timor.

Despite congressional intent U.S. armed services trained Indonesian special forces units, known for their egregious human rights violations, in Close Quarters Combat, Advanced Sniper Techniques, Demolitions, Marksmanship, Psychological Operations and Military Operations in Urban Terrain, among other distinctly combat-related courses under the JCET program. These training sessions took place, according to DoD documents released to Congressman Lane Evans, at least 36 times over extended periods since 1992.

In 1997 alone, the U.S. trained KOPASSUS Special Forces units no less than seven times. KOPASSUS is still the most notoriously brutal unit in Indonesia and East Timor. And U.S. training continues today under the cloak of "crowd control" and "humanitarian projects" and E-IMET. And the Indonesian military continues to employ this training in East Timor...

On November 12 of 1997, I was the only foreigner present at a peaceful vigil as hundreds of university students commemorated the Santa Cruz massacre of 1991. For observing that vigil, Indonesian police arrested, interrogated, and detained me for 24 hours, then expelled me from the country. I had witnessed heavily armed ABRI forces with rifles trained on the peaceful students. What I learned that day was that international observers are critical. It was a travesty of justice that only one person was there. After the fall of General Suharto, the people of East Timor found their voices and seized their opportunity to demonstrate their will for self-determination to the world. But today, one year later, the people of East Timor are suffering under the worst violence since the Santa Cruz massacre. The deteriorating human rights situation now requires massive monitoring on the ground immediately.

We in the U.S. can help to make that happen. We can push to halt the paramilitaries. We can demand that Indonesia withdraw its troops. The U.S. Congress has played a critical role in reaching towards justice in East Timor, by restricting military hardware, training and support to Indonesia and by sending clear messages to Jakarta, like last year's resolutions supporting self-determination.

This year it's time to make the message even tougher and less mistakable. Representatives Chris Smith, Lane Evans, Nita Lowey and over 60 others in the House have led the way by co-sponsoring the International Military Training Transparency and Accountability Act, which will close the

loopholes that allowed the Pentagon to provide JCET to Indonesia despite congressional intent. We thank Representative McKinney, the caucus chairs and their staffers for organizing this important briefing. Congressman Patrick Kennedy, Senators Feingold and Leahy, and others are now strengthening the message to Jakarta: No more military assistance to Indonesia until the paramilitaries are shut down, and Indonesia allows full access to East Timor. The time to act is now. The ballot is scheduled for August 8. That leaves less than 100 days to create an environment for a free and fair vote. A lot rests on us. I hope together we can help to bring long-overdue justice to East Timor.

Mass Killing in Liquiça

Francisco de Jesus da Costa,

massacre survivor

Introduction

First I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the people and government of the U.S. for this invaluable opportunity to give a testimony about the suffering experienced by the people of Timor Leste.

My name is Francisco de Jesus da Costa. I am one of the victims of the massacres committed by the Indonesian Military (TNI) in Liquiça. I managed to escape death.

Before the bloody incident, the TNI and the paramilitary had engaged in various forms of violence such as intimidation, terror, abuse, and killing in Liquiça. They perpetrated these horrible acts to pressure and coerce people to choose the autonomy plan offered by the Indonesian government. The targets of this terror and killing are the leaders of the pro-independence movement and their followers. The terror had created an atmosphere of intense fear among the community and caused waves of refugees to look for safer places to live. Usually the people feel more secure in the churches.

In sub-district Liquiça where I come from, the terror reached its peak with the mass killing on April 6, 1999. Before I come to

the main part of my testimony, I'll describe the incident on April 5, 1999 which caused seven people to die.

April 5, 1999

The militia which is based in Maubara village, about 15 kilometers from the town of Liquiça, attacked the pro-independence people and their leaders in Liquiça. At the border of Liquiça and Maubara they encountered the pro-independence people. In this clash the TNI and the militia killed two civilians and injured seven others.

At 9:00 a.m. the militia backed by the TNI moved toward Liquiça town and along the way they terrorized just about everybody they encountered.

Around 2:00 p.m. they arrived in Liquiça town and they were accompanied by Indonesian troops who sent random shots. This action terrorized the population and made some of them flee to the residence of Father Rafael and some others ran away to the jungle to save themselves. About 1000 people gathered at the Father's residence.

An hour later the TNI and paramilitary troops terrorized the whole town of Liquiça by burning houses, taking away the vehicles owned by the supporters of independence and other forms of violence.

Around five in the evening, the paramilitary and the TNI killed a man, Laurindo (48) and his son, Herminho (17). They then

took their car to terrorize other people in the town. After committing this atrocious act, they killed another two civilians at the house of the village chief of Dato. Around seven in the evening they kidnapped another man, Herminho do Santos (38), a worker at the Public Water office, and killed him later on at night.

April 6, 1999

At 6:00 a.m. the Red and White Iron Rod (BMP) militia began to launch provocation and terror against the refugees at the residence of Father Rafael dos Santos.

Around 8:30 a.m. the BMP paramilitary threw stones at the refugees gathering inside the priest residence and this caused two people injured. This act continued until around 11:00 a.m.

After that one of the leaders of the militia, Eurico Guterres, came to see the priest and offered a peaceful solution. The priest took the offer. Eurico then went to pass on the message about the agreement to the leader of the BMP, Manuel Sousa, and the head of Liquiça district, Leonito Martins. Both Manuel Sousa and Leonito Martins rejected the agreement made between the priest and Eurico Guterres.

Around 12:30 p.m. four trucks full with soldiers and two cars with police from the special force Mobile Brigade came to the area. The military were stationed at the local army headquarters (Kodim), while the police were around the location of incident.

At 1:30 p.m. the police attempted to drive away the militia troops from the surrounding of the priest's residence but the militia ignored it. They showed their insistence to attack us at the house.

Around 2:00 p.m. the militia with the support of the plain-clothes members of the Indonesian army attacked the refugees in the house of Father Rafael. The plain-clothes military shot the people from outside the fence of the priest's house, while the BMP militia rushed into the residence. They started to beat, stab and hack the people inside the priest's house. The police threw some tear gas bombs at the thousand people. The effect of this tear gas benefited the militia because they could easily butcher the refugees. Meanwhile the plain-clothes mili-

tary continued to help the militia by shooting at the hundreds of people who could not get into the priest's house because it was jammed with panicked people. This horrifying attack continued until 5:30 p.m. The police did not do anything toward the militia who slaughtered the people.

Along with some other people, I hid in the priest's dining room during the killing outside. Around five in the afternoon I was forced to go out to save myself. At that moment the militia beat me with a concrete block and jabbed my head. Later on I realized that there were about six wounds in my head. I was very lucky that I could escape death because a police friend whom I happened to know saved me.

When I was outside I saw dead bodies scattered on the ground, children, women, young and old people. I was walking among those corpses. I estimated that there were about 200 bodies at that time.

The police who saved me took me to the Mobile Brigade vehicle and I was taken to the house of the district head with more than 30 people who were injured. We received emergency treatment from a nurse at the house of the sub-district head. We were coerced to promise to choose autonomy during the ballot. The sub-district head ordered us to raise the red and white flag once we returned to our house. I returned to my house but the situation was so unsafe that I decided to stay for the night at the house of the policeman. On Thursday I went to Dili to get treatment for my wounds.

The people who were still alive and wounded were taken to various places, including the sub-district and district military headquarters, the police office and the house of the district head. The dead bodies were taken away by the military vehicles and thrown out in unknown places. Until now those corpses have not been returned to their families for proper burial.

I want to emphasize several things:

1. The Liquiça incident was a mass killing of unarmed civilians. This massacre was committed by the militia which were armed by the Indonesian Military.
2. The Indonesian military was both the brain and the actor of the massacre. They

- openly supported the militia.
3. According to an Indonesian military official, five people died in this massacre. The church (Bishop Belo) said that 25 people died. But, to me who escaped the massacre and witnessed it as well, I doubt the numbers they say. I believe that more than 200 people died on that day.
 4. None of the bodies of the victims have been returned to their families for proper burials.
 5. All the brutal actions perpetrated by the militia and the Indonesian troops, whether it be terror, intimidation or massacre, are intended to threaten the people to choose integration with Indonesia or autonomy under Indonesian rule.

I would like to pass on some demands to the international community and to the government and the people of the United States:

1. We call for the UN and especially the U.S. government, to pressure the Indonesian government and the TNI to remove the weapons they supplied to the militia who committed terror, intimidation and killing of unarmed civilians in Timor Leste.
2. We demand that the U.S. government as a member of the UN Security Council be more active in pressuring the Indonesian government and its military to create a safe and secure condition for carrying out the ballot this coming August.
3. We demand that the U.S. government pressure the Indonesian government and its military forces to respect the rights of the East Timorese to self determination.

This is our testimony to the people and government of the U.S. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Genocide in Timor Leste Has Not Yet Ended

*Dr. Vicente Soares Faria,
Political Coordinator of East
Timorese Intellectual Forum
(Forsarepetil)*

First I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the government and the people of the U.S. who have given me an opportunity to share my suffering and those of my brothers and sisters in Timor Leste (East Timor). My name is Vicente Soares Faria and I am a lecturer at the University of Timor Leste. I experienced and closely witnessed the atrocities committed by the Indonesian military (TNI) in Timor Leste.

There have been too many tragic events in Timor Leste. Perhaps if I have to tell the story about them one by one, I'll need a whole year. Considering the limitation of time, I will reveal several related incidents which happened recently and have caused the death of hundreds of East Timorese

After the Indonesian government [under Habibie] changed its position with regards to the process of resolution to the political

status of Timor Leste, many cases of human rights violations occurred in that region. There are variety of cases ranging from intimidation, terror, provocation, kidnapping, arbitrary arrest, looting, and burning to killing and mass murder.

These cases happened intensively and systematically throughout the territory of Timor Leste. In the following section I will try to describe several cases I vividly remember. Maybe stories about these cases have reached you already so my presence here only to confirm their truth.

1. Alas Case, November 1998

The militia and TNI provoked several young people and the Falintil. Falintil and the youth group retaliated by attacking a military post and caused 2 members of the TNI to die. In turn TNI took vengeance not against Falintil, but on the civilians living in the villages by arresting them, burning their houses, and killing some of them; many disappeared. The number of people who died during this incident was more than 40 and it's not yet clear how many people disappeared because Indonesian military does not allow any group to conduct an investigation in that area.

2. Turiscaí Case, November 1998

The paramilitary terrorized and intimidated civilians. They killed 2 civilians in the process. This incident caused 500 people to take refuge in Dili. Some of them stayed in Becora and the rest lived in the house of Manuel Carrascalão.

3. Atabae Case, November 1998

Paramilitary under the leadership of João Tavares intimidated and terrorized village people who were suspected to be pro-independence. They arrested and abused several civilians. This caused about 300 people to take refuge in Dili at the CNRT office and at the house of Mr. Canciõ Pereira.

4. Maubara Case, February 1999

In early February a militia named Red and White Iron Rod (BMP) was established under the leadership of João Tavares, Eurico Guterres and Manuel Sousa. This group terrorized and intimidated civilians.

5. Liquiça Case, 5 April 1999

Red and White Iron Red (BMP) attacked some youth and pro-independence people killing two people and injuring seven others severely. This attack happened at the border of Maubara and Liquiça and it was totally supported by the members of the Indonesian military.

6. Liquiça Case, 6 April 1999

The paramilitary and the TNI forces committed mass killing at the residence of Father Rafael do Santos. More than 40 people clearly died, but their bodies are not yet returned to their family. The detail of this incident will be told by a friend here who happened to be one witness who escaped the killing.

7. Dili Case, 12 April 1999

The paramilitary groups held a show of force in front of the Governor's office in Dili during an open, grand ceremony which was supported by the government and the military. One militia leader, Eurico Guterres, announced the intimidation and terror in this ceremony attended by members of militia groups from 13 sub-districts. Eurico said that he was determined to sweep out all resistance leaders and supporters of

East Timor independence if they won't follow the orders of the militia leaders, i.e. supporting autonomy under the auspices of the Republic of Indonesia. The names of pro-independence leaders mentioned during the ceremony were Mario Viegas Carrascalão, Manuel Viegas Carrascalão, Leandro Isaac, David Dias Ximenes, Domingos Sousa and other pro-independence activists.

This kind of terror and intimidation had made these leaders and activists, as well as the ordinary people who support independence, go into hiding, whether in the jungle, at the Bishop's residence, at the residence of other priests or nuns, or flee out of Timor Leste to Indonesia or even out of Indonesia. This incident was followed by the mass killing at Mr. Manuel Carrascalão's house on April 17, 1999.

8. Dili Case, 17 April 1999

The pro-integration militia held yet another grand ceremony in front of the governor's office which was attended by the local authority and military officials. They made an oath while drinking dog's blood and then began to launch what has been termed a 'combing operation' against pro-independence supporters. The operation started with a tour de force surrounding Dili, attacking houses of alleged pro-independence supporters, shooting randomly, injuring and killing people and forcing people to hoist the red and white flag [Indonesian flag] in their houses.

This operation ended with killing the civilians who took refuge at the house of Manuel Carrascalão. These victims, about 157 people, had stayed in the house since November last year because of the terror and intimidation in their village Liquiça. Thirteen people died, many of them brutally injured and many disappeared. One of the dead victims was the son of Manuel Carrascalão, Manuel Intan Carrascalão.

The militia action on April 17, 1999, also burned down the houses and cars of the leaders of CNRT in Dili, Leandro Isaac and David Dias Ximenes, as well as the house and two cars owned by other pro-independence figure, Jermano Hernan. They also burned down two public transportation ve-

hicles owned by the local population.

The bodies of the dead victims were not returned to their families but taken by the Indonesian security officials to a military hospital. During this rampage, the Indonesian military officials did not do anything to prevent nor to challenge the militia attack on the unarmed civilians. They allowed this brutal attack to happen without any obstacle.

9. Dili Case, April 18, 1999

A bloody clash happened in the eastern part of Becora, Dili. The militia group, Aitarak, under the leadership of Eurico Guterres shot a group of young people who allegedly supported pro-independence. Two people died during this incident.

On the same day there was a report that the Indonesian military secretly sent 150 militiamen to Jakarta attack and kill the leaders and activists of pro-independence group who live outside of East Timor. This is why a high official within the present regime who is an East Timorese, Mario Viegas Carrascalão (member of the president special advisory council) chose to leave Indonesia to Portugal because he was one of the main targets of the death threat sent by the militias. Meanwhile, other pro-independence leaders and activists remain in hiding or flee out of Timor Leste because of the intimidation by the militia supported by the ABRI.

Closing

Based on my experience in the territory, just as I briefly described above, the main source of the problem and human rights violations in Timor Leste is the presence of the TNI in every incident of torture and killing. The resolution of Timor Leste problem has to be put in the frame of democracy, justice and peace. This condition will not exist in Timor Leste if the militia armed by the TNI are not disarmed and disbanded and the TNI withdrawn from the territory. This task is the responsibility of the inter-

national community, especially the UN. The UN has the moral obligation to implement the resolutions regarding the East Timorese problem passed by the Security Council. This is a manifestation of respect toward human rights as reflected by the UN Charter itself.

With our 23 years experience under the Indonesian regime at least several cases mentioned above serve as a proof of the ABRI atrocities against us. Thereby we demand that:

1. The U.S. government as a member of the UN Security Council pressures the Indonesian government and the TNI to immediately disarm the militia and withdraw their troops from East Timor.
2. The U.S. government, which claims to be the pioneer of democracy and human rights, participate more actively in supporting the attempts made by UN, government representatives from Portugal and Indonesia in resolving the problem of East Timor in a democratic, just and peaceful way.
3. The U.S. government help the UN to send their peacekeeping troops to East Timor in order to secure the ballot which will be held in the coming August.
4. The U.S. government send an independent humanitarian team which will join the UNHRC and the Churches in Timor Leste to help the refugees in different parts of Timor Leste at this very difficult time.

Hereby my testimony and hope. It is our expectation that the suffering of the East Timorese finds its place in the heart of the government and the people of the U.S. Your involvement and support is very much necessary to carry out a peaceful process for resolving the East Timor problem. Your values of democracy will be at stake in the struggle of the Maubere people.

Long live democracy in America and long live the struggle of the Maubere people!

The Truth about Indonesian troops in East Timor

Manuel Dos Mártires

I was born in Dili in 1968 with a different name. When I decided to work as a civil servant at the East Timor military provincial office (Korem 164/Wira Dharma), I had to change my identity because I came from a family who joined the Fretilin party. If I did not change my identity I would not have been accepted to work there. I enrolled in that office as Manuel dos Mártires. I am the seventh child of nine brothers. Ever since I was in elementary school, I had been helping my parents supply logistics and medicine for my brothers who joined the East Timorese Armed Resistance (FALINTIL), or other people in the jungle.

I worked at the military provincial office from December 1987 until I left East Timor on December 10, 1998. I applied for the job intending to smuggle out as much data about the Indonesian Military (TNI) as possible. Fortunately, I was able to get a position as a computer operator in the Personnel Department. My job allowed me to carry out my mission, retrieving information about the TNI from the computer and relaying it to the FALINTIL and journalists. Thus, I came to know about the real strength of the Indonesian military in East Timor. I also found out that the TNI and the Indonesian government had continually manipulated the data they released about the actual number of troops on the ground, and that they had been lying to the world about this.

All this time, the TNI and the Indonesian government said that there were only 6,000-10,000 troops in East Timor. On the contrary, from the data I traced at the Personnel Department of the Korem, I learned that the correct number was up to 21,658 people, only counting soldiers officially registered in the government documents. Besides these "official troops," there are the "unofficial" ones (the wild troops), amounting to 11,000 more people. (I acquired this data from a special record kept at the Operational and Intelligence Department in my previous of-

fice and from the Tribuana Intelligence Task Force office). Indonesian troops still arrive both by a military-owned Hercules transport plane every Friday, and by the commercial ships *Dobonsolo* and *Awu*, on which the troops disguise themselves as ordinary passengers. The number of troops who come each week might be small, but they continuously arrive from the airport, seaport or from West Timor.

Recently the TNI generals have claimed that there is a civil war in East Timor. As an East Timorese, my experience tells me not to believe this. Ever since the Indonesian invasion in 1975, it was the Indonesian military which created a "civil war" in East Timor by forcing people to kill each other or by coercing people to become informants. People can not always resist this coercion because the TNI often threatens to kill them if they do not want to follow their orders. In other cases, the TNI officers offer money to those who are unemployed and poor if they are willing to work for the Indonesian military. They also promise these people that they will become the local leaders if East Timor remains to be part of Indonesia.

The Indonesian government claims that the majority of East Timorese want integration with Indonesia. Therefore, a referendum will cause civil war. I don't believe this is true. The Indonesian government is telling lies again. As is clear from the massacres in Liquiça, Dili and in other places, the members of the paramilitary groups received about U.S. \$30 per month and weapons to attack civilians. Worse than this, the military drugged the militia to make them very aggressive and eager to kill innocent people mercilessly. Whenever an atrocity happens, the Indonesian military is behind the paramilitaries. Some plainclothes soldiers merge within the paramilitary.

I dare to speak here in front of you because the United States is the most powerful country in the world, and can assert its influence on countries which continuously commit human rights violations. It is publicly known that the Indonesian military terrorizes, intimidates, rapes and kills people in East Timor. I believe this knowledge is enough to make the U.S. government pres-

sure the Indonesian military to stop its human rights abuses and let the East Timorese enjoy their right to self-determination. There is no other way -- the TNI has to get out of my motherland and allow us to choose what is best for us, a referendum toward independence!

Our suffering during 23 years of Indonesian occupation has been great. One third (more than 200,000) of our people has died because of brutal acts by the Indonesian military. People lost their parents, brothers and sisters, and they cannot live in peace because of terror and intimidation. My family, too, has experienced much suffering under this prolonged occupation. After Indonesian invaded in December 1975 and fought against Fretilin, three of my brothers joined the guerrillas in the jungle. My first brother, Carlos, died after being shot by the TNI. Then my second brother, Domingos, disappeared, and I don't know whether he is alive or dead in the jungle. My third brother, João, was arrested dur-

ing a clash with the Indonesian army and he is alive. I also lost hundreds of friends and close relatives killed and kidnapped by the military.

For 23 years Indonesia claims to have developed East Timor. This development, however, is not for the people. Only a small minority, like the leaders of the pro-integration groups and the Indonesian transmigrants enjoy this development.

Finally, I take this opportunity to ask the U.S. government to stop violence in East Timor by doing the following:

1. Pressure the Indonesian government and its military to withdraw its troops from East Timor.
2. Suspend any joint programs with the military and stop supplying military spare parts to Indonesia.
3. Urge the Indonesian government and its military to disarm the paramilitaries and stop distributing weapons to them.
4. Send UN Peacekeeping troops to East Timor before the ballot in August.

Women in East Timor and the Current Terror Campaign

Aryati, Indonesian human rights activist

I come here to speak on behalf of Indonesians who are deeply concerned with the deteriorating conditions in East Timor. The preamble of the Indonesian constitution states that "independence is the right of all nations." Yet the Indonesian government has denied the right of self-determination to the East Timorese since invading the country in 1975. As an Indonesian citizen, I feel responsible to the East Timorese people and ashamed of the unspeakable atrocities the Indonesian military has committed.

Women in East Timor

I first visited East Timor last August. Once Suharto had resigned in May, the political climate in East Timor had greatly improved. The repression had partially lessened because of the confusion in Jakarta.

The East Timorese were emboldened to speak out, hold forums, and demonstrate in the streets. The military was continuing to commit human rights abuses but the East Timorese were able to seize many liberties. It was the freest time there since 1975.

What impressed me most was the determination of the East Timorese to live normal lives, to send their children to school, to attend Sunday church in nice clothes, to tend their gardens. After living so long under one of this century's worst military occupations, they were using the brief, partial reprieve after Suharto's fall to fulfill their ideals of the good life.

I went to East Timor to assist a local women's organization establish a weavers cooperative. I met with women weavers in Maubara village in the district of Liquiça. As they led me around their village, in and out of their bamboo homes, I learned that East Timorese do not consider a home complete if it does not have a loom. The women's homes were in ill-repair, their diets were poor, their incomes were meager, yet invariably they reserved money to buy

the thread to weave cloth. This homemade cloth was neither intended for everyday use nor for sale. They wove to make things of beauty. The women generously gave me cloths and flatly refused to accept any money in return.

The next I heard about the women weavers, late last year, was that they had fled their homes and looms. They had taken refuge in the Catholic church building in Liquiça because of attacks and threats from the militias who had been armed and financed by the Indonesian military. Some of the women weavers were no doubt among the dead and wounded of the Liquiça church massacre on April 6, 1999. The staff of a legal aid organization, Yayasan HAK, which investigated the massacre at great risk to themselves, discovered that at least 57 people had been hacked to death by the militia members wielding knives and axes.

As has been reported by FOKUPERS, an East Timorese women's organization, the military-supported militias are especially targeting women and children. As the men in the villages fled from the militias, pregnant women, those who had recently given birth, or those taking care of small children have taken refuge in churches or large private homes. Many of the dead and wounded in the massacres at the Liquiça church and at Manuel Carrascalão's home in Dili were women and children.

Women have long been brutalized by the Indonesian military as I realized during my second visit to East Timor in December. I accompanied the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Violence Against Women, Raddhika Coomaraswamy. At that time, I had the chance to meet with about twenty women who were the victims of military violence. Some of them came with their children who were born as a result of rapes committed by the Indonesian soldiers. They were willing to come from the far corners of the island because they were desperate to have their grievances heard and redressed. I heard about one atrocity after another. Their unanimous plea was: "please, tell the Indonesian military to get out of East Timor, or else we'll never be able to live in peace."

The Military's Current Terror Campaign

From the events of this year, it is clear that the Indonesian military does not want to leave East Timor. When President Habibie announced in January that the East Timorese would be able to vote on whether they wished to remain as part of Indonesia or not, the military immediately began to intensify its war on the East Timorese.

While the Foreign Ministry has been negotiating at the United Nations since January about how the vote will be held, the military in East Timor has been conducting an operation to kill off prominent advocates of independence and terrorize the population into voting for the continuation of Indonesia's occupation. The Indonesian military is determined to prevent a free and fair vote since it knows that the vast majority of East Timorese will choose independence.

The military organized, financed, armed, and encouraged East Timorese criminals and thugs into militias and then set them loose like attack dogs upon the society. The military has destroyed the relative peace that prevailed when I was there last year and has plunged East Timor into barbarism. By now, it is difficult to determine how many people the military has killed so far this year. The human rights organization, Yayasan HAK, which usually conducts fact-finding investigations has been unable to keep up with all the killings. Moreover, the staff members of HAK themselves have been terrorized and its director, Aniceto Guterres Lopes, driven into hiding.

The military has forcibly driven thousands of villagers into open-air prisons where they are forced to sing the Indonesian national anthem and pledge allegiance to the Indonesian flag. The *Sydney Morning Herald* has called the enclosure in the town of Liquiça a "concentration camp." Needless to say, the August vote will not be free and fair if the military is allowed to continue herding people into camps and committing atrocities.

The U.S. Response

The United States government, at this critical hour, has the chance to ensure that the August vote is free and fair. The Clinton administration must abandon its customary practice of issuing gentle rebukes to the Indonesian military and take decisive, concrete action. Right now, the United States is doing nothing but allowing the United Nations to proceed with the preparations for the August vote.

That is not enough. The vote will not be free and fair unless the Indonesian military is forced to end its terror campaign and that is something the United Nations can not do. The U.S. government, however, does have the power to curb the Indonesian military. It could, at the very least, immediately cut off all arms sales to Indonesia a simple act that, astonishingly enough, the Clinton administration has refused to do. It could also persuade Britain to cut off its arms sales. Just last month, Britain shipped fighter aircraft to the Indonesian military.

The Clinton administration must not be allowed to claim that it does not want to disturb or offend the Indonesian military prior to the delicate June national elections in Indonesia. As an Indonesian citizen, I can assure you that the military is the greatest danger to the development of democracy in Indonesia. It routinely commits massacres in the twenty six provinces that are, unlike East Timor, legally part of the country. The military only creates unrest and disorder wherever it goes. It is one state institution that is above the law and completely unaccountable.

The Habibie regime which claims to be a "reformist" government has stopped short of reforming the military. It has done little to demand that the military take responsibility for the past and present abuses of human rights it has committed. Anytime a military atrocity or crime is exposed, the generals always speak of "oknum," a rogue officer disobeying orders. By now, with so many scandals exposed, the military will either have to admit that it is entirely staffed with undisciplined rogue officers or that it violates human rights as a matter of course.

If the Clinton administration continues to coddle the military, it will only feel emboldened to commit more atrocities. Only days after the Commander of the Seventh Fleet had a friendly chat in mid-April with Gen. Wiranto, the Commander in Chief of the Indonesian military, Wiranto's men in East Timor encouraged their East Timorese collaborators to go on a rampage and kill dozens of innocent civilians. Wiranto is clearly conniving in the violence in East Timor that has extended over a five month period.

We do not want the U.S. to bomb Indonesia to stop atrocities in East Timor. After all, such a bombing could kill me and many other Indonesians who are struggling against our government's occupation of East Timor. We are only asking that the U.S. stop helping the Indonesian military.

It is obscene for the Clinton administration to be following a policy of "constructive engagement" with the Indonesian military, a lawless institution led by men who should be treated as war criminals, while talking so righteously about countering Serbian atrocities in Kosovo. If the U.S. is willing to spend billions to stop atrocities on the Kosovo Albanians, it should be willing to save itself money by denying all aid to the Indonesian military.

Again, I want to assure you that if the U.S. government acts to end the military's illegal occupation of East Timor, it will be helping, not harming, the development of democracy inside Indonesia itself. The occupation of East Timor has been the military's major project for the past 23 years. If that project can be ended, Indonesians will be closer to ending the military's control over the Indonesian state and society. As Marzuki Darusman, Head of the National Commission on Human Rights has said, "The military is fighting for political survival in this country." If East Timor was let go, it would open up a chain reaction. Then you could easily shunt the military aside from politics. It's countdown time for them."

The Situation in East Timor

Arnold S. Koben, The Humanitarian Project

When Indonesia's longtime strongman, President Suharto, resigned from office last year as a result of the Asian economic crisis and was replaced by his vice-president, B.J. Habibie, there were some months of relative freedom, and the pro-independence sentiments of the vast majority of East Timor's population were on vivid display. In late January, in a surprise move, Habibie announced that the people of East Timor would be given the choice of "wide-ranging autonomy" or outright independence. (Ten United Nations resolutions have refused to recognize Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.) To far-off observers, it seemed as if the conflict was finally at an end.

In reality, military elements opposed the new policy, fearing that it could encourage secessionist movements in Indonesia. These elements struck back with a vicious and violent campaign throughout the territory, even as hopeful news of fresh diplomatic possibilities was emanating from Jakarta. Army hard-liners, including a group that conducted a merciless campaign against a nationalist movement in the Muslim province of Aceh in the early 1990s, which claimed thousands of lives, organized paramilitary groups to attack those favoring independence for East Timor. This has been coupled with a clever propaganda effort to portray the struggle as one between rival East Timorese groups, to mask the reality, namely the continuation of Indonesian military grip on the territory by any means necessary. Indeed, the Indonesian military presence in East Timor was heavier during my visit in March of this year than during earlier visits to the territory.

I feel a special obligation to appear before these distinguished committees today. From March 14 through 21, 1999, I visited East Timor, my third visit to the territory. The sense of foreboding was overwhelm-

ing as I traveled around the island. Bishop Belo was sure that there was a well-orchestrated effort by Indonesian security forces to foment violence, while spreading false information to create the impression that the people of East Timor were incapable of being independent. Everywhere I heard detailed accounts of brutal intimidation by the Indonesian army and East Timorese they had either forced or paid to join paramilitary groups, which are said to include plainclothes Indonesian troops and other irregulars. In a chilling threat, Indonesian military commanders had made it clear that if they had to leave East Timor in the end, they would not do so peacefully: "We came in blood, and we will leave in blood," one local commander had told the local people.

In the weeks that followed – that is, from March 22 until now – the Indonesian military clearly took steps to make good on this dreadful promise. On April 6, dozens were slaughtered by militiamen after taking refuge at a church in the coastal town of Liquiça, while Indonesian security forces either assisted the killers or simply stood by. Bishop Belo said that it was like a repeat of the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre. Then came the attack on the home of the Carrascalão family on April 17. The family elder, Manuel Viegas Carrascalão, a former local legislator, ran for help as he saw thugs rampaging down his street. He begged the local army commander for protection, to no avail. Ireland's Foreign Minister, David Andrews, was meeting with the military commander at the time as part of a fact-finding trip to Dili. Andrews stressed that despite official denials, cooperation between the militias and the security forces was clear.

A group of paramilitaries including plainclothes soldiers burst in and killed and maimed without mercy, targeting, among others, Carrascalão's son. The 18-year-old, Manuelito was viciously slain, his only crime assisting refugees who had come to the capital to flee military sweeps by security forces. At least a dozen people were killed. These defenseless people had been given shelter in the family home, which had seemed secure, a symbol of stability: one

brother, Mario, was the Indonesian appointed governor of East Timor for a decade, but recently came out in favor of independence, as had Manuel. It is a measure of how dangerous the situation has become that both brothers have taken asylum abroad.

I have attempted to follow events in East Timor over the past 23 years, both as a journalist and as a human rights specialist. But I would not have guessed just how brutal a bloodbath would be unleashed in the weeks after my visit. I had met with Manuel Carrascalão, in his house in the center of Dili, which was virtually destroyed on April 17. Evidently someone was trying to send a brutal message: oppose Indonesian rule and you may die. This message was not only aimed at the Carrascalão, of course: it was also a clear signal to the rest of the people of East Timor, few of whom are as prominent or well-connected. If even a family like this would be so vulnerable, what about everyone else?

While such things are taking place, with more killings of supporters of independence last week in rural towns, news from the diplomatic front seems positive, but has a surreal cast under current circumstances. Indonesia and Portugal will sign an agreement on May 5 that calls for a "consultation" of the population of East Timor on August 8, with the choices of independence or autonomy. In a grotesque corruption of language that would have made George Orwell blanche, some Indonesian spokesmen have described machete-wielding thugs as advocates of "autonomy." The paramilitaries have been going door-to-door, and in a bizarre rendition of ordinary electioneering, forcing citizens to sign forms in favor of continued Indonesian rule, which is now as it existed in the darkest days of the occupation.

The fear is that any election held under these conditions will produce the same result as in West Irian, where selected leaders coerced by the government voted to be part of Indonesia in a 1969 exercise known as the "act of free choice."

Only strong international pressure can prevent such a result, even with United

Nations observers present. But hard-line military elements might not be blamed for believing that Indonesia has little to fear from the United States and other nations, despite the fact that Jakarta now needs tens of billions of dollars in foreign loans to stabilize its teetering economy. Some retired army generals who took part in the initial stages of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor are said to be playing a backstage role in the current operations, and remember that the world did little the last time. Though the Clinton Administration and several other NATO nations plus Japan and Australia have applied some degree of pressure on Indonesia during the current East Timor crisis, it is far from clear how seriously this is taken by the Indonesian armed forces. Only last week, for instance, a retired Indonesian general was cited in *The Manchester Guardian* as saying that President Gerald Ford not only condoned the Indonesian invasion of East Timor when he paid a state visit to Jakarta in the days before the 1975 assault, he actively encouraged it. "[Ford] pretty much told us to do it," the general reportedly said. The implication of the general's comment at this moment is that the U.S. in the end will do little to oppose Indonesian policy on this issue.

At a time when Indonesia needs assurances of international financial backing, a different message can be sent. "Only international pressure can end the violence," a priest told me. The outcome in East Timor will be a crucial test of Western consistency at a time when the fate of the Kosovars is so high on Washington's agenda. The East Timorese are only asking for American influence, not troops.

Indeed, all of this may sound like Kosovo, but it happened in East Timor. It is an unfortunate fact that for much of the time that Indonesia has waged this war of subjugation, it has been supported with weapons and diplomatic backing by many of the same NATO nations now fighting in the name of humanitarian concerns in Kosovo. In a further irony, some experts believe that Indonesian military intelligence chiefs, calculating that the international community can

only focus on one foreign crisis at a time, have taken the opportunity to expand their campaign of terror in East Timor while the world is absorbed with events in Kosovo.

After I returned from my recent visit to East Timor, I was asked by a European magazine editor if such comparisons with Kosovo could possibly be accurate. In fact, many in East Timor, including Bishop Belo, have emphasized that their nation of 700,000 people has experienced conditions over the past 23 years that, taken together, tell a grim story akin to that of Kosovo. An estimated 200,000 people, or nearly a third of the

original population, perished from the combined effects of the Indonesian assault by 1979 alone: international relief experts said that war-related starvation in East Timor, where nutritional levels were far lower than in Kosovo to begin with, was even worse than disasters in Biafra and Cambodia. More recently, military operations led or backed by Indonesian forces have created about 20,000 refugees. Previous actions (or inaction) by the United States and allied governments helped create these conditions. It is now within our power to help the people of East Timor, and we must do so.

If you want to help move U.S. policy toward supporting East Timorese and Indonesian human and political rights, contact:

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