

Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor



APCET: child of a people's struggle



initiatives for international dialogue



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We Talk With Our Eyes

We talk with our eyes
Inside East Timor
We all know each other
Our sufferings are the same
Our eyes tell it all

Twenty years of death
Same years of struggle
Of faith in life
And of finally winning

Our resistance in the mountains
The hills and the streets
In the homes and the churches
In this country you call
Land of the crosses

Brave hearts and souls
Keep the stories in our eyes
Keep the dreams in our eyes
Keep them burning
Keep them burning
We talk with our eyes.

~ Gus Miclat
1996





Foreword

By Jose Ramos-Horta

Nobel Laureate, 1996

Prime Minister, Timor Leste, 2006 - 2007

President, Timor Leste, 2008-2012

Ten years ago, a new nation was born.

Timor-Leste, all of 14,874 square kilometers of verdant land and mountains with its over a million people entered the world's pantheon of new "democracies." The United Nations immediately welcomed the country as its 191st member.

This feat would not have been possible if not for the heroic struggle of the Timorese people who defied colossal odds in winning their rightful independence. Selfless and brave leaders, who were martyred, imprisoned, tortured or forced into exile valiantly led our people in their pursuit for self-determination. I have been honored to serve our people as their "Ambassador" to the world when our voices were mere whispers or not heard, or were stifled and stilled, or were drowned by the other great issues of the times; and as their Prime Minister and President during these recent difficult years of post-independence transition.

But our endeavors would not have also succeeded if not for the solidarity and steadfast work of our friends all over the world. But it is the solidarity and unrelenting efforts of our friends here in our region, under the banner of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor, or "APCET" as it was most famously known- that made a telling difference and help tip our struggle to an irreversible dash to victory. It was APCET that "broke the silence" among our neighbors about the dire and unjust situation obtaining in our land. It was APCET that pressured our neighbors' leaders to heed the wretched plight of our people. It was APCET that helped lobby the United Nations to intervene more reasonably—and forcefully- in determining the path eventually chosen by people. It was APCET which selflessly gave refuge to our people who fled to neighboring shores during the incessant carnage they were





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subjected to. It was APCET that mobilized a mass peoples and solidarity movement in the region that solidified our cause shaking the flimsy fraternity of governments with our erstwhile occupier. The veneer of amity and brotherhood was shattered by the efforts of APCET.

It is thus fitting that APCET- led by the forward-looking Philippine-based regional advocacy institution, Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID)- has produced a book of its work in time for the culmination of our 10th year of independence.

This seminal book chronicles the genesis of the coalition, the challenges it stared down, and the difficulties and risks its members willingly took in the name of solidarity for the East Timorese. Significantly too, the book provides lessons on solidarity work especially from the standpoint of "South" peoples for another "South" public, which our ever-shrinking global village can vastly learn from.

I am very proud and honored to have been a companion, supporter, friend, gadfly and partly responsible for APCET's existence. I am happy that APCET has meanwhile transformed into a broader solidarity and peace-building coalition for the region -- the Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC). I hope that APSOC continues the pioneering tradition of APCET, as there are still just struggles that need our support. I promise to do my best for the Timorese people to share our own solidarity the same way that we were blessed from those like APCET.

This book is a must-read not only for activists, historians, and development workers but also for politicians, donors, policy-makers and diplomats.

And especially for the Timorese people, this book will remind us that we were not alone in our brave and noble cause to win independence in 2001.

A luta continua!





Preface

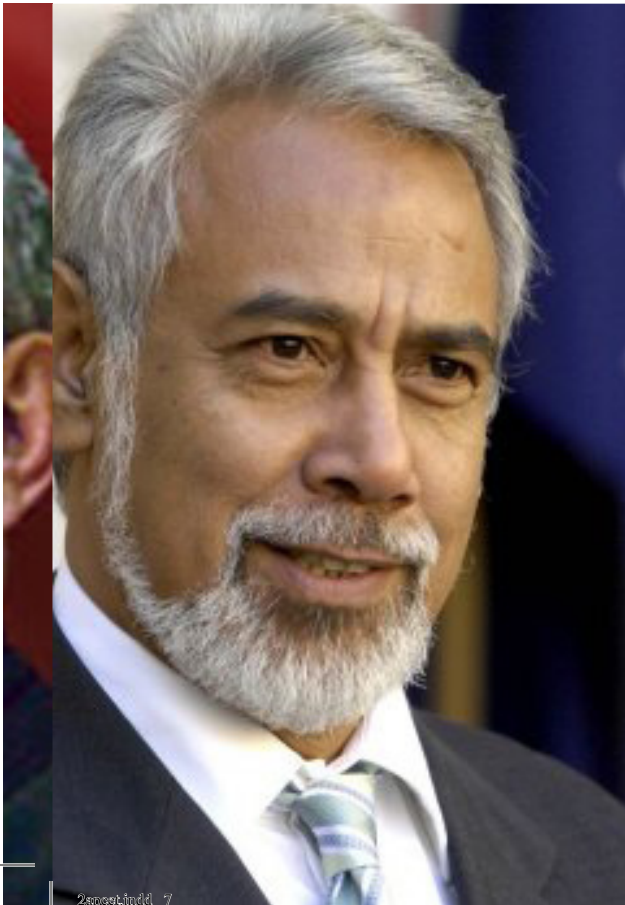
By Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao
Prime Minister, Timor-Leste, 2007- Present
President, Timor-Leste, 2002 - 2007

At a time when the occupation of East Timor and the Suharto Government's oppression of our small half-island country seemed unassailable, a modest group of civil society organisations decided to pool their resources to take up our cause. In doing so, they met head on the strength of the Indonesian military which had denied our people their right to self-determination.

With limited international public awareness, neighboring countries were able to ignore the rightful place of our nation and the legitimacy of our claims and

turned a blind eye to the violent occupation and our people's basic right to liberty. And so, it became apparent that international public opinion plays an important part in shaping foreign policy. Years of effort to engage the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations failed to produce a meaningful response.

The establishment and the ensuing effort of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET) provided a platform for the previously unheard voices of the solidarity groups into a coherent and effective voice, speaking for our people. This certainly played a significant role in changing public opinion against the occupation of East Timor. APCET





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became a pioneer, allowing civil society to become a fixture in the changing make up of regional and international relations in regard to the East Timor question. The defiance and perseverance of APCET and its affiliates to give voice to the Timorese people at every available opportunity, whether in official or unofficial diplomatic platforms, exposed the illegal occupation and promoted our struggle for self-determination.

APCET, composed of transnational non-government organisations and led by the Philippine-based Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), allowed for the creation of alternative channels for diplomacy. Transcending borders, nationalities and ideologies, APCET affiliates coordinated the activities of civil society organisations and mobilised social movements to raise public consciousness in support to the call to reclaim the rights and welfare of our people. While it may be argued that the influence of “people’s diplomacy” as advanced by APCET on formal diplomatic processes may be limited, the alternative platforms, agenda, and tireless lobbying implemented by the coalition expanded the breadth of the debates as well as those that participated in them.

The toll of occupation on the rights and welfare, as well as the lives and livelihood, of our people created an enormously complex socio-cultural, economic and political problem. The effects were evident in the strife that followed our independence and remain central to the continuing challenge of healing wounds as we face the ultimate challenge of consolidating democracy and nation building.

One constant however remains: the solidarity that the civil society organizations, and the social movements that composed APCET, continue to extend to our people, now the people of Timor-Leste, serves as an ongoing reminder that international solidarity does not end with liberation but is all the more important in building a nation that does not forget its past and looks to its future full of hope and ambition.





Acknowledgments

This book was a long time coming.

We had intended to put down in writing the more than 10 years of our work, in supporting the struggle for self-determination of the East Timorese through the regional solidarity formation that we helped establish: the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET).

Our purpose was to sum up our experience and draw valuable lessons and practices—both good and not so good—those were generated by our accompaniment so as to share the discourse to those who find themselves in akin situations today and in the future.

APCET—its acronym embodied what it set out to do—“upsetting” the then status quo about East Timor: Indonesian generals and politicians, ASEAN heads of state and foreign ministers, Western governments and corporations, UN officials, and perhaps some East Timorese too who believed that remaining as Indonesia’s “27th province” was the better fate for their people.

At the end of the day, APCET’s story is East Timor’s story. People, friends, groups like APCET were only there to journey with the East Timorese even if we resonated passionately with their issues. There are a lot of lessons to be learned in this relationship. Lessons that we could have learned and put into practice outright. Lessons learned from hindsight. Lessons that we only learned after some hard chewing. Lessons we learned after some comparative study. And there are still some more even to learn after we write this book. As some lessons are also reiteration of already those we know from previous experiences.

And like the struggle that we were accompanying, these lessons were learned the difficult way. Sometimes without the benefit of foresight. But most often only with the benefit of gumption and passion.

For this to finally see print we have many, many people to thank, a few of whom we can mention here. Our apologies to others who we will fail to cite but



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who have doggedly, unselfishly and quietly plodded with us in bringing this book about.

We thank Rommel Ab. Hipolito, wordsmith par excellence, veritable critic, sometimes hermit, sometimes heckler, who picked our brains, challenged or affirmed our assumptions, analyzed with us and finally weaved and made sense of our stories, putting them all in writing in this seminal work;

Erstwhile affiliates of APCET: Australian Coalition for a Free East Timor, Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor (Australia), East Timor Independence Committee (New Zealand), Center for Information and Reformation Action Network -PIJAR (Indonesia), Free East Timor Japan Coalition, Friends of the Third World (Sri Lanka), Indonesian People in Solidarity Struggle with the Maubere People -SPRIM, Korean East Timor Solidarity, Philippine Solidarity for East Timor and Indonesia, Solidaritas Timur Timor Malaysia, Thai Friends of East Timor, Asian Students Association (Hong Kong), Timor Lorosae Support Group (New Zealand), East Timor Action Network (United States), Hong Kong Round Table on East Timor, Indonesian Solidarity for Peace in East Timor (SOLIDAMOR), who responded to our entreaties to help us remember our stories and lessons;

Our previous donor-partners, NOVIB, HIVOS, CAFOD, TROCAIRE, CHRISTIAN AID, UMVERTEILEN, CCODP, X min Y, MISEREOR, who believed and supported our work in East Timor all those years;

Partners from around the world, Portuguese and beloved Timor supporter Prof. Barbedo Magalhaes, IPJET, TAPOL, ETAN, who all never wavered in supporting, complementing APCET's work;

The IID staff specially those who handled our East Timor program and saw this project through, Ms. Ruby Rose Lora and Ma. Carmen Lauzon Gatmaytan;

And most importantly the East Timorese people, their leaders, partner organizations such as KSI, Fongtil, Radio Rakambia, our former interns Antero da Silva, Lita Sarmento, Roberto Cabral, Micah Barretto, Jose Da Costa Magno, Jacinto Maia (+), Aurelio Freitas, Natalina Lidia Aparicio, Eurico Pereira, Diamantino da Cruz, Marquita Soares, Anwar da Costa and Jose Goncalves.

To all of you dear friends and comrades, our deepest, wholehearted gratitude.

Gus Miclat
Coordinator, APCET
Executive Director, IID





Xanana Gusmao with Gus Miclat, APCET Coordinator and Executive Director of the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), taken in Cipinang Prison in Jakarta, Indonesia, 1998.

Acronyms

ACET	Australian Coalition for East Timor
ACFOD	Asian Cultural Forum on Development
AIETD	All-Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue
ANP	Associação Nacional Popular
APCET	Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
Apodeti	Associação Popular Democrática Timorense (Timorese Popular Democratic Association)
APS	Asean Peoples' Summit
ASA	Asian Students' Association
ASAP	Action in Solidarity with the Asia-Pacific
ASDT	Associação Social Democrática Timorense (Timorese Social Democratic Association)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASIET-Australia	Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor- Australia
Cenpeace	Center for Peace Initiatives
CIS-GAMKI-GMKI	Center for Internally Displaced Peoples' Services
CNRM	Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Maubere (National Council of Maubere Resistance)
CNRT	Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Timorenses (National Council of Timorese Resistance)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAPSY	Democratic Action Party Socialist Youth
EABC	East Asean Business Conference
ETAN-USA	East Timor Action Network-United States of America
ETIC	East Timor Independence Committee
ETRA	East Timor Relief Association
Falintil	Forças Armadas para a Libertação Nacional de Timor- Leste (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor)
FETC (New Zealand)	Free East Timor Coalition
FETJC	Free East Timor Japan Coalition
FKPB	Forum for Disaster Preparedness and Response
FORUM-Asia	Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development
FPP	Forum Peduli Perempuan
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)
FTW	Friends of the Third World (Sri Lanka)





HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HKRTET	Hong Kong Round Table on East Timor
ICETI	International Conference on East Timor and Indonesia
IID	Initiatives for International Dialogue
INFID	International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development
IPJET	International Platform of Jurists for East Timor
IPT	International Peoples' Tribunal for East Timor
KETS-South Korea	Korean East Timor Solidarity-South Korea
KONUCH	Korea NGOs Network
KOTA	Klibur Oan Timor Asuwain (Association of Timorese Heroes)
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NGO	Non-government Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PAHRA	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
PEACE-SET	Peaceful Settlement in East Timor
PET	Parliamentarians for East Timor
Philindo	Philippines-Indonesia Friendship Society
PhilSETI-Philippines	Philippine Solidarity for East Timor and Indonesia
PIJAR	Center for Information and Reformation Action Network
PO	People's Organization
PRM	Parti Rakyat Malaysia
PST	Partido Socialista Timorese (Timorese Socialist Party)
SOLIDAMOR-Indonesia	Indonesian Solidarity for Peace in East Timor
SOLTIMTIM-Malaysia	Solidaritas Timor Timur-Malaysia
SPRIM-Indonesia	Indonesian People in Solidarity Struggle with the Maubere People-Indonesia
TFET	Thai Friends of East Timor
TRO	Temporary Restraining Order
UDT	União Democrática Timorese (Timorese Democratic Union)
UK	United Kingdom
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	United Nations Mission for East Timor
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
US	United States
YALERA	Yayasan Lemona
Yasinain	Yayasan Ina Makbalin
YPI	Yayasan Peduli Indonesia



I ntroduction

About 40 years ago, Jack Woddis advanced the view that “The modern colonial system matured at the end of the 19th century as a consequence of the change from free competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism or imperialism.”¹ He cited three interrelated factors for this, namely: (1) the advancement in industrial techniques that made possible (2) the development and growth of large-scale industry which in turn led to (3) the concentration of economic and political power in a relatively few major companies and financial institutions.

In combination these factors redefined, according to Woddis, the “pattern of relations between European powers and the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.” That is to say, the relation changed from one of seizure and control of countries in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere to serve merely as military outposts, trading centers, and “white settlements,” to their direct and strategic control, exploitation, and political, economic, and socio-cultural subjugation as colonies.

Anyone with a little more than a passing acquaintance with world economic and political history would likely agree. The seized territories that eventually became the colonies did provide the industries in Europe with the necessary, and over time increasing quantities of, raw materials that supported industrial growth





and expansion. At the same time these colonies did function as new markets and capital outlets for the “home countries.” Then, too, the prospect of greater profit extraction given the cheap land, labor, and other resources in the colonies did goad European powers into maximizing their efforts in these colonies and in hitherto undeveloped areas throughout the world. This the European powers accomplished mainly in either of two ways: through forcible occupation and takeover, or in the guise of “friendly treaties” with indigenous ruling classes.

Such “old-style colonialism,” however, “[was] vanishing” by the end of the 19th century, Woddis maintained. Where in 1919 for instance, some 70 percent of the world’s estimated population, then of 1.8 billion people, lived in colonies or dominions, direct colonial rule in 1966 “had disappeared over most of Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.” The reason, according to Woddis, could be traced to the birth and expansion of socialism following the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The next 25 years after 1917, Woddis said, saw the emergence of national liberation movements throughout Africa and Asia. Such struggles for independence mounted despite the continuing grip of imperialism on most colonies. This owed in large measure, Woddis asserted, to the evolution of “modern class forces in the colonial countries – [the] national bourgeoisie, intelligentsia and working class ...” He proceeded to note that in 1945 liberation uprisings, including mutinies, took place in Asia – notably in Vietnam, Indonesia, Korea, and India – and in Africa, particularly in Ghana, Kenya, Tunisia, and Morocco. Anti-colonialism sentiment in the home countries likewise spread, exemplified for instance by solidarity movements in France protesting the wars in Algeria and Vietnam, and in Britain against repression and apartheid in Africa.

Altogether the rise of socialism, the surge in national independence movements, and the strengthening of the working class and organized democratic and peace actions forced colonial powers to retreat and give up direct colonial rule, or what in 1945 was known as decolonization. “The adoption of the United Nations Resolution on the ending of colonialism was an expression of this changed situation in the world,” Woddis wrote.

Reynaldo Ty made similar observations in a treatise on the general crisis of the world economy.²





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The issue this time was East Timor's assertion of its right to freedom and self-determination.

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According to Ty, the first stage of the general crisis occurred during the 1917 October Revolution in the Russian Empire from which emerged the world socialist system. The second stage came in the 1940s at the end of WW II. At this time countries in Africa and Latin America fought for and won their independence from colonialism. “It was also during this period that China won the first socialist revolution in Asia, and Cuba in the Americas. These two socialist victories aggravated the crisis of the world capitalist system and ushered in the epoch of anti-colonialism,” Ty argued.

He added that it was during the second stage that “many newly independent states ... joined the ranks of the socialist world.”

The third stage according to Ty took place in the 1950s and “involved the intensification of the antagonistic tendencies inherent in the capitalist system... With socialism emerging as a challenge and with colonialism generally proscribed, major economic powers had to adapt to the new conditions by resorting to a new and more acceptable form of colonial subjugation: neocolonialism.”

To be sure Western powers did not lack in serious efforts at re-conquering former colonies or else re-establishing their political and economic influence in Asia and Africa. According to Woddis, “in the post-1945 period, western powers had striven to crush the movements for national liberation – in Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaya, India, Korea, the Philippines, Madagascar, and throughout Africa.” But these independence struggles proved too powerful and advanced enough that western powers had to rethink their strategies. And this, Woddis proposed, marked the beginnings of “neo-colonialism.” He wrote:

The Western powers have understood that in this new epoch they can only have influence in the new states by operating via the new social forces which have been thrown up into positions of power by the national revolutions; and this





means, above all, the new elite – the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the new administrators, technicians and military leaders, and the emerging indigenous capitalist forces.

Here again, one apprehends that decolonization had been more apparent than real, and that former colonial powers did not actually totally relinquish or otherwise completely lose their hold on now-independent states. If anything, they secured more firmly their exploitative stranglehold in the former colonies. The new spin was that, in addition to maintaining territories to support home economies in the form mainly of trade and some such economic arrangements, western powers must contend with keeping these same former colonies “from breaking out of the orbit of capitalism” and moving toward socialism. This in essence explained their core strategy of developing strategic economic, political, and military alliances with emergent social forces in the new states. And they succeeded famously, as evidenced by the continuing clout of western countries since the post-WW II period not only in the former colonies, but globally as well.

Even so, with the spread of socialist influence in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa, the hegemonic competition between capitalism and socialism intensified. In time the world became sharply divided, not only along ideological lines, but also in economic terms, particularly in the late 1950s through the mid-1970s. Such economic dichotomization even among capitalist states found succinct expression in the lexicon of the late 1960s that inter alia defined the industrialized “have” countries in contradistinction to the underdeveloped “have not” economies. The language of polarity was no mere cant. It was in fact articulate proof that political independence did not necessarily mean economic liberation and stability for former colonies and territories. This led to political and economic engagements between the have and have-not countries.³

It was from those early engagements that the so-called North-South dialogues and later the South-South dialogues between and among civil society groups and between civil society organizations and governments took shape in the 1980s.⁴ These encounters primarily sought to address prevailing inequalities in inter-country political relations and unfair economic practices and arrangements, many of which dated back to pre-decolonization periods.





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The 1960s jargon of economic and political disparity likewise proved the fact that, the founding of the United Nations in 1945 notwithstanding, decolonization was by and large still a myth. The reality was that certain “decolonized” states continued to struggle against illegitimate political and economic subjugation by external powers, old or new.

East Timor, until a few years ago the strife-torn half of the crocodile-shaped island of Timor 400 miles north of Australia and 1,300 miles east of Jakarta (Indonesia), is a case in point.

When Portugal all but abandoned it in 1974 after 400 years of colonial rule, East Timor had to wage resistance for more than twenty years to free itself from Indonesia, which occupied and annexed it in 1975. But unlike in other parts of the world, this time it was not socialism that was in dispute, although fears for its own security and stability figured high in Indonesia's decision to invade East Timor. Neither was the ascendancy of a new bourgeoisie, intellectual elite or strong working class the issue, for no such ascendant force existed then. In fact, if anything, divisiveness among political parties wracked East Timor following the collapse of the fascist Caetano regime in Portugal in 1974 and pushed the tiny island half to a bloody civil war.

The issue this time was East Timor's assertion of its right to freedom and self-determination. It was this assertion that ushered in the long-running Maubere People's resistance movement, the same struggle for *ukun rasik an* that later gave birth to APCET – the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor.





New coalition for self-determination and demilitarisation in the Asia-Pacific region

The Asia Pacific Coalition for E-Timor will transform into a new coalition with a focus on issues of self-determination and demilitarisation in the Asia-Pacific region, which includes several UNPO members (Shan, Karenni, Mon, Chin, Aceh and W-Papua)

The Asia Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET) is a coalition of Asian human rights groups and East Timor solidarity networks that was founded at a conference in Manila in 1994 with the aim of galvanising solidarity with East Timor's struggle for national self-determination.

With East Timor having won its political independence, the fifth and final APCET conference, held in Dili on May 15-19, decided to transform APCET into a new coalition with a focus on issues of self-determination and demilitarisation in the broader Asia-Pacific region.

The conference was attended by 150 delegates. Australian organisations represented at the conference were Action in Solidarity with Asia and the Pacific (ASAP) and the Australian Coalition for East Timor (ACET). Representatives from Burma, Aceh, West Papua, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Mainland, Malaysia and Indonesia highlighted the peoples' struggles in those countries and emphasised the useful role a more far-reaching solidarity coalition could play in the region.

Activists and human rights workers from East Timor also supported the resolution to expand APCET's brief, and decided to form their own solidarity organisation, which will be part of the new grouping.

During the fifth APCET meeting several statements on UNPO members were made.

On Aceh:

- To call upon both the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to resume peace negotiations in Aceh and allow the inclusion of civil society as part of this democratic process
- To call for amnesty for all political prisoners in Aceh, including the thousands detained during the one year martial law period from May 2003-2004

- To call upon the Indonesian government to stop the isolation of political detainees by transferring Acehese prisoners from Aceh to prisons elsewhere in Indonesia

On Burma (Shan, Karenni, Mon, Chin):

- To demand the release of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and other NLD leaders and the release of all political prisoners in Burma
- To support the call for tripartite dialogue between the NLD, ethnic nationalities and the Burmese military regime
- To stop all forms of human rights violations (particularly sexual violations against ethnic women of Burma, and forced labour practices)

On West Papua:

- To demand that the Indonesian government stop their policy of dividing the Papua province
- To call upon the Indonesian government and the West Papuan people to resolve the problems of West Papua through peaceful dialogue
- To call upon the UN Secretary-General to review the UN's role in the Act of Free Choice (PEPERA) in 1969.

(This article was compiled with information from Initiatives for International Dialogue and Green Left)



DECEMBER 1, 1998
11:10 AM
FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE
CONTACT: East Timor
Action Network
John Miller (718)596-7668

Nobel Peace Laureate Calls For Immediate Release Of Malaysian Pro- Reform Leader

NEW YORK - December 1 - Nobel Peace Co-Laureate Jose Ramos Horta today called for the immediate release of the leader of Malaysia's pro-reform movement, and one of the founder members of the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET), who was re-arrested immediately yesterday after being released on bail.

The arrest marked the third time that Tian Chua, chairman of the Coalition of People's Democracy, has been detained since the pro-democratic reform group was set up a week after the September arrest of former Malaysian deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim.

"Tian Chua is in the forefront for the struggle of freedom and democracy in Malaysia and is well-known in the region for his brave stand against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor," said Ramos-Horta.

"When the Suharto regime was using bully-boy tactics in ASEAN to prevent the East Timor issue from being openly debated in the region, Tian Chua and other Malaysians together with other brave activists in the Philippines and Indonesia stood up against Jakarta through APCET."

"Now, when Malaysia is besieged by the autocratic

Mahathir regime Tian Chua has committed himself to fighting the draconian Internal Security Act, which allows for detention without a trial for two years, and campaigning for a free and fair trial for Anwar Ibrahim," added the Nobel Peace Co-Laureate.

"I demand that the Malaysian police immediately release Tian Chua and all those arrested at the pro-reformasi demonstrations. I also condemn the police violence that has been used against Tian Chua while he was detained," said Ramos-Horta.

"Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad together with his gestapo-like police force, in their vendetta against reform-minded Anwar Ibrahim, is ripping away the foundations of justice and democracy in Malaysia. This has to stop immediately."

28 October 2000

by Augusto N. Miclat, Jr.

The Fourth Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET 4) on November 26 to 30, 2000 (Sunday to Thursday) in Baucau, East Timor. The conference will be historical on two counts: first, after three conferences, held respectively in Manila, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, it will be held for the first time inside East Timor; and secondly, it will be held in an independent Timor Loro Sae. The conference is organised by the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor. Think Centre will be sending representatives to observe the meeting.

The previous APCET conferences have charted the direction of the broad coalition in its solidarity struggle with East Timor. This conference is aimed at plotting APCET's response to East Timor's efforts to achieve full political and economic independence. APCET 4 will also serve as the forum in discussing the coalition's new thrust in helping empower the grassroots organizations and consolidating East Timorese civil society.

The conference theme will be: "Building an Independent East Timor: Empowering the Grassroots, Consolidating Civil Society." The venue will be the Diocesan Center in Baucau, about three hours ride from the capital Dili. .

The conference program will include a pre-conference activity- the immersion visit which aims to acquaint delegates with the on-the-ground situation and needs of the East Timorese communities; and the two-day actual conference plenaries. Expected arrival time will be (Saturday), a day before the immersion visit.

For further information

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APCET 5 Conference Statement

by Initiatives For International Dialogue on May 19,
2004 in Press Releases, Solidarity Building

The Fifth Conference of the Asia Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET 5) held in Dili from 16 – 19 May 2004, affirms the success of APCET in: bringing organizations from all over the region together to work in solidarity for the continuing liberation of the people of Timor Leste; developing a spirit of cooperation which contributed to the eventual ending of the Indonesian occupation of Timor Leste and creating an atmosphere in which the struggles of the past can be used to inspire others.

The Fifth Conference of the Asia Pacific Coalition for East Timor: International Solidarity and the Continuing Quest for Justice, held in Dili from 16 – 19 May 2004, affirms the success of APCET in:

bringing organizations from all over the region together to work in solidarity for the continuing liberation of the people of Timor Leste developing a spirit of cooperation which contributed to the eventual ending of the Indonesian occupation of Timor Leste and creating an atmosphere in which the struggles of the past can be used to inspire others.

This spirit must continue in order that the current problems of this emerging nation of Timor Leste are addressed so that it can play a successful role in its own development.

We recognize that the

struggle of the Timor Leste people is not yet complete: they face grave issues of poverty, economic dependency and political domination by outside forces, and indications of corruption in governance and bureaucracy. Confronting these will involve the strengthening of the capacity of civil society to play a full part in the nation's development.

It will also involve the rights of the Timor Leste people to develop their own independent institutions, to build a new society free from any external domination.

In order to achieve these objectives, the APCET 5 Conference resolves the following to continue our solidarity with the people of Timor Leste. APCET 5 will:

On Timor Gap:

Actively support the resolution of the Australia-Timor Leste maritime boundary dispute by urging the Australian government to:

Respect the sovereignty of Timor Leste and negotiate a fair maritime boundary within a period of three years according to contemporary international legal principles.

Rejoin international arbitration mechanisms such as the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

Cease issuing new exploration licenses in

disputed areas

Place all revenues from fields in disputed areas into an escrow account until a permanent maritime boundary is finalized

Demand that the UN take initiatives to mediate and facilitate the maritime boundary disputes between Australia and Timor Leste.

On Indonesia:

We are also disturbed that the Timor Leste leadership have succumbed to the pressure by Jakarta to cancel the trial of Gen. Wiranto for his role in the 1999 destruction of Timor Leste.

Therefore we urge the Timor Leste leadership to stand firm in the wake of political and military pressure from Jakarta.

On Justice:

Assist victims of atrocities through all possible legal and political means including submitting the public indictment papers of APCET 5 to the UN

Explore other activities to provide justice to victims in Timor Leste such as the filing of individual cases in Indonesian and Timorese courts

Identify and mobilize lawyers who will study the requirements of a Peoples' Tribunal for Timor Leste

On celebrating solidarity:

Propose and help set up a solidarity museum in Timor Leste where APCET affiliates can showcase materials celebrating our solidarity with the people of Timor Leste.





The success of East Timor's independence struggle is a valuable experience for the region to share and is a sign of hope for those still in struggle. APCET 5 will further this objective of raising hope through shared experience by:

Forming a Timorese solidarity organization through the creation of a Timorese organizing committee composed of PSMTL, ARKTL, Caritas-Dili, TILAN and other interested bodies. The Timorese organizing committee will formalize their organization by August 2004 with the assistance of the APCET secretariat.

Transforming itself into a broader regional solidarity coalition. An ad hoc regional working group will be set up for the new regional solidarity coalition; this ad hoc working group is tasked to prepare the first council of the new regional solidarity coalition within one year.

APCET 5 is also an expression of solidarity with the people of the region who have contributed to the struggle of East Timor, often while enduring struggles of their own.

APCET 5 resolves to take the following actions of solidarity in the region:

On Impunity:

To urge Asia-Pacific countries to ratify and implement the Rome Treaty that established the International Criminal Court to stop impunity in the region and to prevent future serious crimes

On Indonesia:

To oppose remilitarization in Indonesia, including the presidential candidacy of Gen. Wiranto, and its implications for the region, especially since he still has

to stand for trial for crimes against humanity

On Aceh:

To call upon both the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to resume peace negotiations in Aceh and allow the inclusion of civil society as part of this democratic process

To call for amnesty for all political prisoners in Aceh, including the thousands detained during the one year martial law period from May 2003-2004

To call upon the Indonesian government to stop the isolation of political detainees by transferring Aceh prisoners from Aceh to prisons elsewhere in Indonesia

On Burma:

To demand the release of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and other NLD leaders and the release of all political prisoners in Burma

To support the call for tripartite dialogue between the NLD, ethnic nationalities and the Burmese military regime

To stop all forms of human rights violations (particularly sexual violations against ethnic women of Burma, and forced labour practices)

On Sri Lanka:

To urge the Sri Lankan government to accept and recognize the interim self-governing authority supported by the Tamil people; and the international community to support the immediate resumption of peace talks in Sri Lanka

On Mindanao:

To support the struggles and aspirations of the Mindanao peoples, including the Bangsamoro and Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and self-governance through just,

peaceful and democratic processes such as a referendum

On Thailand:

To call upon the Thai government to respect the human rights of Pattani people and to ensure protection of human rights defenders and NGOs in Southern Thailand

To call for a peaceful resolution to the conflicts in Southern Thailand

On West Papua:

To demand that the Indonesian government stop their policy of dividing the Papua province

To call upon the Indonesian government and the West Papuan people to resolve the problems of West Papua through peaceful dialogue

To call upon the UN Secretary-General to review the UN's role in the Act of Free Choice (PEPERA) in 1969.

We celebrate 10 years of APCET existence with joy and success, and we are proud that our solidarity has contributed to fulfillment of the dream of an independent Timor Leste. We look forward to the continuing journey of a more challenging time. APCET, as a coalition, or in the capacity of its individual members, will continue to work to strengthen regional solidarity to strive for democracy, justice and the genuine independence of all peoples.

A luta continua!

*Adopted by APCET 5
Instituto Reformacao
Continua de Profesores
Dili, Timor Leste
19 May 2004*



Rich, Poor Timor

Underdevelopment Despite

The island of Timor is located east of the Indonesian archipelago between latitudes 8°17'S and 10°22'S and longitudes 123°25'E and 127°19'E.⁵ Measuring roughly 34,000 square kilometers, Timor is about the size of The Netherlands.⁶ East Timor, for more than four centuries a colony of the Portuguese, covers 14,925 square kilometers, including the enclave of Oecussi and the island of Atauro.⁷ The western part of the island, once ruled by the Dutch, has been part of Indonesia since 1945 when Indonesia became a republic.

Timor is mountainous and has pronounced wet and dry seasons. The southern coastal plain, wide with swampy areas at the river deltas, allows for two harvests a year while the drier northern coastal range, which rises steeply above the sea, makes for only one annual harvest. Apart from the now-scarce sandalwood whose oil is prized chiefly for use in perfumes, the Timorese also grow and export coffee, copra, rubber, tobacco, peanuts, and beeswax. Coffee accounts for some 80 percent of total export earnings. Timorese food crops consist of their staple diet maize, rice, wheat, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava, sago, vegetables, and tropical fruit.





Beneath the waters of what is known as the Timor Gap rests one of the world's richest oil deposits with a volume of from one to six billion barrels and gas reserves of up to 17 billion cubic meters.

In the past two groups of people dominated Timor. These were the “dry land people,” also known alternately as (1) Atoni Pa Meto, Dawan, or Jaikeru and (2) the Belu. The Atoni, who were of Austronesian, Malay, and Melanesian descent, were believed to be the first inhabitants of Timor. The Belu, on the other hand, arrived in Timor between 3000 and 200 BC and occupied the eastern part of the island.⁸

Long before Europeans came to Timor, Chinese, Arab, and Gujerati traders already frequented East Timor in search of sandalwood.⁹ After the Portuguese, the Dutch were the next Europeans to sail into Southeast Asia. They succeeded in dismantling Portuguese monopoly in the region, except in Macau and Timor. It was not until the 17th century that the Portuguese and the Dutch settled their dispute over the sandalwood trade. They agreed on Portuguese control over the eastern half of Timor, Dutch rule in the western part (which later became Indonesian West Timor).

The Timorese today are recognized to be made up of about 16 ethno-linguistic groups. Portuguese is the official language even as the various indigenous languages remain alive. In East Timor, Tetum (also called tetun and teto) is the acknowledged lingua franca. It is also widely used in West Timor.

From 609,477, based on a 1970 census, East Timor's population grew to about 670,000 in 1975.¹⁰ Although roughly 30 percent of East Timorese converted to Catholicism in the 1970s, and a smaller albeit undetermined number to Islam, the majority had remained animists. Today about 90 percent of the East Timorese are

“ It was this Maubere spirit that, despite devastating military setbacks, carried Fretilin, the entire resistance movement, and all pro-independence East Timorese through the long-drawn-out war against Indonesia. ”



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Catholics.¹¹ The population of about 800,000 is 78 percent Timorese, 20 percent Indonesian, and two percent Chinese.

For all its rich resources, however, East Timor was for 400 years among the least developed of Portugal's colonies. One may conjecture that such underdevelopment traces partly to the fact that from the beginning, Portugal ruled East Timor indirectly through the independent reinos (traditional kingdoms).¹² The different rulers, called liurais, collected taxes on behalf of Portugal and instituted forced labor for Portugal's ventures in the island.

Obviously, keeping the people fragmented and under continuous poverty, at generally low levels of literacy, made for easier control. Thus, Portugal must have seen no reason to consolidate or otherwise integrate these kingdoms into one political and economic structure or system.

Then again, colonialism in East Timor, as elsewhere, was nearly totally extractive in nature, with hardly any provision for the replenishment or regeneration of withdrawn resources or benefits. Apparently, the Portuguese did not see any need to be different from other colonialists by consciously developing its territories and the people therein.

After suppressing the bloody 1910-1912 Great Rebellion of liurais led by Dom Boaventura, Portugal abolished the reinos. It subsequently ruled East Timor through tiny, dispersed hamlets called sucos under chefes who took the place of the liurais.

World War II briefly interrupted Portugal's reign in East Timor. But immediately after the war's end, Portugal lost no time rebuilding the capital of Dili, Baucau, Ermera (the center of coffee-growing) and other towns and villages damaged by the war. Yet, beyond the towns and administrative villages lived more than eighty per cent of the population in the hundreds of tiny hamlets, in conditions that had endured with little change since the beginning of Portuguese colonisation.¹³





Misery of Destiny

Our old Timorese elite was no elite, just a bunch of civil servants who, in their everyday conversation, sinned by saying “for all intents and purposes,” “considering that...” and “the misery of destiny.”

— José Alexander Xanana Gusmao¹⁴

The Lisbon Coup and the Decolonization of East Timor

After the rebellion of 1910-1912 the East Timorese once more rose up against Portuguese rule in a short-lived revolt in 1959. Fifteen years later, they would get yet another crack at independence following the April 1974 “Carnation Revolution” (Revolução do Cravos) in Lisbon, Portugal. The collapse of the fascist Caetano regime paved the way for a democratic government that pursued, among other policies, the decolonization of all Portuguese territories. The decolonization process involved the lifting of political controls in Portugal’s former colonies and the organization of local political parties. Responding to the call of the Governor of East Timor in May 1974, five political parties emerged. These parties figured prominently in the struggle of the East Timorese to forge their own history.¹⁵





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The União Democrática Timorense (UDT) replaced the Associação Nacional Popular (ANP), the official right-wing Portuguese government party. In the beginning the most popular party, the UDT “advocated democratization, income redistribution, human rights and gradual independence as a federation of Portugal.”¹⁶ Supporting the UDT were “the colony’s small elite, high-ranking colonial officials, plantation owners, and regional chieftains.”¹⁷

On the other hand, the Associação Social Democrática Timorense (ASDT, the Timorese Social Democratic Association) espoused “the ‘universal doctrines of socialism and democracy’ and independence”¹⁸ and “rejected any form of special relationship either with Portugal or Indonesia.”¹⁹ Based in Dili, the capital, the ASDT had for its supporters “the new urban elites (mainly bureaucrats and teachers).”²⁰

A third party was the Associação Popular Democrática Timorense or Apodeti, the Timorese Popular Democratic Association. First called the “Association for the Integration of Timor into Indonesia,” Apodeti only had about 300 members and received funding from Indonesia.²¹

The other political parties were the KOTA or Klibur Oan Timor Asuwain and the Trabalhista, the Labor Party.

Despite this initial semblance of a march toward full decolonization the situation in East Timor after the Lisbon coup was tense. In his autobiography José Alexander “Xanana” Gusmão, who later became the leader of the Timorese independence movement, wrote,

*The political climate was now unpleasant. Hopes for the future were dramatized by the exodus of the colonists and a debilitated government, along with an army of longhaired soldiers mixed up with the “revolutionaries,” and a general climate of dissatisfaction and instability. There was a confusion of aspirations put forward by different small circles ...*²²

All this time Indonesia had been keenly watching the developments in East Timor. In June 1974, it assured the ASDT in writing that the “independence of every country is the right of every nation, with no exception for the people of Timor.”²³ Indonesia further assured the ASDT that “the Government and the





people of Indonesia have no intention to increase or expand their territory or to occupy other territories, other than what is stipulated in their Constitution.”²⁴

Interestingly enough, in early September 1974, Indonesian President Suharto met with Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam to discuss, among others issues, East Timor. Both agreed that “an independent East Timor would not be viable.”²⁵

In mid-September the ASDT renamed itself Fretilin, or the Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente. The change reflected the influence of clandestine East Timorese groups already existing before the Lisbon revolution and the liberation movements in Portugal’s African colonies.²⁶ The radicalism of Fretilin showed in its economic and social platform. Of all the political parties, Fretilin alone pushed for the expropriation of large landholdings, the awarding of idle fertile lands to peasant cooperatives, greater Timorese participation in local decision-making processes, and countryside health, education, and cultural programs.²⁷

At one point a Portuguese official who was working on decolonization matters chided Ma’Huno Bulerek Karatainu, Fretilin deputy chief of staff, saying

You should convince your colleagues to become more cooperative in the decolonization process. Your leaders have learnt a few Marxist phrases by heart on the steps of the palace, and when they ...start discussing the program of decolonization all they can do is spout those Marxist slogans, which don’t help at all!

To which reproach Ma’Huno retorted,

*For us it is ukun rasik an, self-determination. This is our problem. All the rest is rubbish.*²⁸

Indonesia apparently was wary of the Fretilin agenda and began to more actively promote Apodeti. It also supported regular Radio Kupang commentaries in West Timor that pictured Fretilin as “communist” and UDT as “neo-fascist.”²⁹ By October, Indonesia had launched a covert destabilization campaign called Operasi Komodo (Komodo Operation) consisting of infiltration and intelligence-gathering activities.³⁰ This even as Indonesia began preparations for a full-scale military undertaking.³¹



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In December 1974, Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik declared that the only options for East Timor were either integration into Indonesia or continued subordination to Portugal. Independence, Malik said, was unrealistic given the economic backwardness and weakness of the East Timorese.

Indonesia, it turned out, was dead serious about this.

The Civil War

Early the following year, on January 21 1975, Fretilin coalesced with UDT to facilitate the decolonization process. But during talks with Indonesian officials in Jakarta shortly afterwards, UDT leaders fell for Indonesia's bait. Indonesia claimed it would support independence for East Timor, but only if Fretilin was out of the way. It was a proposition UDT could not pass up. In May UDT officially withdrew from the coalition.

It hardly mattered to Fretilin, though, for by this time it had grown enormously popular. Indeed, when the last ballot of the July local elections supervised by the Portuguese Decolonization Committee had been counted, 90 percent of the elected liurais were Fretilin members or supporters.³²

UDT could not take the rejection. On August 9 and 10 it mounted several anti-Fretilin and anti-communist rallies in Dili. On August 11, it launched a full-scale coup.³³

Shoved to the mountains, Fretilin initially planned to call for peace talks with UDT. But it soon became clear that such talks were out of the question. On August 13 Fretilin called for armed struggle against the UDT to begin on the 15th. On the 20th Fretilin organized its military front, the Forças Armadas para a Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste or Falintil.

The political situation deteriorated, with fighting spreading to the rural areas. On the 27th, as the civil war raged, East Timor Portuguese governor Mário Lemos Pires and his staff abandoned Dili and fled to the nearby island of Atauro. Some 2,000 East Timorese also hurried to Atambua in West Timor and ended up in refugee camps under the close watch of Indonesians.

By September Fretilin had regained control of East Timor and freed all UDT





prisoners, including Xanana Gusmão, whom the UDT arrested on August 17th. But even after the hostilities had ceased, the governor refused to return to Dili and complete the decolonization process.

The Indonesian Invasion

In October Indonesia began armed incursions across the border from West Timor, forcing some 40 Fretilin troops in Batugade to withdraw to Balibo.³⁴ There, on October 16th, Indonesian soldiers killed five Australian journalists who had witnessed the border attacks.³⁵ No protest emanated from Australia.

To head off further encroachment on East Timor's territorial integrity, Fretilin decided on a unilateral declaration of independence. On November 28th, it proclaimed the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Fretilin believed then that being now an independent state, East Timor could call on the international community via the United Nations for a stop to Indonesian aggression.³⁶

Indonesia did not take kindly to the declaration. One analyst theorized that: *Indonesia's interest in East Timor ... indicated a deep apprehension at a possible threat to the security of the Republic which might arise from uncertain change in the adjoining colony. It is possible that the Suharto administration would have been opposed to the emergence of any independent state in succession to Portuguese rule. The advent in mid-May 1974 of a radical political movement with a measure of popular support generated an anxiety at the prospect of having to share a common border with an independent state of an unacceptable political identity. Its external affiliations could pose a challenge to Indonesia's interests through its very presence at the margin of a fissiparous archipelago.*³⁷

On November 29th in Kupang, "compromised UDT and Apodeti leaders declared East Timor integrated with Indonesia and invited the Indonesians to liberate East Timor, in the Balibo Declaration dated 30 November 1975 ..." ³⁸ As if on cue, Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik then formally declared that East Timor was now integrated into Indonesia.

With uncanny stealth, Indonesia made its next move. On December 7th, a day





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after the state visit of US President Gerald Ford and US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Indonesia invaded East Timor.

The invasion code-named Operasi Seroja (Operation Lotus) “consisted of a series of landings and assaults on Dili, Baucau, Liquica and Maubara on the north coast, on Lospalos in the east, and on Suai in the south near the border of West Timor.”³⁹ The marine and airborne troops that attacked Dili were equipped with US-made weapons.⁴⁰

On December 12, the United Nations, by a vote of 72 to 9 with 44 abstentions, called for the withdrawal of Indonesia from East Timor.

UDT, Apodeti, Kota, and TRABALHISTA, having heard the UN, promptly set up the pro-Indonesia “Provisional Government of East Timor,” aboard an Indonesian warship on December 17th.

On December 22nd, the UN Security Council unanimously condemned the invasion and instructed the Secretary-General to dispatch a special representative to East Timor.

Indonesia responded to this by sending 15,000-20,000 additional troops to East Timor on Christmas Day.

By February 13, 1976, two months into the invasion, about 60,000 East Timorese had lost their lives. This was according to Lopes de Cruz himself, former UDT leader who was then the president of the Provisional Government of East Timor.

On April 22nd, the UN Security Council voting 12 to none with 2 abstentions renewed its call for Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor.

If Indonesia did anything, it was to answer back in late May with a military-sponsored East Timorese “Popular Assembly” that drew up a petition seeking full integration into Indonesia. President Suharto signed the Bill of Integration on July 17th.

By November 1976 the East Timorese death toll had risen to 100,000.

On December 1st, the UN General Assembly voting 75 to 20 with 52 abstentions rejected integration and called for an act of self-determination.

Indonesia could not care less. By its assessment the UN was, one year after the invasion, still all bark and no bite.





The rest was a dark history of carnage that left at least 200,000 dead, or about a third of East Timor's population, since the 1975 invasion. It is a history of looting, rape, imprisonment without trial and with torture, unexplained disappearances, disease and mass starvation due to economic disruption, massive uprooting of people, and other atrocities that only rapacious aggression and war can wreak.

Protracted Maubere Resistance

But then again, the darkness that descended on East Timor was not total. Indonesia had thought that victory would be had within days of its attack on East Timor. It was dead wrong. It failed to reckon with the Maubere people's liberation movement that would fight to a stalemate all the way to the 1980s and beyond.

In colonial days up to 1974, Mau Bere was a pejorative term for "poor, ignorant, superstitious peasants"⁴¹ called Mambai, a people whom Tetum-speaking and coastal Timorese once regarded as the most backward of the island. The Mambai were, according to anthropologist Elizabeth Traube, identified as a group of ignorant, taciturn, withdrawn highland hillbillies. At the same time, a certain sense of awe and mystery hangs over them. They are portrayed as suspicious, careful guardians of traditional Timorese wisdom. These multiple images of the Mambai intertwine in the usages of "Mau Bere," a common Mambai personal name. During the colonial period, Mau Bere was a semi-derogatory tag for all the illiterate, ignorant impoverished hill people. Fretilin took up this Mambai name and made it one of the central symbols of the liberation movement. The phrase, "Mau Bere, my brother" became a pervasive refrain, a call for Timorese unity, for to be a Mau Bere was to be a "son of Timor."⁴²

The use of the indigenous word Maubere to stand for the Timorese people proved the ingenuity of Fretilin in converting cultural symbols into a basis for common identity and pride and into a strategic rallying cry for freedom and the right to self-determination.⁴³

It was this Maubere spirit that, despite devastating military setbacks, carried Fretilin, the entire resistance movement, and all pro-independence East Timorese through the long-drawn-out war against Indonesia.



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And in that war for self-determination, they were not alone.

Following the Indonesian invasion and through the 1990s, a worldwide solidarity movement for East Timor emerged. It stretched from Australia and New Zealand, to Portugal, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom in Europe, to the United States of America. Solidarity support involved not only linking up with international relief and development agencies, but ensuring the steady flow of information about East Timor to the rest of the world as well. This was critical in subsequent lobby work in the parliaments of Australia, Portugal, The Netherlands, and the UK, and in the US Congress.⁴⁴

About this movement, writer and advocate for East Timor, Carmel Budiardjo, is worth quoting here at length.⁴⁵

During the first years of the occupation ... there were many solidarity organizations in Europe and Australia which campaigned on the issue of independence for East Timor and support for Fretilin. This was particularly true of the Campaign for an Independent East Timor in Australia led by Denis Fehey... The Australia East Timor Association also came into existence in 1975 and kept up relentless pressure on succeeding Australian governments.

However, by 1979, Fretilin had suffered heavy defeat and for a time seemed to have all but disappeared. For the next few years, several Catholic groups and individuals in Australia played a critically important role by making contact with East Timorese who were stranded in Indonesia or who could be contacted in the territory; they succeeded in collating a wealth of information about the terrible sufferings of the East Timorese... In this phase, the emphasis was on the human rights and humanitarian tragedy ... and for several years the onus was on human rights organizations like TAPOL [the British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia] to keep the issue of East Timor alive. During this bleak period, the People's Permanent Tribunal held [court] in Lisbon in July 1981 before a panel of well-known jurists at which the Fretilin central committee made an indictment against Indonesia for its unlawful





occupation of East Timor and for the crime of genocide. The US government was also indicted for supporting Indonesian aggression. It was at this time that the Portuguese solidarity organization, the CDPM, was born and for years led by Luisa Pereira.

At another level, support was building for representations to be made at the UN's Decolonisation Committee whose agenda included East Timor despite intense lobbying by Jakarta. One of the first people to testify there as early as 1978 was [political analyst and linguist] Noam Chomsky. Attendance by activists from all over the world on East Timor's behalf became a regular feature at the Committee's meetings throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Gradually too the issue of East Timor was brought to the attention of members of the US Congress who, from as early as 1980, sent letters to the US Administration on a variety of issues, thanks to persistent lobbying by Arnie Kohen. The Washington lobbying paid off when President Reagan's visit to Indonesia in early 1986 was plagued with negative media coverage, even leading to several well-known journalists being refused permission to enter Indonesia to cover the visit.

In the UK Lord [Eric] Avebury, who had raised his voice from the very start ... condemning the [Indonesian] invasion pushed for a debate in the House of Lords in December 1980. The all-party Parliamentary Human Rights Group of which Avebury was chair repeatedly called for an arms embargo against Indonesia because of its occupation of East Timor.

Throughout the whole period, Amnesty International made regular interventions and issued reports on the human rights situation [in East Timor]. In 1983, the organization published an official Indonesian torture document that had been smuggled out of Indonesia by the late Msgr. Martinhu de Costa Lopez following his removal as the bishop of Dili.

In the UK ... in the early years ... the British Campaign for an Independent East Timor (BCIET) spearheaded the movement, with TAPOL closely involved in that campaign but also conducting its own activities and information gathering. After 1979, BCIET became defunct and it was





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TAPOL that remained to keep the issue alive. In 1984 the British government concluded its first contract to sell Hawk aircraft to Indonesia. This led to a fruitful partnership [by TAPOL] with Campaign against Arms Trade. During the 1980s, church-based organizations [also] took up the campaign with vigor, especially the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) and CAFOD, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development. BCET, the British Campaign for East Timor drew together all these NGOs and a number of peace groups, and grew in strength especially after launching a campaign for support following the Santa Cruz Massacre in November 1991.

This was the phase of building an international solidarity network and strengthening support for East Timor among parliamentarians. From the early 1980s as contact with Falintil and its leader Xanana Gusmão was gradually re-established, solidarity organisations were formed in many European countries which held annual consultations, with each organisation taking turns to host the gathering. Now the issue was the need for peace talks under the aegis of the UN, and when the level of fighting grew intense, for a ceasefire, and exposing the consistent pattern of human rights violations. Although this was primarily a European network, the Free East Timor Japan Coalition (FETJC) also began to attend the meetings.

In June 1988, a UK-Japanese parliamentarian mission visited Portugal for meetings with Portuguese MPs, which led to the establishment of Parliamentarians for East Timor that Lord Avebury chaired. PET undertook a number of international actions, including making representations to the UN Secretary General about the fate of East Timor.

In Canada a solidarity group called East Timor Alert Network was set up in the late 1980s on the initiative of photographer Elaine Briere (whose photographs in 1974 of East Timor villages and villagers were "later used extensively by solidarity groups in their publications)."

The Santa Cruz Massacre [of November 12, 1991] left nearly three hundred young people dead, but the presence of foreign journalists and a cameraman generated world attention when footage of the massacre at the





cemetery taken by Max Stahl were shown on television screens worldwide. For the first time, Indonesian brutalities were made visible and stirred an unprecedented level of anger. This inspired the birth of the East Timor Action Network (ETAN), a solidarity organisation in the US. US journalists Allan Naim and Amy Goodman who were also present at the Massacre and had almost been killed spared no effort to campaign in Washington and throughout the country, helping to build a powerful network of groups within ETAN which became one of the most effective Washington-oriented lobbies in the country.

*The film *In Cold Blood*, broadcast by Yorkshire Television in January 1992, using Max Stahl's dramatic footage, inspired activists in Ireland to create what was to become one of the most effective solidarity groups of all, under Tom Hyland, and soon to become a household name in the [Irish] Republic.*

No similar solidarity movement developed in Southeast Asia in the early years of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, but that was hardly surprising. Indonesia's immediate neighbors – namely Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines – all belonged to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), blithely bound to ASEAN's sacrosanct principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member-countries.

One would likewise note that ASEAN, other than being a club of US-backed mailed-fist rulers, was in fact designed to be a barricade against the spread of communism in Asia – the very bogey that Indonesia raised to itself but publicly denied was its reason for invading East Timor.

Under these circumstances, any attempt by any group to banner the issue of East Timor would have been crushed outright. Even that would have assumed that such a group had sufficient information on East Timor – which nobody had. Up to that time, East Timor was Indonesia's most heavily-guarded secret.⁴⁶

In any case, Asian civil society organizations were yet fledgling groups then and solidarity links within the Asia-Pacific area, if they existed at all, were not as manifest or prominent as they were a decade later. At this time, too, the Philippines





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was strangling under a repressive martial law regime, and resistance against the dictatorship left hardly any room for participation in a campaign on behalf of other similarly oppressed peoples or states.

But destiny would not be denied. Southeast Asian civil society organizations would eventually learn about East Timor and its benighted fate. The tale of woe would come from a leader of the Timorese liberation movement who early in his anti-colonial career was exiled to Mozambique for two years for his political beliefs.⁴⁷ Three days before the 1975 Indonesian invasion, he left on a mandate to lead an international campaign on the East Timorese struggle for independence and self-determination. While he was away four of his siblings died in the hands of the Indonesian invaders. He refused to return home and carried on with his mission. For his work he, together with East Timorese Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996.

That man was José Ramos-Horta.





Baptism of Fire

You couldn't have gotten better publicity if you paid for it.
– Rina Jimenez-David⁴⁸

*November 1992. Xanana is captured in Dili and many others are arrested also, including those who hid him and members of his family. He is taken to Bali and Jakarta amidst international protest.*⁴⁹

Bangkok, December 1992

Some 500 international delegates, most of them members of Asian non-government organizations (NGOs) engaged in human rights advocacy, solidarity, and social development work, met in Bangkok, Thailand for the second People's Plan for the 21st Century (PP 21) conference. As its name implied, PP 21 sought to outline, even if in broad strokes, a development agenda for the new millennium.

PP 21-Bangkok was also a kind of commemorative reaffirmation. Exactly one year ago a fledgling Thai democracy movement succeeded in restoring a civilian government in Thailand. The assembly thus served as an expression of solidarity





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and support for efforts of the Thai democracy movement to oppose attempts at a comeback by authoritarian elements in Bangkok.

One of the speakers during the assembly was José Ramos-Horta who represented the East Timorese Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Maubere (CNRM, or the National Council of Maubere Resistance). It was here that Asian activists learned a bit more of East Timor and its struggle, and also of Xanana Gusmão's arrest in Dili and subsequent detention in Jakarta a month earlier. This led to more serious discussions. The irony was not lost among the assembly participants: this tiny island half of East Timor was right in Southeast Asia and had been struggling against Indonesian oppression for the last 17 years, yet hardly any Southeast Asian civil society organization knew anything about it. And here they were in Bangkok talking of people's development in the 21st century!

The proposal then came up to hold a conference on East Timor and Indonesia in the Philippines, with Filipino Renato "RC" Constantino, Jr. as chair of the convener's group and the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) as the secretariat. Gus Miclat, IID's Executive Director, acted as the conference Coordinator.

After initial meetings with a broad gathering of Philippine human rights and other progressive groups, preparations for the proposed conference got underway in January 1993. The host group had agreed to call the affair "International Conference on East Timor and Indonesia" (ICETI) and set it for May 1993. Lack of resources and other pressing concerns, however, got in the way and forced the rescheduling of the conference.

February-May 1993. Trial [of Xanana] in Dili. He is sentenced to life imprisonment and refused permission to make [a] defense statement. He is transferred to Salemba prison then to Cipinang in Jakarta. Ma'Huno becomes leader of the resistance in Timor but is soon captured and Konis Santana fills his place.

July 20, 1993. Indonesian Government gives go ahead for talks between pro and anti-integrationists. Former UDT leader, Lopes de Cruz, heads the pro faction.





Portugal, August 1993

At a symposium in Oporto University, Portugal in August 1993 where ICETI convener RC Constantino, Jr. and IID Executive Director Gus Miclat met up again with Ramos-Horta and East Timorese representatives of Fretilin and UDT, they finally agreed to hold the twice-reset international gathering in May 1994. This was now to be called the “Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor” (APCET). Among the international groups in the Portugal symposium that signified willingness to co-sponsor APCET were the Parliamentarians for East Timor (PET) and the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET).

Hullabaloo in the Philippines

In November 1993 Philippine National Security Adviser Gen. Jose Almonte contacted Constantino, Jr. in what turned out to be the first of a series of probing and conference update-seeking. Apparently Indonesia had gotten wind of APCET and promptly conveyed its concern to the Fidel Ramos government. The planned conference simply did not sit well with Jakarta. It could not and would not abide the prospect of an Indonesian can of worms being opened for public disgust, and definitely not with the kind of foreign participants the APCET host group intended to invite.

As pressure from Indonesia built up through mid-1994, the Philippine government increased its own pressure on the conference organizers. Was it possible for the organizers, say, to move the affair to another country maybe? Or, if that was too expensive, can the conference generalize a bit the agenda on human rights? No problem if the conference focused on the Philippines’ own human rights record, sure. No? All right then, could the organizers perhaps change the title of the conference? Better yet, could the organizers just call off the conference altogether? Surely this was not too much to ask?

The convener’s group (Annex 1) declined, arguing that the conference was not going to be any rabble-rousing campaign, as Indonesia and the Philippine





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government believed, but an above-board private exchange of views on East Timor. In fact, the convener's group was going to invite the diplomatic corps, including members of the Indonesian embassy and pro-Indonesian integration East Timorese, to the conference to be held at the state-run University of the Philippines from May 31 to June 4.

The government persisted, saying the conference would unnecessarily risk political and economic relations with Indonesia and, ipso facto, jeopardize national interest. Already, Indonesia had threatened (and made good its word) to indefinitely postpone hosting the peace talks between the Philippine government and the secessionist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Indonesia added that if APCET pushed through, it would withdraw from the first East ASEAN Business Conference (EABC) scheduled May 26-28 in Mindanao in the southern Philippines. (Its withdrawal from the EABC effectively led to the postponement of the convention.)

Indonesia also intimated further political and economic reprisals if the Ramos government failed to stop APCET. This included its diverting elsewhere of some \$700 million (about P19 billion) in potential investments.

APCET persisted, too, telling the government how baseless its fear was that the conference would "be used as a platform for political propaganda against an ASEAN partner and brother nation" as President Ramos had put it.⁵⁰

Deadlock.

The media learned of the "negotiations" soon enough and it was split. There were those who lambasted APCET organizers for ignoring national interest and the need for the country to maintain friendly relations with Indonesia. Others rallied behind APCET, criticizing the government for kowtowing to Indonesia. Still others were wry. One put it thus, "Never have we had to pay so much for stepping on a banana peel."⁵¹

But as an analyst from the Asian Center pointed out, "the issue ha[d] escalated beyond human rights violations to academic freedom, freedom of speech and assembly, to assertion of sovereignty and independence from foreign, in this case Indonesian, intervention."⁵²





If APCET organizers, delegates, and supporters succeeded in internationalizing East Timor, it was because they held their ground or, more to the point, because they took the bull by its horns.



About which (the late) Sen. Arturo Tolentino lamented,

We are like the slaves of Indonesia. We have lost our national dignity, independence and national sovereignty. We are mere door mats of our neighbors.⁵³

But there was no mistaking it, not even with the government's charade of tactful importuning with APCET organizers, the Ramos government was bent on stopping the conference. But it knew all along there really was no way it could legitimately bump off APCET. It also knew it would run right smack against the Philippine constitution if it so much as hinted at strong-arm tactics.

At the same time, the government realized it could ill-afford a full-blown diplomatic row with Indonesia. As it was, Suharto snubbed a diplomatic mission that the Ramos government had sent to placate him. The only remaining option, the Ramos government thought, was for it to act fast, and boldly.

It did.

On May 20, invoking national security, the government ordered a ban on 34 foreign participants to APCET.

Topping the list of those barred entry were Danielle Mitterrand, wife of French President François Mitterrand, José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire and fellow Irish activist Tom Hyland (coordinator of the Dublin-based East Timor-Ireland Solidarity Campaign). Mme. Mitterrand was supposed to deliver the keynote address during the conference, while Ramos-Horta was to speak on the overall situation in East Timor. The First Lady of France would later disclose that she finally decided against attending the conference because of Indonesia's threat to make things harder for the Philippines.

Also in the blacklist were Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong (authors of





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The War against East Timor), Susan Castillo (a teacher at the University of Porto in Portugal and translator from Portuguese to English of books on East Timor), and (the late) Bishop Aloysius Nabuo Soma of Japan.

APCET organizers, delegates, and supporters slammed the ban. Even (the late) Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin assailed the government's attempt to stop the conference, accusing Malacañang of yielding to "outside pressure."⁵⁴ He also apologized to Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, apostolic administrator of the diocese of Dili, East Timor, that Philippine leaders "have so easily forgotten that the best way to express to God our gratitude for our new found freedom is to help those who are still suffering to gain theirs."

The government's ban stayed.

News of it traveled around the world, but that did not seem to bother Indonesia. In fact, Indonesian President Suharto was pleased with the government's ban on Ramos-Horta, saying, "President Ramos has rated friendly relations with Indonesia more important than a conference, which is obviously aimed at discrediting Indonesia."⁵⁵

But Portuguese Prime Minister Aníbal Cavaco Silva criticized the Philippines for yielding to Indonesia's pressure. "(The Portuguese government) thinks it strange for a country it considered a friend to give way in the face of a dictatorship," he said.⁵⁶

On May 27th a hitherto unknown clique called the Philippines-Indonesia Friendship Society (Philindo) materialized out of nowhere and managed to secure from a regional trial court a temporary restraining order (TRO) on the holding of APCET. According to Philindo, "the holding of the East Timor conference would violate the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia which established the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)."⁵⁷

The TRO was for 20 days, and the conference was only four days away.

But APCET organizers were undeterred and vowed to go ahead with the conference. Even if the court that issued the TRO threatened the organizers with the crime of treason that was punishable with death if the conference went ahead!





As this developed, a group of petitioners led by University of the Philippines Law Dean Pacifico Agabin asked the Supreme Court to nullify the restraining order stopping APCET.⁵⁸ The petitioners argued that Philindo had “absolutely no legal standing to prevent the holding of the conference” and cannot invoke “national interest and security of the State” as grounds for its petition for a restraining order.⁵⁹

Time was ticking away.

Finally, the breakthrough.

On May 31, barely three hours before the start of the conference, the Supreme Court ruled that APCET could proceed as scheduled.⁶⁰ The high tribunal, however, upheld the government’s ban on foreign delegates. It said,

Nothing in this resolution should be interpreted as impairing the constitutional and statutory authority of the President of the Philippines to exclude aliens from entering the Philippines when demanded by national interest and national security.⁶¹

APCET jubilated nonetheless. It was an assertion of “our right,” said APCET lead convener Renato Constantino, Jr., “We were prepared to take the consequences of setting aside the temporary restraining order, and the Supreme Court upheld our right.”⁶²

It was sweet vindication for APCET alright. This even as the organizers acknowledged that the panic-born blunders of both the Indonesian and Philippine governments had created the near-comedic brouhaha that afforded APCET free domestic and international publicity. APCET organizers at the outset would have been quite content with a few column inches in the local print media, and perhaps a minute or two of TV and radio air time on the side.

As one columnist wrote, if a tad too biting for jest:

As many have already pointed out, without Indonesia’s alarums and the Ramos administration’s pathetic attempts to mollify Suharto, the APCET conference would have come and gone without the Filipino public paying any special attention. It would have joined any of the dime-a-dozen regional and international conferences that Philippine NGOs convene.





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Today, even the international media have flocked to Manila to cover what promised to be a tumultuous conference opening. The eyes of the world are on Manila and on APCET, and East Timor has been projected to the international stage. Activists from all around the globe have joined a long line of foreigners jetting in for the almost-obligatory photo-op at the NAIA [Ninoy Aquino International Airport] before being driven away. Such a photo may well have become by now a status symbol among the world's peace and human rights advocates.

You couldn't have gotten better publicity if you paid for it.⁶³

What this columnist wrote may be so. The fact remained though that the events that crowded around the conference had simply assumed a life of their own. Who wouldn't be grateful for windfalls? Yet again, would the Filipinos and the world really have ignored APCET as another of those a-dime-a-dozen conferences if Indonesia and the Philippines had just held their horses, or to go by another metaphor, if they had not rampaged like bulls in a china shop? If APCET organizers, delegates, and supporters succeeded in internationalizing East Timor, it was because they held their ground or, more to the point, because they took the bull by its horns. What APCET drove home was a lesson not in obstinacy and heedless defiance, but in strength of conviction.





The Battle is Won: On with the Struggle!

*The message I, as a journalist, would like to convey here is that ...
democracy in Southeast Asia is not divisible. It's not for one person
to be in jail and terrorized, and for his neighbor to call himself a
free man.*

– Max Stahl⁶⁴

The Conference

The one curious thing about the furor was that when APCET finally opened, there was hardly any media coverage of the proceedings. Perhaps the banning of some of the prominent delegates had taken some of the luster off the affair. Or perhaps the local media had had enough of APCET for the nonce. Whatever the reason was did not matter much anymore to APCET organizers and participants. The important thing was the conference was on, with around 40 foreign delegates and 42 Philippine conferees, the convener's group and secretariat excepting. Considering the circumstances, it did not look like a poor attendance figure.

Expressions of solidarity and congratulations came a-plenty. There were those from detained Timorese leader Xanana Gusmão, East Timorese political prisoners





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in Dili, Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) Bangladesh, Agir Pour Timor (France), AKSI-Indonesia Solidarity Action Australia, Amnesty International Philippines, Human Rights Council of Australia, Malaysia- and Thailand-based NGOs, TAPOL, and the National Democratic Front-Mindanao.

Highlights

There were 15 speeches and messages delivered during the conference. The following are some excerpts.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves to remind the peoples of the world that we cannot overlook a nation's disregard for human rights, for such disregard results in barbarous acts which outrage the conscience of mankind. Our neighbor Indonesia must understand that we cannot officially close our eyes to the sordid human rights violations in East Timor, for this would compromise our commitment to human rights and betray us into a tacit support for a war without justification – (Then) Philippine Senator Wigberto Tañada

All people have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. The United Nations did not and has not recognized that the East Timorese exercised self-determination in regard to their integration with Indonesia. Nothing can ever justify the crime of robbing other people of their birthright to freedom and to determine their own destinies in the manner and through paths they alone have the right to choose. – (The late Ret.) Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan.

Even if one would accept the criterion of non-viability as a factor preventing the independence of a colonial territory, nothing suggests that East Timor can be considered as non-viable. On the contrary, everything indicates that the actual and potential resources of East Timor were one of the most important motives which have led to the occupation and annexation of





East Timor. – Pedro Pinto Leite, Secretary General, International Platform of Jurists for East Timor.

Korean people are morally obliged to stand in solidarity with the East Timorese because we share the experience of foreign occupation. I am ashamed that my country has indulged only in self-development and has been indifferent to the anguish of other people as the East Timorese. – Yong Wan Cho, Attorney-at-Law and Executive Member of Korea NGOs Network (KONUHC)

It is important to reflect that there also exists a dichotomy with regard to the pronouncements of several countries, most of them Western, vis-à-vis the situation of East Timor: while these countries display a concern for the continued human rights violations in East Timor, they continue to support the government of Indonesia in terms of political and economic treaties, arms trade, and foreign investment. While mouthing that human rights are universal, the governments of Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia insist on the concept of cultural relativism in the implementation of human rights. The theory of cultural relativism emphasizes the prevalence of cultural and historical variants as bases for deviation from the universality of human rights. Moreover, these same countries – while again maintaining the indivisibility of human rights and the interdependence of civil, political and economic rights – highlight the need to give priority to the rights to development and economic rights, over and above civil and political rights. – Atty. Cecilia E. Jimenez, Legal and International Affairs Officer of the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA).

The people of East Timor are aware that any attitude of inflexibility by the extremist will not favor a solution to the problem of East Timor. For this reason our method of struggle is based on moderation and flexibility, based on complete openness for dialogue. We remain ready to enter into





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a process of dialogue without preconditions with a view to exploring every possible solution beneficial to all parties involved. – Nino Konis Santana, Head of the Executive Council/Armed Front, National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM).

Men, women and children have been killed in these last twenty years without even the chance to make the world hear their cry. We are [here] to make sure that [the world would know of the] thousands of Timorese women being raped by barbarous men who call themselves soldiers and have been looting my country for the last nineteen years; we are here to echo the voices of those young women and children who have disappeared without a trace; we are here to raise the voices of these oppressed people. And for that, I do not apologize for using every forum on this planet to make the voice of my people heard; and I will make sure that their voices of freedom are heard; I will never allow the walls of dictatorship to silence them. Never! – Ines Almeida, an East Timorese exile in Australia now working as a volunteer with the East Timor Relief Association (ETRA), an NGO of both Timorese and non-Timorese. She was one of only three East Timorese to make it to the conference.

It was not an easy decision at all for Indonesian citizens like us to decide to accept the invitation of the organizers of this Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor.... Our constitution states that independence is the right of all peoples and because of that, colonialism must be wiped from the face of the earth because it is in conflict with humanity and justice. The people of East Timor must have these rights, as declared in our constitution. – Rachland Nashidik, Chairperson of the Center for Information and Action Network for Democratic Reform (PIJAR).

Even early on it was evident that political issues concerning East Timor, particularly human rights, would dominate the conference discussions. The





following resolutions, quite apart from the solidarity messages, reflected this preeminence:

1. Call for the release of Xanana Gusmão and all political prisoners, and for Xanana's participation in negotiations to resolve the East Timor situation
2. Call for an immediate ceasefire, the complete demilitarization of East Timor, and a fair and honest referendum under the supervision of the United Nations
3. Support the peace plan of the CNRM and other East Timorese initiatives for genuine self-determination, and actively campaign for the adoption and the popularization of the peace proposal at the regional, sub-regional, national, and local levels
4. Request the United Nations Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur to consult women in East Timor regarding atrocities against women, including sexual violence/rape by the Indonesian military in East Timor
5. Extend solidarity to the women of East Timor and support their efforts for their full participation in decision-making in society as well as in the struggle for self-determination as women and as East Timorese
6. Condemn Indonesia's forced birth control and aggressive family planning program in East Timor
7. Urge the Indonesian government to fulfill its promise to allow expanded access to East Timor for human rights and humanitarian organizations, the media, and UN special rapporteurs
8. Express support for the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia, particularly the activists who campaign for the East Timorese
9. Recognize the East Timorese as a sovereign people and nation, and
10. Affirm the commitment to help in the struggle of the Maubere people for genuine liberation in any way possible.

The conference likewise identified matters for immediate action.

One of these was for an appeal to countries extending official development assistance (ODA) to Indonesia – such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand – for them to urge Indonesia to begin steps to withdraw from East Timor.





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The conference also agreed to endorse or otherwise support the nomination of East Timor Bishop Filipe Ximenes Belo for the Nobel Peace Prize. Another proposal was for a mission to East Timor to look into the real conditions in the country. Finally, APCET agreed to bring up East Timor at the East Asia Growth Area Business Conference (on September 1994 in Davao City, southern Philippines) to begin applying pressure on Indonesia.

It was during the workshops, however, that the participants came up with the beginnings of a common perspective on ways to push Indonesia into giving back what it took away from East Timor: its right to freedom and self-determination. One gleans this coherent, if rough framework, from the following partial summary outline of some of the workshop results not otherwise specifically contained in the resolutions.

1. On human rights.

- The need to defend the universality and indivisibility of human rights, and to challenge the prevailing concept of human rights of most Asian governments and leaders

- A critical study of national security doctrines in the region with an eye to their overhaul

- The setting up of an Asian Human Rights Charter and Tribunal
- The need for human rights information to reach the grassroots

2. On Resource Mobilization and Development Cooperation in the form of

A. Political and Policy Advocacy

- Applying pressure on the Indonesian government to open East Timor to NGOs

- Supporting the diplomatic initiatives of the CNRM
- Supporting the Nobel Peace Prize Nomination of Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes

Belo, a staunch advocate of East Timorese independence

B. Capacity building for the East Timorese

- Sending fact-finding teams or study groups to East Timor
- Training exchanges and seminars
- Technology exchange and services





“

*Expressions of solidarity and congratulations
came a-plenty.*

”

C. Campaign/Action/Mobilization

- Generating resources – finances, logistics, and people – among NGOs in Southeast Asia and influencing institutions in Indonesia and East Timor to work for the Maubere people

D. Coordination and linkages

- Tapping the traditionally “non-political” network
- Strengthening solidarity among various support groups, and
- Coordinating with the ETRA

3. On Women.

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

4. On People’s Diplomacy, Education and Information Campaigns, and Networking

- Raising the East Timor issue before the UN Decolonization Committee, ASEAN Post-Ministerial Meeting, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Vatican, and ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference for Asia, among others

- Organizing pools of resource persons for educational campaigns on East Timor in schools

- Inquiring into the practicability and viability of an alternative news bureau
- Tapping and maximizing contact with already existing networks of NGOs in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere for information exchange and dissemination
- Identifying targets for information campaigns, especially those groups that



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could influence official decision-making

- Forming solidarity groups for East Timor at the national, international, and regional (Asia-Pacific) levels, and
- Holding regular solidarity activities for East Timor (e.g., anniversaries and commemorations)

Toward the close of the assembly, the conferees agreed to convert the conference into a body that would oversee the implementation of the conference resolutions and action agenda. For the moment there would be an ad hoc committee composed of at least one representative each from South Asia, East Asia, the Pacific, Australia-Aotearoa-New Zealand-Papua New Guinea, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The committee would have the power to expand membership as it saw fit. The APCET secretariat would remain as such until a permanent committee could be formed to steer the new formation.

The conference further agreed to have (the late) Bishop Aloysius Nobuo Soma of Japan as the honorary chairperson of the newly-organized body, and Gus Miclat, Executive Director of IID, as Coordinator.

A new advocacy front was born. The conferees christened the new assembly the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (APCET).

The next step: to walk all the talk.





Buckling Down to Work

The East Timorese struggle for national liberation has gained new heights. It has now become a people's agenda. Long Live East Timor!

– Daud Maliga⁶⁵

Nature of the Coalition

From the outset the agreement was for the coalition to be a loose formation of local, national, sub-regional, and international organizations and institutions that had been or were willing to be involved in solidarity initiatives on East Timor. The sense was that while East Timor was their common bond, the organizations and institutions that joined the coalition as affiliates, contacts, or partners were free to pursue their respective campaigns. In no case was the coalition to impose a directive that superseded individual mandates, competencies, and advocacies, even if these proved to be similar, parallel, or complementary with regard to East Timor. Neither did it mean that participation and involvement in the coalition would now take precedence in terms of priorities. The commitment to the Timorese struggle for self-determination via the coalition did not in any way impair or prejudice independence and flexibility.





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The affiliates (Annex 2) were from the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

Coalition contacts on the other hand represented development agencies, pressure groups and the academe in Canada, the United States, Brazil, Nepal, Fiji, Portugal, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

East Timor partners meanwhile consisted of political and religious groups, humanitarian agencies, and individuals representing women and youth sectors.

Structure

The affiliates, contacts, and partners constituted themselves into a kind of general assembly during biennial conferences; in fact they were the Conference themselves. The Conference was responsible for formulating broad policy proposals and strategies for advocacy on East Timor. It also proposed strategies to deal with governments, international bodies, and solidarity groups working toward a peaceful solution to East Timor.

In charge of the preparations and conduct of the conferences were local host committees composed of solidarity groups led by an affiliate in the host country (e.g., Thai Friends of East Timor in Thailand). The APCET Secretariat, however, was largely responsible for communications and facilitation of the conference program and securing additional funding support.

In between conferences, the 15-member APCET Council (Annex 3) would meet to recommend specific plans based on conference resolutions and decide on all coalition matters including finance generation. The Council consisted of 12 affiliates, with the APCET Coordinator and representatives from the youth and women sectors as ex-officio members. During its first meeting in 1994, the Council adopted the policy that "any national or regional organization can sit in the Council, while any local group unaffiliated with a national [body] is welcome, but without any voting power." The Council set no other eligibility criterion.

There was also the seven-member Steering Committee (Annex 4) that was formed during the APCET Council meeting in Bangkok in February 1995. Meeting





in the in-between years the Committee, among others, discussed immediate advocacy plans based on updates from members and followed through on the status of previous plans or proposals. The APCET Coordinator sat as an ex-officio member.

The Secretariat, which was composed of the Executive Director and personnel of IID, became a permanent part of the APCET organization after the first conference on East Timor in 1994.

The main duties of IID's Executive Director as the APCET coordinator consisted of (1) representing APCET and the Secretariat in international meetings and conferences on East Timor (2) communicating with affiliates (3) preparing petition papers, media statements and releases on issues related to East Timor (4) preparing project applications for donor funding of APCET programs, and (5) supervising ESTAFETA, APCET's quarterly magazine on East Timor updates. (Estafeta referred to young Timorese who acted as couriers between the clandestine front in the towns and cities and the guerillas in the hills and mountains in East Timor.)

An APCET project officer handled day-to-day operations in close contact with the APCET Coordinator and IID's Advocacy Program Coordinator. The project officer's tasks covered communications, educational campaigns, lobbying, and networking.

Activities

In terms of its advocacy paradigm, APCET hewed closely to the key areas of work identified in the first conference in May 1994. These areas of work covered (1) political and policy advocacy (2) capacity building for the East Timorese (3) resource generation (4) coordination and linkages, and (5) lobbying. APCET would later group these areas of work into three categories of activities:

Awareness-raising was one of these. This involved initiatives aimed at increasing, expanding, and spreading the stock of knowledge about East Timor in the hope of shaping public opinion toward supporting the East Timorese cause of self-determination. Specific activities covered media work, general public information campaigns, direct mass actions and propaganda work, educational





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activities, and the development and dissemination of the appropriate information, education, and communication materials.

Lobbying was another category, encompassing all actions aimed at directly or indirectly influencing political decision-making at the national, regional, and international levels, involving but not limited to governments, the United Nations, regional and international groupings and forums (e.g., ASEAN and APEC), the church and the academe, and NGOs. Lobby work would include coordination with ETRA and similar entities, and increased linkages via networking and solidarity development and strengthening among existing and potential support groups.

Capacity building, on the other hand, focused on reinforcing “the organizational and campaigning power of the affiliates of APCET” particularly through “material or infrastructural support” and “in terms of strategic thinking and cooperation.”⁶⁶

How fared APCET since 1994?





APCET in Retrospect

I. Awareness-Raising Work

The Conferences

APCET II:

Tempest!

"This display of neo-fascism was not the only mockery of our society – instead of punishing the offenders, the police released the handful of mob leaders on the same day and detained the victims of their violence."

– Suaram⁶⁷

After the clamorous first conference in Manila in May-June 1994, the coalition scheduled its next conference for November 9-11, 1996 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The second conference was also to serve as an observance of the fifth anniversary of the November 12, 1991 Dili (East Timor) massacre where Indonesian troops shot dead at least 50 demonstrators following a funeral for an anti-Indonesian activist. Eyewitnesses and human rights groups had estimated that no less than 200 East Timorese died in the massacre at Santa Cruz cemetery. A Malaysian, Kamal _____ was one of those killed.



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The local host committee consisted of Suaram, Aliran, Sahabat Wanita, Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM), Malaysian Trade Union Congress, Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (Youth Section), All Women's Action Society, Just World Trust, Centre for Peace Initiatives (Cenpeace), Insan, and the Democratic Action Party Socialist Youth (DAPSY).⁶⁸ The venue was the Asia Hotel off Jalan Raja-Muda. Of the 300 participants that the host committee expected, some 120 were foreigners including representatives of five foreign missions.⁶⁹

As with APCET I in Manila two years back, APCET II "aimed at highlighting the need for a peaceful resolution of the East Timor conflict in order to recognize East Timorese rights to self-determination."⁷⁰ And like its predecessor, APCET II made for prominent media copy, particularly as the Malaysian government first urged, then later warned the organizers not to proceed with the conference.

If the Philippines had been wary of a backlash from Indonesia, Malaysia worried about it too. Malaysia repeatedly stressed that it would not risk straining bilateral relations with Indonesia on account of the NGO conference. Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad was scheduled to call on Jakarta at the end of November to reciprocate President Suharto's visit to Kuala Lumpur the previous month, and the government said it was not going to let APCET II spoil that.

Neither would it put on the line the status of Malaysians working or studying in Indonesia, or Malaysian investments in Indonesia in general trading, plantations, timber extraction, mining and infrastructure development.⁷¹ The government also admonished APCET II organizers not to compromise the dispute over the Ligitan and Sipadan islands that both Malaysia and Indonesia had already referred for arbitration to the International Court of Justice at The Hague. The Malaysian government insisted that East Timor was Indonesia's internal affair and that everyone should respect Indonesian integrity.

APCET II organizers countered that the conference was a legal private initiative and would not in any way harm Malaysian and Indonesian relations. They added that recent co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and East Timor leader Ramos-Horta would not attend the conference "in order to avoid putting Malaysia in a difficult





situation with the Indonesian government.” APCET II also pointed out that in the past Malaysia itself “had strived for a peaceful resolution to conflicts in Palestine, South Africa, Cambodia, Bosnia, and Mindanao (Philippines).”⁷²

But the Malaysian government would not budge, finally warning APCET II organizers that they faced stiff government action if they proceeded with the conference. It also said it would deport foreign delegates to the conference.

APCET II counter-warned that banning the East Timor conference would tarnish Malaysia’s international image.

On November 7th, two days before the conference, the Home Ministry detained for 12 hours APCET I lead convener Renato Constantino, Jr., who had landed at Subang Airport, then booked him on the next outbound flight for Manila, Philippines. Opposition leader in the Malaysian Parliament Lim Kit Siang quickly assailed Constantino’s deportation as “deplorable,” while two Philippine senators accused the Ramos government of “pressuring” Malaysia into banning the conference.⁷³

But it was only the beginning.

On Saturday morning, November 9th, some 600 pro-government youths calling themselves the *Bariisan Bertindak Rakyat Malaysia* (Malaysia People’s Action Front) barged into the conference at the fourth floor of Asia Hotel, battering doors, overturning tables and chairs, and flinging bottles around to a volley of invectives. Police came in some 45 minutes later and rounded up 113 conference participants, 46 of them foreigners.⁷⁴

Conference delegates deported on the day of the crackdown consisted of five Australians, four Americans, four Portuguese, three Japanese, two Sri Lankans, one Bangladeshi, and one South African. Among these were Australian Andrew McNaughtan, convener of the Australia East Timor Association in New South Wales, Roman Catholic Bishops Aloysius Nobuo Soma of Nagoya, Japan and Hilton Deakin of Melbourne, Australia, and Bishop Gabriel Garol of the United Church of Christ of the Philippines (UCCP).

Detained longer were other participants from 20 countries including APCET coordinator Gus Miclat, 59 Malaysian human rights advocates, and journalists



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Catherine McGrath of Australia Broadcasting Corporation and British national Roger Mitton, Asiaweek correspondent.

Amidst a swirl of allegations and suspicions, the Malaysian government promptly denied orchestrating the fracas, maintaining that the mob of youths acted on their own. In fact, it said, it also detained the conference breakers. It did, but as Aliran Monthly noted “all the thugs were released except for seven and they too were freed hours later.”⁷⁵ Three United Malays National Organization (UMNO) demonstrators were later charged and fined RM 1,500 each.

Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, head of the UMNO Youth, justified the storming of the conference saying, “The Cabinet had already indicated there should be no conference. But they (NGOs) were still kurang ajar (insolent) so we took a political action to stop the conference.”⁷⁶

Malaysian and Philippine print media, along with Asiaweek, Asian Wall Street Journal, and other Asian broadsheets and news wires denounced the crackdown. So did Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

But not so much as a pip issued from the Philippines and Australia over the detention and deportation of their nationals. Their common refrain was that Malaysia had the right to do what it did.

It was also no surprise that as with the Philippine government back in 1994, Indonesia lauded as “appropriate” Malaysia’s scuttling of the East Timor conference. Indonesia’s Minister of State Moerdiono said Malaysia’s decision “reflected the ASEAN members’ commitment not to interfere in the affairs of other countries and their highest solidarity.”⁷⁷

In January 1997 Malaysian Attorney General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah cleared 60 local participants of APCET II of “any wrongdoing.”⁷⁸ Spokesperson of the 60 participants, Elizabeth Wong, said the AG’s decision “vindicated the stand of the organizers that they did not break any law” and that “we were wrongfully arrested and detained.”⁷⁹ She also lamented that several hundred other demonstrators who violently disrupted the conference were “going scot-free.”⁸⁰

ASEAN solidarity over and above human rights? Cultural relativism could not have been more naked.





What seemed equally unsettling, even if only in hindsight, was the apparently coincidental parallelism of certain perspectives vis-à-vis APCET. For instance, this editorial of the Asian Wall Street Journal on November 12, 1996:

The best thing might have been to ignore the conference entirely. The Nobel Peace Prize publicity for East Timor activists notwithstanding, such conferences have been going on for years without much of a fuss and, if truth be told, without much to show for them. It's admittedly easy to say this in retrospect, but if the meeting had been allowed to go ahead, it would be over now, and all but forgotten.⁸¹

One notes how strikingly similar this was with the comment of a Philippine columnist on APCET I two years earlier. The perceptions were a cause for pause. Were NGOs and their alliances and advocacies and conferences and media releases really all sound and fury, signifying nothing?

One thing was clear though. If APCET I drove home a lesson in conviction, APCET II delivered a message of courage. Conference participants had stared in the face clear and unmistakable danger to their physical safety at the venue. Detention and deportation, too, were anything but badges of honor to be displayed for all to see in the aftermath. Perhaps they might have been, if only APCET II had achieved its objectives. But such was the price to pay for holding fast to one's conviction.

And APCET did learn an invaluable lesson of its own, and that was to never underestimate opposition forces, for there was no telling the limits of what they can and would do. This APCET kept in mind before it converged again in Thailand two years later.

APCET III: Compromise

The time has come for NGOs to educate ASEAN peoples about the human tragedy in East Timor.

– Withaya Sucharithanarugse⁸²

APCET held its third conference in Bangkok, Thailand on March 4-6, 1998 care of the Thailand-based Thai Friends of East Timor (TFET). Co-sponsoring and coordinating the conference were the APCET Secretariat, Union for Civil Liberties,





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Peace Information Centre (Thammasat University), Amnesty International Thailand, Social Sciences Association of Thailand, Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-Asia), Foundation for Women, South East Asian Studies Project, and IID. In attendance were 60 foreign delegates from 14 countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe representing organizations on East Timor, human rights and other support groups, and academic institutions.

APCET III was a closed-door affair that followed right after the "International Symposium for a Peaceful Settlement in East Timor (PEACE-SET), initially organized by the Chulalongkorn University's Asian Studies Program. APCET had earlier agreed to this set-up to avoid possible harsh action by the Thai government. At the last moment Chulalongkorn University pulled out because of pressure from Thai authorities, but the symposium pushed through.

As it was, even the symposium was not spared the specter of another Kuala Lumpur. Even before the symposium could start, Thai officials had threatened to arrest all foreign participants to the symposium. Their pretext: these delegates did not have work permits. According to Thai authorities, foreigners who would speak during the symposium would be considered as working and thus should secure work permits. Said an aghast Somchai Homla-or of the Thai alibi,

*NGOs and civil society groups, business and government, regularly hold meetings involving foreigners in Bangkok and all over Thailand. We have never been informed by the Labour Ministry, police or any other authority that foreigners need a work permit to attend a meeting in Thailand, nor am I aware of any law to that effect. The authorities are using the law arbitrarily to discriminate against the activities of NGOs."*⁸³

Authorities finally allowed the affair to proceed after symposium organizers agreed to refrain from allowing speeches and to convert the symposium into a roundtable discussion. For good measure Thai authorities sent five people from Thai Intelligence, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Labour to the second day of the roundtable discussion. To be sure, they did not come to exchange pleasantries, and the photographs and video footage they took of the organizers





and the participants were not meant as giveaway postcards or tourist souvenirs.

APCET III by comparison was virtually hassle-free, although a number of participants to the conference were likewise delegates to the earlier PEACE-SET symposium-turned-roundtable discussion.

Central to the agenda of APCET III was the engaging of ASEAN and Asia-Pacific regional formations to confront the East Timor issue and to provide a venue for fast-tracking the East Timor peace process. The conference also aimed at a sharing of experiences of people's movements and nations that had recently engaged in conflict resolution and political negotiations. This sharing helped form the basis of an APCET support strategy for East Timor.

• From the overall theme "Peace and Self-Determination for East Timor," the participants derived five sub-themes, namely:

- Fast-tracking the peace and self-determination process for East Timor
- Engaging ASEAN in East Timor conflict resolution
- Upholding and protecting human rights in Indonesia and East Timor
- Freedom for Xanana Gusmão and all East Timorese and Indonesian political prisoners, and
- Strengthening the Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor (APCET) and affirming its linkage and support to similar solidarity formations for East Timor, as well as, the struggling peoples of Indonesia, Burma, Tibet, China, among others.

In addition, the conference held panel discussions and workshops on the East Timor conflict and women's issues against the backdrop of the economic and political turmoil in Indonesia.⁸⁴

The conference also addressed concerns on how to better address partnership building between solidarity groups and East Timorese organizations.

At its close, the conference adopted the following resolutions:

- Support for self-determination and a call for a referendum in East Timor
- Support for peace initiatives such as the All-Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue (AIETD), the Peace Plan of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM), and the UN Secretary General's expressed commitment to the peaceful resolution of the East Timor conflict



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- A call on the US, the European Union, and Japan to promote the peaceful resolution of the East Timor conflict and for ASEAN to sponsor peace initiatives
- Support for the democratic movement in Indonesia
- A call for humanitarian aid to East Timor and for the UN Commission on Human Rights to set up a permanent office in Dili, and
- An appeal for the international community to end all forms of military support for the Suharto regime.

An immediate action point that the conference decided on was to bring up East Timor at ASEAN, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the ASEAN-European Union meetings.

It is worth noting that a month after APCET III, a National Timorese Convention held in Portugal replaced the CNRM with the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT). The new non-partisan national umbrella organization for Timorese resistance elected Xanana Gusmão as president.⁸⁵ Ramos-Horta, the new vice president of CNRT, led calls for the immediate release of Xanana.

And in May 1998, Suharto resigned as Indonesian president following overwhelming pro-democracy pressure from the Indonesian public.⁸⁶ The new Indonesian government allowed Western media unprecedented access to Xanana and other political prisoners in Cipinang Prison. In an interview, Xanana said that while he did not have great faith in the Habibie administration, the fall of Suharto was a step toward freedom for East Timor.

APCET IV: Full Circle

We must bring East Timor back to where it geographically belongs. To-day, we have finally come home.

— Renato Constantino, Jr.⁸⁷

Violence and deep uncertainty gripped East Timor in the wake of the ouster of Suharto. And yet there was no mistaking that, the cataclysm in the island notwithstanding, East Timor was on the verge of a new beginning. The following timeline indicated as much:





• **5 August 1998** Agreement is reached between Indonesia and Portugal to undertake, under the auspices of the Secretary General (of the UN), negotiations on a special status based on a wide-ranging autonomy for East Timor. [Up to the downfall of the Suharto regime, the UN had maintained recognition of Portugal as the legitimate administrator of East Timor following decolonization of the island half in 1974.]

• **20 November 1998** Portugal suspends talks with Jakarta on East Timor after reports of a massacre.

• **January 1999** Australia suddenly changes foreign policy on East Timor to one of “self-determination.” [Previously, Australia was the only country that recognized Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.]

• **February 1999** Xanana is moved to house arrest in Salemba, Jakarta. He further warns about possible violence and calls for armed international peacekeepers, but nevertheless agrees to proceed with the referendum.

• **16 February 1999** Tens of thousands of people in Dili attend the burial of a 25-year-old man shot dead during an incident between pro-independence and pro-Indonesia youths.

• **3 March 1999** Indonesian President B.J. Habibie announces that if, in a “process of consultation,” the majority of East Timorese rejected autonomy in favor of independence, Indonesia would grant independence. Xanana begins calling for a ceasefire, disarmament and real Indonesian troop reductions.

• **5 May 1999** Agreement is reached between Indonesia, Portugal, and the UN to put a special autonomy framework to the East Timorese people through a “popular consultation.” and for the UN to establish a United Nations mission, UNAMET, to do so. The Government of Indonesia is made responsible for maintaining peace and security in order that the popular consultation can be “carried out in a fair and peaceful way in an atmosphere free of intimidation, violence or interference from any side.”

• **30 August 1999** The ballot, or “popular consultation,” is carried out.

• **4 September 1999** The results of the ballot are announced: 78.5 per cent of East Timorese vote for independence by indicating the CNRT flag on the ballot paper.



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- **September 1999** The pro-integration militias, with substantial Indonesian military backing, engage in a period of uncontrolled terrorism. An unknown number of East Timorese are killed and over 200,000 forcibly displaced into West Timor and other parts of Indonesia. Xanana is released amidst military slayings in East Timor. He takes refuge in the British Embassy and then flees to Darwin (Australia) after receiving death threats

- **15 September 1999** The terrifying violence in East Timor finally spurs the USA to pressure Indonesia into accepting a peacekeeping force. The UN Security Council authorizes an Australian-led multinational force to restore peace and security in East Timor. Xanana returns to a devastated East Timor and makes emotional pleas for all Timorese to return home, to forgive and to rebuild.⁸⁸

Originally, during its third meeting in Bangkok in 1998, APCET had thought of holding its fourth biennial conference in Jakarta. But with the toppling of the Suharto regime, it made better sense to hold APCET IV in newly-free East Timor. (Delegates to APCET III had challenged Indonesian participants to get rid of Suharto before APCET IV was to be convened.)

And so from November 26-30, 2000 it was held in East Timor's second major city Baucau, which had nurtured freedom fighters during the entire East Timorese struggle for self-determination. A total of 72 delegates attended. Of these, 45 were delegates from 18 countries, the rest were East Timorese.

The conference had two segments: the first, two-day community immersion visits by the delegates, and the second, the plenary sessions.

Among those who welcomed the conference participants were CNRT president Xanana Gusmão, Nobel Laureate and CNRT vice president Ramos-Horta, Partido Socialista Timor (PST) head Avelino Coelho, UDT President Joao Carrascalao, and Jean Christian Cady, Deputy Administrator of the United Nations Transitional Authority for East Timor (UNTAET).

For a theme APCET IV chose "Building an Independent East Timor, Empowering the Grassroots, Consolidating Civil Society." The conference had four objectives, namely, to (1) harmonize programs and activities of APCET affiliates and align these with overall efforts toward the rebuilding of East Timor (2) map out emergency





and other assistance measures for the East Timorese (3) link with East Timorese NGOs as part of preparatory activities leading to the consolidation of civil society, and (4) determine the feasibility of transforming the coalition into a development cooperation or an international cooperative formation for East Timor.

Delivering keynote addresses were Renato Constantino Jr., APCET founding convener, and pioneering and leading international advocate for East Timor Carmel Budiardjo of TAPOL-UK. Representatives of East Timorese civil society Maria Domingas “Micato” Alves of FOKUPERS and Joaquin Fonseca of Yayasan Hak also gave special addresses.

At its close the conference reaffirmed the right of the East Timorese to self-determination and full political and economic independence. The conference likewise reaffirmed the coalition’s commitment to work closely with the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia.

APCET also called for:

- The immediate establishment of an international war crimes tribunal for East Timor
- An immediate end to any and all forms of military support and ties with the Indonesian military
- The international community to guarantee 100 per cent sovereignty to East Timor, including over resources, such as those in the Timor Gap
- The speedy and resourced repatriation of all willing East Timorese still in West Timor
- A United Nations guarantee of border protection until the East Timorese decide that they have the ability and the resources to control the borders, and
- The immediate decentralization of resources by UNTAET to address reconstruction and the basic living needs in the rural communities.

On the whole the conference was in a celebratory mood. And Xanana Gusmão may have captured the essence of the solidarity struggle for East Timor when he exulted, “We are your people and your country. You are also our people.”⁸⁹ Carmel Budiardjo for her part said,

East Timorese resilience and resistance [were] the inspiration which won



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world public opinion to their side, the true reason why Indonesia was compelled to agree to a referendum and the true reason why the world community decided to intervene last September. World public opinion has been the most powerful weapon for East Timor. This is one of the lessons for APCET and should be recognized here in our future program.⁹⁰

That much still needed to be done was the central point of the other speakers. Renato Constantino Jr. for instance stressed:

The solidarity network that joined the East Timorese struggle to be free will have to express this solidarity on another plane. Much, much more will be asked of us, because the tasks of building a new nation from the ruins of Indonesia's oppressive and exploitative rule will even be more demanding.⁹¹

And Ramos-Horta in his [opening] message:

APCET IV ... will likewise determine the direction, role, and relevance of the solidarity movement in a sovereign East Timor. It goes without saying that in this crucial stage of building our nation almost literally from the ashes, all the more do we need the accompaniment of our friends and supporters from international civil society, and especially from the South and from this region.

Even if some of us will eventually govern East Timor, we will need the coalition to be there amongst our people, help empower, accompany us and hopefully challenge, inspire, check and balance those in government.⁹²

Would the promise and the challenge hold?

APCET V: Curtains Down

We are proud that our solidarity has contributed to the fulfillment of the dream of an independent Timor Leste. APCET as a coalition, or in the capacity





of its individual members, will continue to work to strengthen regional solidarity to strive for democracy, justice, and the genuine independence of all peoples. A luta continua! – APCET V

The fifth conference of APCET, held in Dili from May 16-19, 2004, affirmed the success of APCET in:

- Bringing organizations from all over the region together to work in solidarity for the continuing liberation of the people of Timor Leste⁹³
- Developing a spirit of cooperation which contributed to the eventual ending of the Indonesian occupation of Timor Leste, and
- Creating an atmosphere in which the struggles of the past can be used to inspire others.⁹⁴

Even though Timor Leste had already won its independence, APCET realized that the East Timorese still had to grapple with a host of serious problems. Among these were widespread poverty, a wobbly economy, political interference by outside forces, and incipient corruption in the bureaucracy. At the same time, the East Timorese had to confront the need to develop independent political and economic institutions and strengthen East Timorese civil society.

APCET V committed active support. Among others, APCET vowed to push for the resolution of the Australia-Timor Leste maritime boundary dispute involving the Timor Gap by

A. Urging the Australian government to:

- Respect the sovereignty of Timor Leste and to negotiate a fair maritime boundary within a period of three years according to contemporary international legal principles
- Rejoin international arbitration mechanisms from which Australia had withdrawn, namely the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the International Court of Justice
- To cease issuing new exploration permits in disputed areas, and





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- To place all revenues from fields in disputed areas in an escrow account until a permanent maritime boundary shall have been finalized, and

B. Asking the United Nations to take initiatives to mediate and facilitate the resolution of the maritime boundary issue between Timor Leste and Australia

APCET V likewise committed to assist victims of atrocities through all possible legal and political means, including (1) the submission of the public indictment papers of APCET V to the UN (2) the filing of individual cases in Indonesian and Timorese courts, and (3) the mobilization of lawyers who will study the requirements of a People's Tribunal for Timor Leste.

Public Indictment Launch

During the conference workshop, legal experts and other Timorese lawyers and advocates on the consolidation of the indictment sheet and other plans reported the following recommendations:

- That the draft indictment sheet be adopted by the conference
- That APCET submit to UN a resolution calling for the creation of an international tribunal to provide justice to the victims of serious crimes
- That a People's Tribunal be established that will prosecute the perpetrators of genocide and other crimes against humanity in East Timor (among them, President Suharto and Indonesian generals Murdani, Subianto, and Wiranto) and that concerned lawyers study the requirements of a People's Tribunal, and
- That other avenues for justice be explored such as the filing of individual cases in Timor Leste or Indonesian courts

A panel of legal luminaries from the region endorsed the charge sheet. The panel included Malaysian human rights lawyer Sivarasa Rasiah, Dean Merlin Magallona from the University of the Philippines College of Law and former Undersecretary of Department of Foreign Affairs; former Senator Thongbai





Thongpao of Thailand, and Somchai Homla-or, FORUM-Asia's Executive Director.

The conference thence unanimously approved a resolution calling on the United Nations to establish a tribunal to prosecute the crimes in East Timor. IID along with representatives of the APCET conference formally submitted the resolution to the United Nations Mission office in East Timor in Dili. IID also later formally wrote to the UN Security Council reiterating APCET's call for justice for East Timor and urged Philippine permanent representative to the UN Lauro Baja, who assumed the Security Council chairmanship for the month of June, to include the matter of an international tribunal on East Timor in the council's agenda for the month.

There was a twist to APCET V, though.

For all the optimism that suffused the fourth conference in Baucau four years ago and the alacrity with which delegates looked forward to meeting the challenges of helping build East Timor, APCET had already started widening its solidarity horizon. It was during the fifth conference that APCET outlined this view of an expanded solidarity agenda in the Asia-Pacific region.

On Impunity. This would involve urging Asia-Pacific countries to ratify and implement the Rome treaty that established the International Criminal Court to stop impunity in the region and to prevent future serious crimes.

On Indonesia. The main thrust was to oppose remilitarization in Indonesia, including the presidential candidacy of Gen. Wiranto and its implications for the region, especially since he still had to stand trial for his role in crimes in East Timor.⁹⁵

On Aceh. The effort would entail:

- Calling upon both the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to resume peace negotiations in Aceh and allow the participation of civil society in the process
- Calling for amnesty for all political prisoners in Aceh, including the thousands



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detained during the one-year martial law period from May 2003 through May 2004, and

- Calling upon the Indonesian government to stop the isolation of political detainees by transferring Acehese prisoners to other detention cells in Indonesia.

On Burma. The proposed campaign would:

- Demand the release of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other National League for Democracy (NLD) leaders and all political prisoners
- Support the call for a tripartite dialogue between the NLD, the ethnic peoples of Burma, and the Burmese military regime, and
- Demand a stop to all forms of human rights violations, particularly sexual violations against ethnic women of Burma and forced labor practices.

On Sri Lanka. The proposed action would urge the Sri Lankan government to accept and recognize the interim self-governing authority supported by the Tamil people, and to call on the international community to support the immediate resumption of peace talks in Sri Lanka.

On Mindanao, Philippines. The envisioned new campaign would support, through just, peaceful, and democratic processes, the struggles and aspirations of Mindanao peoples, including the struggle for self-determination and self-governance by the Bangsamoro and the island's indigenous nations.

On Thailand. There would be a call upon the Thai government to respect the rights of the Patanni people and ensure the protection of human rights defenders and NGOs in Southern Thailand. APCET would also call for a peaceful resolution to the ethnic conflicts in Southern Thailand.

On West Papua. The campaign would:

- Demand that the Indonesian government stop its policy of dividing Papua province





- Call upon the Indonesian government and the West Papuans to solve the problems of West Papua (e.g., militarization, human rights violations, and economic exploitation) through peaceful dialogue, and
- Call upon the UN Secretary General to review the UN's role in the Act of Free Choice (PEPERA) in 1969 that provided for the exercise of the Right to Self-Determination.

The signs had been there since APCET IV, and there was no keeping the reality back. Even as it had promised to accompany East Timor on its new journey, the coalition had reached the end of the line. It was time to move on beyond East Timor. As APCET's valedictory put it, if immodestly,

Yet, even if the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor is about to take its bow, its impact had not been fleeting, nor its lessons so easily forgotten. It is time to celebrate .

II. Other Awareness Raising Work

A. Publications, Press Releases, Other Services

1. Breaking the Silence: The Story behind APCET

The first publication of APCET, *Breaking the Silence: The Story behind APCET*, by APCET Coordinator and IID Executive Director Gus Miclat, traced the birth of the coalition to the tumultuous events that attended the holding of the first conference on East Timor in Manila in 1994. A video version had also been produced.

2. ESTAFETA

In the second quarter of 1995 APCET launched ESTAFETA, its quarterly newsletter. ESTAFETA was derived from the moniker of children in East Timor who served as couriers for the resistance movement. The newsletter covered a wide range of subjects. These included the goings-on in East Timor and ASEAN, the concerns of the women of East Timor, features on the Dili massacre and the





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Indonesian uprising, APCET updates, special news, including the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to East Timorese leader Ramos-Horta and East Timor Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, reports from Amnesty International and other human rights groups, and issue analyses and commentaries on a host of other current issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The principal recipients of ESTAFETA were APCET affiliates and their constituencies. The Philippine media and interested NGOs also availed themselves of copies.

In early 1999, members of the expanded Steering Committee noted in a meeting that ESTAFETA might be duplicating the efforts of some affiliates who were doing similar work. The committee decided then that ESTAFETA would publish two to three issues until APCET IV and focus on profiles of East Timorese organizations, APCET affiliates and solidarity organizations. Thenceforth, ESTAFETA would come out as an annual handbook of East Timorese NGOs and people's organizations (POs).

3. East Timor for Beginners

This primer on East Timor first saw the light of day in 1996 with the printing of 1,000 copies. It contained basic information on East Timor – its geography, its people, its colonial history, its forcible occupation and annexation by Indonesia, and its struggle for freedom and self-determination. In 1997 APCET published the primer in Indonesian, based on a translation by Indonesian affiliate Center for Information and Reformation Action Network (PIJAR). Indonesian authorities banned the primer.

4. "Mob Rule: The East Timor Conference in Malaysia"

Published by APCET affiliate Suaram Komunikasi of Malaysia, this book is a compilation of statements, analyses, eyewitness accounts, and press statements about the events that led to the aborted second biennial conference of APCET in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on November 9, 1996.

5. Press Releases

APCET produced and issued press releases according to needs and opportunities. They dealt mainly with the biennial conferences and other high-profile activities





of the coalition. The following are among APCET's more recent press statements, prior to its closure in 2004:

On the Timor Sea agreements review. APCET e-mailed the Australian Joint Committee on Treaties, which was reviewing the Timor Sea agreements of 2002. APCET's position was for Australia to employ international laws and submit to international arbitration in order to resolve its boundary and resource-sharing disputes with East Timor. The 2002 treaties would result in Timor losing up to 60 percent of its oil and gas resources and the future revenues coming from them. The submission was part of an international campaign by activists to pressure the Australian parliament, the body which would ratify the treaties.

"Indonesian Verdicts A Far Cry From Justice; Real Masterminds Remain Free."

This press release was a reaction to the initial judgments of the Indonesian Ad Hoc Human Rights Court, which acquitted six army officers and sentenced a civilian official to only three years after they were charged with crimes against humanity in East Timor. Aside from criticizing the verdicts and questioning the performance and mandate of the court, APCET asked for the establishment of an international tribunal as the only body that can punish the war criminals in East Timor and end impunity in Indonesia.

A Letter of appeal faxed to Ambassador Soemadi D. M. Brotodiningrat, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Washington, DC; and to Consul Setiawan Sadikin, Acting Consul General of the Indonesian Consulate in Davao City. The letter asked for the immediate and unconditional release of Joy Lee Sadler (an American nurse) and Dr. Lesley McCulloch (a UK academic) who were arrested in Aceh on September 10, 2003 by Indonesian security forces and underwent human rights violations while under detention. The letters were part of a campaign by the East Timor Action Network (ETAN) and the Indonesia Human Rights Network (IHRN) to free the two.

"Justice for Timor Includes Trials for The Masterminds." This was released on the 11th anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili. It sought to remind the UN of the recommendation of its own International Commission of Inquiry on





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East Timor (ICI-ET) nearly three years ago to form an international tribunal for East Timor. The statement noted that the ongoing justice processes inside East Timor and Indonesia centered too much on the crimes committed in 1999 only. The statement pushed for the indictment and trial of the masterminds of the crimes in East Timor to include world leaders who were complicit in the crimes from 1975 and beyond.

“East Timor Indictments Need International Support.” This called on the United Nations to extend full support to the UN-formed Serious Crimes Unit (SCU) in East Timor, which had issued indictments against top-level Indonesian army and police officers involved in crimes against humanity in East Timor. The statement also called on the UN to again pressure Jakarta to extradite the top-ranking officials for prosecution and trial in East Timor.

“Indonesian Army Reprising East Timor Crimes in Aceh.” This statement coincided with the marking of the first anniversary of the restoration of East Timor independence on May 20, and pledged continued support for the demand for justice through an international tribunal. The statement also condemned the Indonesian army offensive against separatist rebels in Aceh because the offensive was a reprise of the invasion of East Timor in 1975 and some top Indonesian officers accused of crimes in East Timor were now directly involved in Aceh as military campaign planners.

6. Internet-based Information Services

APCET maintained two Internet-based information services, namely: a web site (<http://www.skyinet.net/~apcet>) and a mailing list (apcet-info@egroups.com). First posted in February 1998, the web site evolved from a one-page basic information space into one containing an on-line version of the latest ESTAFETA issues. It also carried news and commentaries, latest statements by the coalition and its affiliates on issues in East Timor and Indonesia, a directory of APCET affiliates and contacts, conference highlights, and links to sites of other East Timor solidarity groups.





The web site employed a web tracking utility that generated helpful information about the users visiting the site. Since the utility's installation in October 1998, users had been classified into the following: unknown domains/undetermined geographic location (46%), North America (19%), Asia (13%), Europe (11%) and Australia (11%).

7. "SARASEHAN"

APCET first organized SARASEHAN (Bahasa for forum) in 1999 as a venue for discussion of various subjects affecting South-east Asian countries, in particular East Timor and Indonesia. The first in a series of SARASEHAN was on post-Suharto Indonesia and its implications on East Timor's struggle for independence. Held in Manila, the affair drew close to a hundred people including Indonesian Ambassador to the Philippines Hartono and other members of the diplomatic corps.

APCET held a similar SARASEHAN in Davao City with NGOs, members of the academic community and the media, and Indonesian Consul General Arbi attending.

8. Other Activities

Commemorative Pilgrimage. The international peace pilgrimage Ahi Naklakan (Timorese for light) APCET organized in 1995 was meant as a symbolic commemoration of the 1991 Dili massacre. APCET coordinated the pilgrimage with its East Timor partners, the Timorese resistance, and international solidarity groups.

Photo Exhibit. In 1997 the APCET Secretariat distributed three sets of photographs to affiliates for their education campaigns on East Timor. Provided by affiliates Australian Coalition for East Timor (ACET) and East Timor Independence Committee, New Zealand (ETIC), the photographs made their way to exhibits in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

APCET II Video. Affiliates and partners received copies of this fifteen-minute video documentation of the APCET II crackdown produced by APCET II's Malaysian host committee.



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Concert for East Timor. IID mounted this concert on December 28, 1999 in Davao City with homegrown talents for performers.

III. Lobbying

A. Representation

The lobby work of APCET focused on three bodies. These were

The United Nations. APCET articulated its support for East Timor's struggle for self-determination before the UN Committee on Human Rights (April 1997); and the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization (June 1997). APCET likewise reiterated its call for the vigorous implementation of UN resolutions on East Timor dating back to 1975. Additionally, APCET pushed to establish the legitimacy and strength of international solidarity and support for the East Timor people's movement.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). APCET was active during the APEC Summit in Vancouver, Canada in 1997. In a parallel People's Summit, APCET, together with the International Federation for East Timor (IFET) and North American East Timor support groups, organized a human rights tribunal to dramatize the violations of the Suharto regime in East Timor.

During the 1998 APEC Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, APCET re-launched the Free Xanana Gusmão Campaign. Some 200 activists gathered outside the Indonesian Embassy where APCET Coordinator Gus Miclat read a statement from Xanana Gusmão. APCET affiliates organized their own campaigns in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, Japan, and the USA. Media coverage of the re-launch was particularly heavy owing to the much-publicized rift between Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Indonesian President Habib e on Mahathir's sacking of his deputy Anwar Ibrahim.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Discussions with lobby groups and experts, such as the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies and the Philippine network of the ASEAN-ISIS think tank, inspired the development





of a paper for APCET's ASEAN lobby strategy. APCET presented this paper before affiliates and other participants to an East Timor course hosted by the Oporto University in Portugal in 1997. APCET likewise printed the paper in the ESTAFETA.

Following collaboration with the Working Group on Asia-Pacific Affairs, of which APCET was a core member, the coalition participated in lobby activities during the ASEAN ministerial meeting in 1997. There, APCET issued a statement on East Timor that was distributed to delegates, along with other East Timor materials.

B. Affiliate Consolidation

At the time when APCET formally ceased as a coalition, it had 17 affiliates in 10 countries. These were:

1. Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor (ASIET-Australia)
2. Asian Students Association (ASA-Youth Caucus)
3. Australian Coalition for East Timor (ACET-Australia)
4. Center for Information and Reformation Action Network (PIJAR-Indonesia)
5. East Timor Action Network-USA (ETAN-USA)
6. Free East Timor Coalition (FETC-New Zealand)
7. Free East Timor Japan Coalition (FETJC-Japan)
8. Friends of the Third World (Sri Lanka)
9. Hong Kong Round Table on East Timor (HKRTET)
10. Indonesian People in Solidarity Struggle with the Maubere People (SPRIM-Indonesia)
11. Indonesian Solidarity for Peace in East Timor (SOLIDAMOR-Indonesia)
12. Korean East Timor Solidarity (KETS-South Korea)
13. Philippine Solidarity for East Timor and Indonesia (PhilSETI-Philippines)
14. Solidaritas Timor Timur Malaysia (SOLTIMTIM-Malaysia)
15. Thai Friends of East Timor (TFET-Thailand)
16. Women's Caucus, and
17. Moslem Caucus



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The East Timorese were de facto participants of APCET activities and meetings, and regularly attended even Council and Steering Committee meetings.

C. Networking and Linkage

International Conferences and Gatherings

APCET, represented by its Coordinator, a Secretariat member or an appointee, participated in various international conferences, seminars, and meetings. Among these were:

1. Oporto Academic Course on Indonesia and East Timor (July 1997, Oporto University, Portugal)
2. Asia-Pacific Solidarity Conference (April 1998, Sydney)
3. International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID) Conference (May 1998, Bonn/INFID)
4. Alternative Regional Security: Asia's Prospects and Dilemmas (July 1998, Manila/Focus on the Global South)
5. Asia-Europe Joint Consultation on Challenging Globalization: Solidarity and Search for Alternatives (October 1998, Hong Kong/ARENA), and
6. Regional Consultation for Democracy in Indonesia (September 1998, Jakarta/FORUM Asia).

APCET also co-organized the ASEAN Peoples' Summit on November 26-28, 1999 to parallel the ASEAN Leaders Informal Meeting in Manila. The theme of the APS was "Justice, Democracy and Human Rights: Imperatives for ASEAN Peace and Stability." Participating in the summit were 16 groups and organizations from the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, East Timor, and Burma.

Solidarity Visits/Tours

CNRT Speaking Tour From February 23-March 5, 1999 the National Council for Timorese Resistance (CNRT) went to Manila, Bangkok, and Jakarta on a speaking tour. The tour aimed to report on the deteriorating situation (at that time) in East Timor and to drum up support for UN presence in the territory to stop escalating





violence from pro-Indonesia militia. The tour also served to connect the CNRT with solidarity groups, legislators, diplomats, and media in the region. Coordinating the tour were the Philippine Solidarity for Indonesia and East Timor (PhilSETI), Thai Friends of East Timor (TFET), and the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-Asia).

The CNRT went on another ASEAN speaking tour organized by the UNTAET from January 23 - February 9, 2000 that took them to Beijing, Seoul, Singapore, Bangkok, Manila, and Kuala Lumpur, in that order.

The Manila Visit of José Ramos-Horta. PhilSETI and CNRT collaborated on this visit that lasted from July 24-July 29, 1999. Ramos-Horta sought to (1) drum up interest for the upcoming August referendum in East Timor and international backing for a free and fair vote (2) muster support for the East Timor independence cause from the Philippine government, political parties, and the private sector (3) establish the basis for future cooperation between the Philippines and East Timor, and (4) meet with Philippine solidarity groups. Ramos-Horta was able to meet with, among others, (a) the East Timorese community of seminarians/students in Manila (b) members of the cabinet of the National Coalition Government for the Union of Burma (NCGUB) led by Dr. Sein Win (c) Lower House representatives, ambassadors and foreign embassy representatives (d) [the late] Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin (e) former Philippine President Corazon Aquino, and (f) ASEAN Secretary-General and former Philippine Foreign Affairs undersecretary Rodolfo Severino.

Campaigns

■ 1996 Campaign for Bishop Belo's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

APCET secured endorsements from known personalities in the Asia-Pacific region. In the Philippines, APCET won for Bishop Belo the endorsement of (the late) Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, (the late) Philippine Senators Marcelo Fernan and Arturo Tolentino, and Philippine Lower House Representative Wigberto Tañada.

■ **"Help East Timor Now!"** Launched in June 1999, the campaign was in response to escalating militia violence and the unfolding humanitarian crisis in





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East Timor. Campaign activities included lobbying local legislative bodies to issue support resolutions, protest rallies at Indonesian embassies and consulates, public awareness talks, and an information barrage on the actual situation in East Timor.

■ **“Save East Timor.”** Shortly after the post-referendum violence and the refugee crisis, APCET launched the “Save East Timor” campaign in September 1999. This aimed at mobilizing civil societies, especially in the ASEAN region, to respond to the East Timor emergency. The focus of the campaign was the immediate recognition of the East Timor vote for independence and the need for food, shelter and like forms of humanitarian aid for Timorese refugees.

■ **“Return the Refugees”(2000).** This poster campaign assumed urgency after the Indonesian government announced its plans to close the refugee camps in West Timor within six months (i.e., by February 2001). The Steering Committee okayed the campaign to begin in August and to end in either December (in time for the International Human Rights Day) or in January 2001.

■ **“International Peoples’ Tribunal for East Timor (IPT).”** Started in 2001, this “naming-shaming” campaign produced and distributed a primer on the East Timor charge sheet which aimed to jump-start an unofficial justice process. This process was to complement official initiatives by the UN or other governments to bring justice to East Timor survivors and their families.

■ **“Justice for East Timor Campaign.”** Begun in 2002, the objective was to indict the masterminds of the crimes against humanity in East Timor dating back to the 1975 invasion. The proposed indictment sought to include the leaders in 1975 of Indonesia, the USA, and Australia, and top Indonesian military officers responsible for the grave abuses in East Timor.

■ **Public forums, symposiums, and protest rallies and demonstrations** outside the Indonesian embassies and consulates during “red-letter days” such as Integration Day (July 17), Santa Cruz Massacre Anniversary (November 12, otherwise known as International Day of Solidarity beginning 1997), Invasion Day (December 7), and International Human Rights Day (December 10)

■ **Forum on the International People’s Tribunal, East Timor** (February 25, 2002). This was a consultation on the prospects of an unofficial International





Peoples' Tribunal (IPT) and the symbolic justice it can serve the East Timorese. The forum had 36 participants that included East Timorese, media, and church representatives. Forum reactors were Cecilio Freitas (Executive Director of the NGO Forum who spoke for Timorese civil society), Fr. Juvito Araujo (vice chair of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, CAVR), and Manuela Pereira (Executive Director of FOKUPERS who spoke on the experience of the International Women's War Crimes Tribunal held in Tokyo in 2000).

IV. Capacity Building

As early as February 1999, during the expanded Steering Committee meeting in Manila, Philippines, APCET had already foreseen that East Timor was entering a new phase, and that the coalition must take into account the post-independence political and socio-economic development needs of the East Timorese. Some of the members of the coalition already had programs addressing these needs. Among these members were:

1. Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor-Australia (ASIET). ASIET used to be a political solidarity group for East Timor's liberation from foreign occupation, political democracy, and social justice. During the steering Committee meeting in 1999, ASIET signified its plan to send members to East Timor to study what the organization could do in this new phase of the evolution of an independent East Timor. At the minimum, ASIET saw its role as an information channel (e.g., between students and between trade unions in East Timor and Australia). ASIET was also considering on-the-ground organizing to consolidate the gains made over the years.

ASIET has since transformed into the Action in Solidarity with the Asia-Pacific (ASAP) after the September 11th attack in the US and the so-called global war on terrorism. Early on during its transformation, ASAP advanced the issue of refugees and asylum seekers and supported the campaign for their legal stay in Australia. ASAP likewise challenged Australian foreign policy on East Timor, particularly on





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oil revenues from the Timor Gap for east Timor, and advocated other aspects of economic justice for East Timor.

2. Asian Student's Association (ASA). ASA itself was already undergoing transition. A general congress and election of new leaders were scheduled the week after the steering committee meeting. East Timor would be part of the agenda. ASA also expected to take up the strengthening of its partnership with East Timor youth group Renetil. ASA had no mandate to do reconstruction work in East Timor, but alternatives could be reconsidered during its forthcoming congress.

3. Hong Kong Round Table on East Timor (HKRTET). The organization was eyeing the areas of human rights training and policy advocacy on judicial reforms.

4. Thai Friends of East Timor (TFET). TFET was already in the editing stage for the primer East Timor for Beginners and had conducted its own Free Xanana-related campaign in Bangkok.

In April 2000, the Steering Committee revisited discussions on APCET IV talking points to provide a context for preparations for the fourth conference slated in November. The basic question was whether APCET should carry on with its political role in post-independence East Timor, while at the same time accompanying East Timor in its efforts to consolidate civil society there. The trend, the committee observed, seemed to indicate that affiliate organizations would continue with the coalition at least until the end of the operations of the UNTAET; however, it was apparent that some affiliates would cease to operate as a national coalition (as in the case of Free East Timor Japan Coalition), or might pursue other forms of cooperation (e.g., friendship societies).

The committee consensus was for APCET to continue to assume both political and development roles in the new East Timor. Thus, among others, APCET would keep on with its campaign and lobby activities especially on the issue of refugees in West Timor, and thence to development work involving civil society building, humanitarian assistance, UN monitoring, and other development priorities.

A. Trainings

- Basic Advocacy, November 6-9, 2002, East Timor. This training for East Timorese partners was intended to highlight the role of the grassroots in policy





formulation and to teach the basic elements of advocacy. There were 26 participants from East Timor local NGO networks. These NGOs were the GFTTL (women's group), Radio Rakimbia (media), DEWAN (students), KSI (conflict-resolution NGO), Caritas-Dili (church), and the Center for Peace and Development (church). Inputs in the training covered universal human rights, international laws, international solidarity work, the UN system and ways to lobby the UN, campaign management, policy advocacy, and internationalism and solidarity between and among peoples of the Global South. At the end of the training, the participants were able to finalize a list of community issues and tentative plans for lobbying before their government. The participants also came up with a list of future training needs for their communities.

- Sustainable Agriculture, November 29, 2003. Two former East Timorese interns of APCET conducted this training for 23 grassroots participants in a suburb in Dili. The training focused on basic agricultural procedures, such as organic feeds preparation and supplements for animal raising and crop farming.

B. Internships

East Timorese interns to the Philippines came from partner organizations. They took courses in Basic English, community development, agriculture, fisheries, development theories and approaches, office management systems and leadership, human rights, lobby and advocacy, networking, conflict resolution, and peace building. They also underwent community integration visits and took part in local advocacy campaigns.

Timorese interns to the Philippines since 1994 included Antero da Silva, Roberto Soares, and Micah Baretto and in 2001 Natalina Lidia Aparicio (from the youth group Renetil), Jacinto Maia (of the East Timor Student Solidarity Council), and Jose Magno Acosta (of the Kedalak Sulimutuk Institute). In 2002 and 2003 there were Mariquita Soares of the women's group GFTTL, and Aurelio Freitas Ribeiro of the student group ETSSC.

Filipino interns to East Timor, on the other hand, were Ruby Lora of IID's Solidarity Formation Program (who handled English language teaching courses in





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2001 at the request of APCET partner East Timor Relief Assistance, ETRA), Lyndee Prieto, IID's global education trainer and Doctors Lolit Suplido and Lenin Pascual.

C. Study Tour in East Timor (August 31 to September 3, 2003)

The study tour materialized from a request to the APCET secretariat of Mindanao by scholars and leaders who wanted to study the successful East Timorese political struggle won through an UN-administered referendum in 1999. Aside from learning how the East Timorese lobbied its case before the UN, the scholars also wanted to study the post-1999 East Timor experience under UN administration.

The Mindanao team was composed of Pastor Alvaro "Al" Senturias, Jr., chair of the Mindanao People's Peace Movement (MPPM) and the director of Global Education & International Relations of the Southern Christian College in Midsayap, Cotabato, Professor Michael O. Mastura, a former Constitutional convention delegate and congressman and a well-known author and academic based in southern Philippines, and Mr. Musib Buat. The last two are also lawyers assisting technical panels in the peace talks in Mindanao.

The scholars met with officials of the East Timor Foreign Ministry, the East Timor defense force and other political parties and NGO groups involved in justice, human rights work and conflict resolution programs.

D. Women's Solidarity Tours

First Tour. A group of 14 women delegates from Australia, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Philippines went on a solidarity tour in East Timor from June 20-June 30, 1999. Organized by APCET, the mission aimed to investigate and document recent cases of abuses of Timorese women, and to document women victims of violence and women in situations of armed conflict. The mission, led by Lyca Therese Sarenas of the APCET Secretariat, also aimed to lobby governments and the media to act on violence against women, as well as, facilitate joint programs and projects between Timor women groups and international organizations. The mission was the first such undertaking in East Timor.





On June 29th, the mission held a press conference in Dili to condemn what it discovered and documented as grisly cases of rape and sexual violence against Timorese women perpetrated by the Indonesian military and pro-Indonesia militias. The mission called on the Indonesian government to forthwith desist from further violations of human rights, to immediately withdraw troops from East Timor, and to allow outsider access to the communities. The mission also called on the UN to set up posts in remote areas to prevent more violence, and on the media for greater vigilance.

Second Tour. APCET organized a second all-women solidarity visit to refugee camps on July 22-26, 2001. The mission inquired into the plight of East Timorese women and children and sought to document cases of human rights abuses against women. The broader objectives were to draw world attention to the sufferings of refugees in West Timor, and to galvanize international support for their safe return to East Timor.

The six-member team visited seven camps in West Timor: two in Kupang and five in Atambua. Refugees in Noelbaki and Tuapukan in Kupang totaled 18,000; those in Haliwen (in the stadium), Lolowa, Tirta, and Lebur in Atambua numbered up to 12,400.

In Kupang the team met with the Center for Internally Displaced People's Services (CIS-GAMKI-GMKI).⁹⁶ CIS, an NGO formed in 1999 shortly after the arrival of East Timorese refugees in West Timor, acted as the West Timor partner of the APCET team in accessing the camps.

In Atambua, the team met with local NGOs with programs for the refugees. These NGOs included Yayasan Peduli Indonesia (YPI), Forum Peduli Perempuan (FPP), Forum for Disaster Preparedness and Response (FKPB), Yayasan Bina Mitra Sejahtera (YBMS), Yayasan Lemona (YALERA), Yasan Obor, Yayasan Ina Makbalin (Yasinain), Yayasan Belu Mandiri, Yayasan Bigi Sasawi, Yayasan Pelita Hati, Yayasan Membagi Kasih, and other local human rights foundations.

Some of these groups were members of the Forum for NGOs for Humanitarian Issues in West Timor.



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The mission's findings and recommendations:

FINDINGS	
1. Housing	Housing in the majority of the camps was inadequate; floors of available quarters were of dirt and uneven; roofing was of tarp and other inadequate materials; no cooking facilities; no privacy
2. Food	Inadequate, marked by unequal distribution by camp coordinators; low level of nutrition marked
3. Health	Serious health problems rife; doctors inside camps unavailable; lack of traditional midwives left women without assistance during childbirth; one camp reported 10 maternal deaths from childbirth complications in just one month; another camp reported five such deaths in a month.
4. Education	Child refugees failed to attend school, mainly because parents could not afford expenses (e.g., of uniforms costing Rupiah 25,000 or about US\$2)
5. Money	Women complained that they received none of the monetary allowance of Rp 1,500 a day provided by the Indonesian government. Camp coordinators distributed money to heads of families, in most cases men who squandered it on drinking and gambling.
6. Lack of Productive Activity	Women expressed frustration over the lack of economic opportunities inside the camps; no land to cultivate; no materials for weaving and handicrafts.
7. Sanitation and Water	Except for the camps where the families of East Timorese members of the TNI (Indonesian army) lived, all the other camps had inadequate toilets and other sanitation facilities.





8. Clothing	Inadequate, especially underwear and clothing for children
9. Trauma	Women lamented the lack of information about their missing children, those left in East Timor, or those who were lost along the way to the camps
10. Violence	Tension and conflict inside and outside the camps, especially between refugees and local communities over water supply and lack of access to land, often resulted in violence among men and between different camps. The incidence of domestic and sexual violence against women was high. Sexual violence included rape, forced marriages, adultery, polygyny, pornography, prostitution, and the spread of sexual health problems. Men perpetrated such violence.





Recommendations

1. UN agencies, international institutions, the Indonesian government, international NGOs, together with local organizations and religious groups, must immediately intervene on humanitarian grounds to meet the basic needs of the women and children, in terms of better food, shelter, health, clothing, and education.

2. The Indonesian government and UNTAET must ensure freer and greater access of NGOs, especially local organizations and religious groups, into the camps to work directly with the women and children. This freer access will help to initiate various programs of education and training for skills development, for organizing income generating projects, counseling, and various other interventions for women's empowerment.

3. The conditions in the camps, as well as the climate of fear as a result of continued violence against women, make women increasingly vulnerable to infections, including STIs and HIV/AIDS. Women's reproductive rights are further not recognized and are repeatedly violated as a result of how the camp is organized. Therefore, there is a need for programs to reduce the vulnerability of women and the threat to their reproductive health. These programs can be realized only through an integrated approach, with women's organizations taking the lead.

4. Women's capacity to make decisions has been strangled by patriarchal, social, and family relations and by lack of information, misinformation or no direct access by women to information. Mechanisms need to be created to ensure correct and honest information reaches the women in the camps. This can be developed by various organizations in West Timor, with an effective partnership with women's organizations, relevant agencies, and institutions in East Timor.

5. There are now excellent initiatives for women's empowerment in the camps.





There is counseling and support for women affected by violence, outreach, and support for prostituted women and programs for women's basic health care. However these are still in the infant stage and on a very small scale. Only a coordinated and consolidated approach can develop and strengthen the programs. At this juncture, support from women's organizations and religious groups in East Timor interacting with the local groups can strengthen the program. It will also bring about better understanding and solidarity.

6. The majority of the women whom we spoke to in the camps expressed their desire to return to East Timor. Therefore the recent registration exercise conducted by SATGAS (satuan tugas, a task force on refugees in West Timor) in the camps where refugees had to decide either to stay in Indonesia or return to East Timor cannot be seen as an end or final. Both governments in Indonesia and East Timor and UNTAET must recognize the right to return at anytime and the right to stay. It is also important that repatriation is seen as a process. Therefore, mechanisms have to be developed so that the process for repatriation is accompanied with increasing women's capacity to make decisions, their access to correct information and the availability of resources for the return.

7. In the repatriation process, where now a large number of the men are ex-militia, it is important to recognize and see the need for admission and accountability for the crimes they committed. However, the process of justice to make them accountable must be transparent in East Timor. The refugees need to understand clearly the mechanisms that have been established to meet their accountability. Therefore, efforts need to be initiated before the repatriation to inform, counsel, and prepare the refugees for the return.

8. Donor agencies and other supportive organizations should understand the impact of being a woman refugee during the last two years in West Timor. This impact is manifested in various ways. Thus efforts need to be made to ensure that humanitarian aid like food reaches the women directly. The distribution of the



food, money, and other resources from direct assistance can be directly handled by women themselves. Priority should be given for programs that empower a woman, that increase her self-confidence and capacity to make decisions for herself and her children.

9. In order to ensure that there is sufficient and regular distribution of food and other resources, and that they reach the women directly, appropriate UN bodies should assume responsibility for creating an effective, gender-sensitive monitoring mechanism. This mechanism should also be transparent.

Team Members		
1. Jill Hickson	Member, Action in Solidarity with Indonesia and East Timor-Australia (ASIET)	Australia
2. Manuela Pereira	Executive Coordinator, FOKUPERS	East Timor
3. Irene Fernandez	Chair, Pesticide Action Network-Asia Pacific Director, Tenagita Chairperson, CARAM-ASIA	Malaysia
4. Eleanor Conda	Executive Director, Asian Center for Women's Rights	Philippines
5. Jessica Soto	Executive Director, Amnesty International-Pilipinas	Philippines
6. Mindo Rajagukguk	Training Division Staff, SOLIDAMOR	Indonesia





E. APCET Solidarity and Medical Missions

From August 26 through September 5, 1999 APCET solidarity missions went to East Timor for the UN-sponsored referendum to try to (1) help create conditions for a free and fair vote through a “third force” of Members of Parliament from Asean and (2) offer solidarity to the East Timorese. The solidarity missions consisted of three groups, namely:

- MPs and political leaders from Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, and the Philippines
- Human rights monitors from Malaysia and the Philippines, and
- Two batches of medical missions from the Philippines.

Militia violence, however, forced the solidarity missions out of East Timor after the announcement of the results of the referendum.

In October 2000 the APCET Secretariat organized a two-week all-Filipino medical mission to the Falintil. Three surgeons and an anesthesiologist operated out of the Falintil clinic in Aileu.



The Triumph of Solidarity

One of APCET's funding partners probably said it best of the coalition: that it was a collective expression of solidarity, not only with a small country called East Timor, but also with the rest of the world in the upholding of the universal and inalienable right of peoples and nations to freedom and self-determination. And none indicated this collectivity more strongly than the fact that the US, Australia, New Zealand and the highly developed countries of Europe had united with developing and less developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region to bring to right fruition the struggle for self-determination of the hitherto isolated, unknown, and oppressed people of East Timor. This was North-South and South-South cooperation at its best.

While it was true that a solidarity movement on East Timor had already existed prior to APCET, this did not detract from its significance, but instead enhanced the importance of a concerted and more focused action in the context of political and economic conditions in the Asia-Pacific region. That is to say, that while the affiliates of APCET shared a common perspective of self-determination, this point of view had to be understood, and fought for, in terms of the policies not only of the Indonesian government of Suharto, but of the other members of ASEAN as





well. The interventions of the United Nations, the US and Europe proved critical in bringing about change in East Timor, but pressure from within the region itself was a sine qua non for such a change.

Even the fact that APCET was a loose formation of North and South solidarity networks did not diminish either commitment or dedication for the cause of the East Timorese. One will also carefully note that the coalition drew to its fold diverse advocacy groupings focused on women, youth, church, and other sectoral concerns and interests. Yet such diversity actually allowed for flexibility and independence in the pursuit of respective mandates even with the coalition's common effort to bring the issues of East Timor to global attention and action.

This is not to gloss over the downside to a coalition founded in such a loose, freewheeling manner. The experience of APCET has shown that its work did involve trade-offs and opportunity costs.

Short-Term versus Long-Term Advocacy Perspective. One such trade-off was that the loose arrangement precluded strategic thinking and planning. This inevitably led to a broad policy agenda that was essentially left either to the Secretariat to define or to the affiliates to consider and pursue according to their individual modes of discourse and advocacies. The result had been a lack of a common set of concrete and specific operational objectives, strategies, action plans, engagements, and expected outputs and outcomes on the one hand, and on the other, a lack of a common set of indicators and measures with which to monitor and evaluate the progress and impact of the entire coalition advocacy campaign.

In fairness, it was not in the contemplation of the coalition to project itself on a long-term basis. The coalition recognized even at the outset that its looseness implied, among others, that affiliates were free to disengage at any time. This, along with considerations of financial sustainability, quite naturally necessitated organizing APCET activities within a rather narrow, un-strategic time frame.

The biennial APCET conferences, the coalition's flagship, reflected this short-term character. It would not be transgressing the bounds of modesty to assert that





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the conferences after the disrupted APCET II had served as effective venues for highlighting the situation in East Timor and the urgency of a peaceful solution. The conferences also allowed affiliates to renew mutual bonds or forge new friendships with other support groups, not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but in the North as well. In the process groundwork was laid for future networking, resource sharing, and joint solidarity action. And the fact that international contacts and East Timorese themselves participated in the conferences as resource persons added to the legitimacy and credibility of APCET as an international coalition.

But again, APCET had had to face up to certain realities.

The uproar attending APCET I in Manila, Philippines in 1994, APCET II in Kuala Lumpur in 1996 especially, and APCET III in Bangkok were clear indications that the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia did not take the coalition lightly. That meant impact. The violent dispersal in Kuala Lumpur also reinforced the spirit of solidarity among affiliates, especially among those who went through the harrowing experience together.

But both of these came with the territory, so to speak.

The fact was that world attention was primarily riveted on APCET itself and its harassment – not on East Timor. If the world learned, read, or saw anything, it was more about APCET II delegates being detained and deported, raised clenched fists and all; other than a passing and brief background on East Timor, the world eventually learned about what was then going on in East Timor (e.g., human rights violations and the plight of women and children refugees and asylum seekers), and what the conference and the coalition intended to do about the situation. APCET could have, perhaps should have translated the experience into follow up pressure on Indonesia and Malaysia, but with the emphasis on Malaysia's act of repression as a miniature of the kind Indonesia had been applying on East Timor for the past 21 years.

Structural Challenges

All the consummated conferences consistently produced resolutions, but without accompanying coherent and integrated action plans. Evidently, the short





duration of the conferences was a built-in limitation to in-depth analyses and syntheses of major issues and the drawing up of the appropriate strategies. There was no skirting the fact.

The alternative had been to leave the fleshing out of conference resolutions and advocacy proposals to the APCET Council and the Steering Committee. But it was a tough balancing act for the Council and the Committee. A multitude of agenda items competed for attention and action. What, realistically speaking, could really be achieved in a one-day or two-day meeting? Updating on the affiliates' activities alone often took up more time than was necessary. Discussions during the meetings were also often diverse and related to different levels of advocacy. Consolidation of the updates into a coherent coalition-wide plan of action was sadly lacking. This drew from the fact that neither the Council nor the Steering Committee could impose on the direction and content of the individual advocacy campaigns of the affiliates.

Yet another consideration had been that, although the coalition encouraged interested persons and groups to attend the meetings, attendance was not obligatory; indeed, attendance actually proved to be rather inconsistent. It was not only the cost-effectiveness of such meetings that was a point of concern. It was also the question of how the Council and the Committee could effectively address the coalition's goals given the fluid quality and tendency of their meetings. This was yet another of the opportunity costs of a loose alliance.

The recourse had been to often assign planning and implementation to the Secretariat. Originally the Secretariat was meant to function as a "clearing house" for communications and networking. Additional tasks came on, however, involving education and lobby work based on conference resolutions and decisions by the Council and the Steering Committee.

It was then that the oversight presented itself: no one had previously considered the absorptive capacity of the Secretariat to handle multifarious assignments.

As early as 1996, during preparations for APCET II, it became obvious that the increase in the number and volume of tasks militated against optimal performance. Sending out and responding to invitations, seeing to the demands of the coalition





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lobby, attending to communications and media work, and maintaining links with affiliates and other target audiences required a tremendous amount of time, resources, and energy. These tasks of the Secretariat were over and above the separate organizational demands on the staff, who were at the same time personnel of IID. In addition to APCET, the IID staff assigned to the Secretariat also handled advocacy campaigns related to Burma, South-South solidarity, and similar priority matters.

A cursory glance through the minutes of APCET Council and Steering Committee meetings would indicate this point instructively. The meetings would involve a review of past activities, and an identification of action points under lobby work, education and awareness building, and key concerns under consolidation and expansion, with various sub-tasks under each key area. Yet there was hardly any corresponding identification of who or which unit, affiliate, or partner would take on which area of work, when, and how, and the expected results. The apparent presumption had been that the Secretariat would assume all of the lined up tasks, or that it was up to the Secretariat to figure out how and to whom to delegate these tasks, if it could do so at all.

This situation proved both constricting and stressful.

Another major flaw, if such a label may be appropriate, had been the absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. APCET certainly did not lack in outputs; and it helped that among the first affiliates were groups already working for East Timor since the 1970s and 1980s. This apparently obviated the necessity for rigorous objective-setting, monitoring, and assessment because the affiliates had been doing these on their own ever since.

But it could have served the coalition well if there was equal, if not greater focus, on keeping track of the outcomes of the various activities of the coalition as a whole, particularly with regard to the implementation of conference resolutions which numbered no less than 24 over four conferences. APCET could have also monitored and assessed the outcomes of lobby activities at the UN, ASEAN, and regional groupings, mass actions and like mobilizations, and the recommendations it had organized regarding the missions to East Timor. Thereafter, the coalition could





have applied corrective action if such were necessary. Nothing beats knowing that one is right on course and that one's goals are well in view every step of the way.

In hindsight, it probably could not have hurt if the Secretariat had been organized as a distinct and separate unit that functioned exclusively for the coalition from the beginning – exclusive staff, exclusive tasks, exclusive funding, and so on. If not that, a Secretariat made up of representatives from the different affiliates, the better to bring together various experiences and expertise to bear on the coalition's work. The point is, APCET could have seriously considered the idea of an alternative secretariat set-up, which might have helped the Council and the Steering Committee ensure a holistic perspective, and thus focus priority-setting, effective attention to specific coalition campaign demands, proper planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation.

Awareness Raising

The key areas of advocacy work and their mechanisms could likewise have benefited from prior planning, analysis, monitoring, and evaluation.

East Timor for Beginners, a comic book presentation of basic facts about the East Timor struggle for self-determination, was an example. It was a hit among university professors with an unexpected 1,000 first edition copies in 1997 and another 1,000 copies in 1998. APCET could have initiated a study on potential markets and readership to determine how best to maximize the comic book's value not only as a reading material, but also as an advocacy tool.

The same could be said of ESTAFETA. It could have used a bit of re-conceptualization and re-packaging to better enhance its avowed objectives of keeping the members informed of the various coalition activities and building up and sustaining public interest in the region on East Timor. Originally intended as a self-paying, income-generating fortnightly publication, ESTAFETA was soon reduced to a quarterly magazine . Although it carried enough features, statements, and information on East Timor, ESTAFETA could have added more updates on the activities of affiliates and encouraged discourse between and among them via the magazine. ESTAFETA could have thrown in for good measure not only hard facts on





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developments in East Timor, but also well-researched and in-depth material that media could use for country features, human interest stories, political analysis, and other think pieces.

But there lay exactly the kind of implicit dilemma that ESTAFETA faced. Because it was a quarterly publication, swift dissemination of information that required immediate action was out of the question. In which case, it could not presume to serve the general public or its affiliates as effectively as it wished. On the other hand, it could not overemphasize information for coalition discussion because only affiliates would find that useful, not the general public or the media. ESTAFETA could have used a little critical distance for it to evaluate and decide on the “right” audience mix – i.e., the balancing of different contents, frequencies of treatment, and even physical forms for different target groups.

As for other awareness raising activities and services, APCET had recognized since at least 1997 that there was much room for improvement and regularization of these services. These included (1) giving updates (2) providing the network the necessary materials, paraphernalia, and other support for campaigns and education (3) disseminating regular coalition statements on pressing issues, latest developments in East Timor, up-to-date bulletins on the Coalition and its members’ activities, and (4) systematic on-line distribution of information and appeals coming from East Timor partners and the solidarity network.

APCET had hoped that with the development of the APCET web page, part of this weakness would be resolved and the services to the affiliates and network rendered more efficiently and sufficiently.

There too was the matter of finance. It was not readily apparent in the beginning, but experience had made APCET realize the serious implications on financial sustainability of a coalition being a loose organization. The fact that a coalition is more often than not a short-term arrangement, and APCET was no exception, indicates the need for careful financial planning. APCET itself suffered from budget shortfalls particularly in the holding of conferences. The attempt early on to collect an affiliation fee of \$50 was abandoned, obviously because it discouraged affiliation and was contrary to the implicit idea of voluntary involvement in the





coalition. And ESTAFETA, as shown earlier, simply could not be the self-liquidating, income-earning entity that it was initially envisioned to be. APCET had to rely on funding support from external sources.

Lobbying

If anything, APCET's lobby had implicitly proved not only the universality of human rights, but also the universality of human response to infringements of these rights. APCET also proved that while gross violations of human rights had occurred and continue to occur in Asia, this fact by no means indicates an anti-human rights culture in this part of the world. On the contrary, APCET's lobby had shown an Asian commitment to human rights and human dignity.

But for unavoidable constraints, APCET could have pursued and maintained a robust Asian campaign on East Timor. In 1995, against earlier plans, APCET had to scale down its lobbying activities because of the volume of work. The perceived priority at this time was for lobbying the ASEAN governments instead of the UN because several affiliates already had established access to the world body anyway.

Even so, APCET noted that certain aspects of its lobby work in the UN could have stood refinement.

For one, the language of its petitions and statements before the UN Decolonization Committee (Committee of 24) and their submissions to the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) would have benefited from better crafting. Particularly because the UN is a "forum of diplomacy," APCET could have concentrated on factual presentations and issue-based appeals, and cut down on condemnatory rhetoric and emotionally-charged articulation that often approached sloganeering. It is entirely probable that the UN might have been more receptive to its presentations had APCET shunned terms like "genocidal rule," "dictators," "pseudo-democratic tyrants," "deranged sanctions," and "continuing bloodbath."

For another, lobbying the UNCHR could have used comprehensive research prior to the formulation of positions, appeals, and recommendations. Even basic research would have sufficed, if for nothing else than for making informed





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recommendations addressed to the correct UN entities.

The same should have applied with the slow-starting lobby campaign directed to the ASEAN and other regional groupings (e.g., APEC). While APCET acknowledged the many opportunities for an ASEAN lobby, it fell short of defining exactly how it could maximize these opportunities, except perhaps in terms of new language, such as “flexible engagement and constructive intervention,” formulated by the Thai and Philippine governments in the 1998 ASEAN meeting. But again, there had been no clarity on the part of APCET in this regard. For instance, does the coalition address ASEAN as a whole or in respect to individual governments? What were the points of access and the requirements for such access? Who and what were the specific target entities within the ASEAN political structure?

The seminal paper on ASEAN lobbying that the APCET Secretariat developed in 1997, and presented at a conference sponsored by Lisbon's Oporto University, should have been pursued in earnest.

And there was the matter of the media. APCET had known beforehand how media could both be one of the targets of the coalition's advocacy, and at the same time a powerful ally in propagating the coalition's initiatives and stimulating positive action on East Timor. To be sure, it had engaged media in regular, if often informal, dialogues. But APCET might have complemented this by regularly supplying media with data for use in feature stories and columns, TV talk shows and radio commentaries, particularly since ESTAFETA was rather constrained in this respect.

Overall, it would not have been pulling teeth for APCET to have, for instance, reviewed basic advocacy planning concepts such as setting goals and objectives and external environment analysis. The latter could have been very useful and directive, particularly in

1. Mapping target audiences (policy makers, institutions, formal and informal policy-making processes and procedures, and policy-making constraints)
2. Mapping allies, community support, and opposition
3. Assessing internal capacities and organizational resources, and
4. Planning strategies, tactics, and activities.





Extant advocacy theories on monitoring and evaluation techniques could also have come in handy.

Capacity Building

One of the most important realizations of APCET in the course of its 10-year existence was that solidarity had an enabling aspect to it. The coalition was a convergence point, as it were, for East Timor, Asian civil society, solidarity groups in North and South America, international human rights organizations, and coalitions of indigenous and unrepresented peoples to touch base with each other, to share information and experiences, and to learn from each other's struggles.

These had been possible to a great extent because of the conferences, which were important venues for networking, and e-mail services. The different specific skills trainings, internships, and study exchange arrangements likewise proved invaluable in enhancing capacity strengthening among representatives of East Timor, particularly in the areas of advocacy, conflict transformation, local governance, community organizing, integrated rural development and participatory rural appraisal. These, APCET had hoped, could serve as the spadework for the eventual development of a civil society in East Timor.

The solidarity missions, too, were of immense value, and APCET could have organized more such missions had circumstances been more favorable.

The all-women solidarity mission to the refugee camps in West Timor in 2001 was a revelation. The mission was in essence a fact-finding tour. But it opened to view an often-overlooked dimension of solidarity: that it is a means to empowerment, not least for women. It was not only the initial discussion and exchange of information with local NGOs that was mutually empowering, it was the mission results themselves that indicated how such empowerment could evolve and further develop. The following particular recommendations of the mission about said it all:

- The Indonesian government and UNTAET must ensure freer and greater access of NGOs, especially local organizations and religious groups, into the camps to work directly with the women and children. This freer access will help





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to initiate various programs of education and training for skills development, for organizing income generating projects, counseling and various other interventions for women's empowerment

- There is a need for programs to reduce the vulnerability of women [to infections including STIs and HIV/AIDS] and the threat to their reproductive health. These programs can be realized only through an integrated approach with women's organizations taking the lead

- Women's capacity to make decisions has been strangled by patriarchal, social and family relations and by lack of information, misinformation, or no direct access by the women to information. Mechanisms need to be created to ensure correct and honest information reaches the women in the camps. This can be developed by various organizations in West Timor with an effective partnership with women's organizations, relevant agencies and institutions in East Timor, and

- There are now excellent initiatives for women's empowerment in the camps. There is counseling and support for women affected by violence, outreach and support for prostituted women and programs for women's basic health care... At this juncture, support from women's organizations and religious groups in East Timor interacting with the local groups can strengthen the programs. It will also bring about better understanding and solidarity.

One notes that apart from the empowerment of women, the last two of the recommendations of the mission also pointed to the bridging and possible reconciliation of Indonesian West Timor and the once Indonesia-occupied East Timor. Did not Xanana Gusmão himself appeal for healing, forgiveness, and rebuilding when he returned to Dili from prison in Jakarta?

All things considered, only one question really needed to be asked, and that was: was it worth all the effort, trying to help East Timor attain its freedom and right to self-determination?

It was no small paradox perhaps that APCET as a coalition was essentially short-term, and yet its advocacy was for the long haul. At its inception, none of APCET's founders and earliest affiliates really had any idea how long the struggle of the East Timorese would take. In fact, no one was certain how long the coalition itself





would last. And even up to the time of its closure, APCET could not be definitive about which particular aspects, processes, or events that led to East Timor's independence it had helped bring about or influence.

But then, who could?

The United Nations first called on Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor on December 12, 1975, five days into Indonesia's invasion, but to no avail.⁹⁷ For the next seven years, from December 22, 1975 up to November 3, 1982, the United Nations would reiterate its condemnation of the invasion, reject subsequent attempts at integration into Indonesia, and call for an act of self-determination. In 1984 and 1985 initial talks on the East Timor issue between Indonesia and Portugal showed little progress. Subsequent attempts at formal negotiations yielded nothing up to 1994. It was only in January 1995 that the United Nations, with permission from Indonesia and Portugal, managed to hold talks among the Timorese. Thence, the UN was able to sponsor the All-Inclusive East Timorese Dialogue (AIETD) in June and in July – the Indonesia-Portugal talks that resulted in an agreement to preserve East Timorese culture and intra-Timorese dialogue. The following year, the UN also sponsored the eighth round of talks between Indonesia and Portugal, but the only resolution arrived at was the building of a Timorese cultural center in Dili. It really was not until 1999, after the East Timor vote for independence and the quelling of violent terrorism that raged in the after-polls, that the first concrete conditions for the rebuilding of a devastated East Timor were laid.

All told, it took the UN 24 years before it could help get East Timor on the road to independence. To be sure, a significant factor for that was the consistent pressure for clear and decisive UN action over those years by solidarity groups, especially those that had supported East Timor since 1975, lobbying their respective governments and other institutions. It also helped that Australia shifted its foreign policy in 1999 toward East Timor to one of support for self-determination, thanks again to a large extent of the persistence of Australian civil society and other support groups.

Suppose Suharto had stayed on in power?

Xanana was right: Suharto's resignation was the one defining moment in the struggle for East Timor independence.





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That resignation signaled the beginning of the end of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor; it signaled the swan song of APCET, too.

But APCET could count its blessings. If for nothing else, APCET proved that it was not all sound and fury, signifying nothing. As Carmel Budiardjo put it:

*The international solidarity movement with East Timor became very well organized over the years and contributed massively to informing public opinion and forcing governments and institutions to acknowledge the injustice and brutality of Indonesia's invasion and occupation. Its persistence meant that governments were not able to ignore the legitimate demands of the people of East Timor. It was a loosely organized movement, including a wide variety of groups and individuals. Those of us who worked over the years to keep this movement alive and on its toes can feel a sense of pride in what we achieved.*⁹⁸

And Ramos-Horta during the APCET's fourth biennial conference in Baucau in November 2000, a year after East Timor voted for independence:

The conferences organized by the Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor have been watershed and responsible in not only providing the broadest possible platform for our concerns and issues, but had also charted the solidarity efforts of our supporters in the region and elsewhere.

It is true that for all that it had done, those controversy-hobbled conferences included, APCET could not flatter itself. Events themselves that were beyond APCET's shaping did help the coalition along.

But ultimately, it would not matter whether or not the coalition could lay a finger on a single event in the East Timorese struggle for independence that it could attribute to its efforts, nor would it matter which affiliate contributed the most concrete and effective effort for the cause of East Timor. If a metaphor may be permitted, APCET was like a tributary that merged with other tributaries to the river of East Timor's struggle that, despite rocky, turbulent, and treacherous turns, in the end brought East Timor safely home to sea.

The important thing was APCET stood by East Timor and fought for East Timor. What mattered was not the triumph, but the struggle. To borrow from Xanana, the





Epilogue 1

Solidarity works.

Such is the one unmistakable and fundamental lesson that APCET learned in all the 10 years that it campaigned with and for East Timor.

It was a solidarity that transcended physical borders, political creed, religion, gender, and socio-economic rank. It was a solidarity that brought together peoples and civil society organizations of diverse persuasions in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, and the United States of America to rally behind and alongside the once virtually unknown but long-oppressed people of East Timor in their decades-long fight for freedom and their right to self-determination. And APCET proved that this solidarity was not a condescending arrangement between North and South countries, between haves and have-nots, between the free and the chained. It was rather a bonding of kindred spirits. The happy irony was that such solidarity was possible, despite the looseness of the bonds that held the coalition together. The fact was such looseness made for flexibility and creativity in bringing the plight of East Timor to world attention and action.

The experience of APCET also affirmed a number of axiomatic advocacy principles and praxis.





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One of these is unanimity of belief as a necessary precondition and basis for concerted action. East Timor was an expression both of the universality of human rights and of the inviolability of these rights. It was precisely because of these self-evident truths that the East Timorese cause struck a responsive chord in people around the world. Human rights define human dignity, and a violation of these rights is, in the words of Senator Wigberto Tañada, an outrage to the conscience of humankind. APCET, as was the international solidarity movement that preceded it, was merely the response to the distortion of this universal principle. But it was one unrelenting response that brooked no compromise.

Yet unanimity of belief would be nothing without commitment. It is one thing to believe in a cause, and entirely another to fight for it to the end. The East Timorese exemplified both of these. Had they wavered or otherwise given up on their struggle, no solidarity movement on its behalf would ever have prospered.

If the commitment is real enough, it inevitably translates into organized effort, whether singly as in the case of an individual or a group, or as cooperative action in the case of a network or a coalition. This means the setting up of a structure that delineates the roles of the elements involved. APCET had the Conference as the plenary policy-making body, the Council and the Steering Committee in charge of policy and strategy formulation, and the Secretariat for communications, coordination, conference facilitation, and other day-to-day operations. All functioned as efficiently as they could under less than ideal conditions.

Their experience had demonstrated the incalculable value of first, the identification of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound objectives. And second, of strategic planning and analysis, monitoring, assessment, and corrective action. Not that the coalition ignored these; it was just that they could have attended to these more closely in order to more effectively steer the coalition toward the broad objective of self-determination and independence for East Timor.

Even if the coalition never thought of itself as a long-term partnership, it could have benefited from strategic thinking toward maximizing and rationalizing access and utilization of opportunities and means. The coalition did attempt to make full





use of information technology in its networking and linkage. Had circumstances so permitted, it could have expanded the advocacy potentials of technology beyond e-mails and web sites to teleconferences, Internet forums, and other high-visibility technological formats and venues. Information technology is one arena where the creativity, adaptability, and flexibility of an organized advocacy effort can be brought to free and full play.

Partnership with other entities is also critical. The formal media is one huge and potent partner in any campaign, and APCET recognized that it could have done better in this regard as part of its lobby and awareness raising work. Here again, one cannot underestimate the value of reviewing the theoretical underpinnings of advocacy. It could not harm if one brushed up, for instance, on mapping and understanding of target audiences: who they were, what they could contribute to the campaign, where, when, and how they could be involved, and why they should be involved at all. Other than formal media, appropriate and legitimate domestic and international partnerships could also have been forged with the church and religious groups, the academe, government units and political institutions, policy makers, and other civil society organizations and movements.

Finally, there is constituency building, which is basic to any civil society campaign. In the case of APCET, its constituents consisted not only of the East Timorese, but also of its local and international allies, in addition to the coalition's affiliates, contacts, and target audiences. In a word, APCET's constituents were all those who worked with it through the highs and lows of its campaign or else supported the coalition in whatever manner possible. The following quotation should clarify APCET's work at constituency building.





The Chronicle of East Timor's Independence: A Case Study in Constituency-Building

East Timor's road to independence will go down in history as an uphill feat. Indonesian forces invaded the territory in 1975 after more than 400 years of colonial rule by Portugal. The struggle for independence was led by the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin).

Yet in the first few years of occupation, there was little impact on the ground. Human rights violations by the Indonesian military and related famine and disease took a heavy toll on the population. It was only after years of sustained networking outside East Timor that there were glimmers of hope. International media and NGOs like Amnesty International and the British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia (TAPOL) put East Timor on the world map.

At the regional level, Southeast Asian solidarity found its expression in the NGO network named after the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET) that persevered despite disruptions by both the Philippine and Malaysian Governments. With the help of the Catholic Church, the issue gained public support in many countries.

These layers of networking finally resulted in advocacy impact at the United Nations level. Although fraught with violence, the country finally gained its freedom in 2001.⁹⁹





Epilogue 2

APCET has moved on.

Its mandate to accompany the East Timorese people in their self-determination has been nominally achieved. Further work in and for East Timor may have to take on new expressions and new mandates. The recentcurrent troubles there engendered by simmering and lurking issues such as the dynamic between reconciliation and justice; income gap, poverty, land ownership, and even the decision to make official the Portuguese language are unraveling.

Meanwhile, there are also other pressing challenges in the region that crave for the solidarity, support and attention of the international community including from the now sovereign East Timorese people: Burma, Aceh, West Papua, Mindanao, Sri Lanka, South Thailand and ASEAN. They too need their own “APCETs”.

Thus APCET, has in fact, metamorphosed into two distinct and inter-related entities that reflect the realities and challenges in both East Timor and the region.

After various discussions and consultations with both East Timorese partners and affiliates, APCET has now transited into two formations: an East Timorese-based and led entity advocating for their issues internationally while also working on solidarity for others; and, a broader international solidarity coalition responding





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to the other burning issues in the region. The East Timorese entity has become an affiliate to this broader coalition.

Initially, there were ideas to still transform the coalition into a “cooperative” endeavor between the members of the coalition and the East Timorese and even retain the coalition’s seminal APCET acronym for “Asia-Pacific Cooperation with East Timor” or even an “All- People’s Cooperation with East Timor”. This was heavily discussed in the run-up to the 4th APCET conference in Baucau in 2000 and in previous consultations with the emerging leadership of the young nation and civil society partners.

The word “Cooperation” would have reflected the priority needs of the nation as it confronts the task of nation building and attendant development issues.

Yet, eventually, the prevalent mood was to let go even as coalition members committed its continuing solidarity while they focused on specific discourses and related bilaterally with their respective Timorese partners. Solidarity took on a new framework with myriad and even sometimes distinct but complementary foci, i.e., political education, party organizing, livelihood, capacity-building and so on and so forth in preparation for building the new nation.

Thus was born both TILCAP and APSOC.

1. TILCAP: An East Timorese coalition for international solidarity

The APCET 5 conference paved the way for the formal launching of a new East Timor- based and led organization called Timor Leste Coalition for Asia and the Pacific or TILCAP.

This entity is the East Timorese channel for engaging in international solidarity for other peoples in the region. Indeed this was the best time for the East Timorese people to provide inspiration and share their lessons and goodwill to the international community specially to other struggling peoples in the region while their victory was fresh.

But more so, this organization wanted to also tap into the existing APCET regional network to advocate for the pressing issues at hand in East Timor that needed international support or campaigns, i.e. Timor Gap, justice, reconciliation and , development.





2. Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC)

Even while most affiliates went their own way inside Timor after independence or moved on to other concerns, the erstwhile international affiliates of APCET and their other regional partners chose to transform themselves into a solidarity network responding to other justice, self-determination and human rights issues in the region. While East Timor was now free, others in the region were not yet. Fueled and enriched by the Timor solidarity experience, the new formation called itself the Asia-Pacific Solidarity Coalition or APSOC.

APCET's then affiliate organizations compose the core members of this broad coalition along with TILCAP playing a key role. Other entities that are the nucleus members are the Support Committee for Human Rights in Aceh (SCHRA), ALTSEAN-Burma, SOLIDAMOR, Free Burma-Coalition and IID.

This solidarity formation is endeavoring to coordinate regional level campaigns on burning issues and likewise serve as a venue for the Timorese to now in turn express solidarity to other peoples issues.

At the moment, along with allied organizations and networks, APSOC is a core element in the regional campaign for Burma's democracy. It is also exploring peace-building efforts in West Papua, Mindanao and South Thailand.

Indeed, as we learned from the East Timorese and APCET experience, solidarity is constant. Solidarity is indivisible.

A luta continua!





Annexes

Annex 1

Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET) List of Conveners

1. National Council for Maubere Resistance (CNRM) – The umbrella organization of East Timorese resistance groups such as Fretilin and UDT, as well as major Timorese political parties.
2. People's Plan for the 21st Century (PP 21) – A loose formation of Asia-Pacific NGOs, political organizations, sectoral movements and personalities seeking to draw up a people's agenda for the 21st century.
3. Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) – A non-government organization that initiates programs on South-South solidarity and cultural exchanges.
4. Law Asia-Human Rights Standing Committee – A group composed of Asian lawyers concerned with human rights protection in Asia.
5. Parliamentarians for East Timor (PET) – Led by Lord Eric Avebury of the British House of Lords, it is composed of legislators from Japan, Australia, and Europe who advocate the right to self-determination of the Timorese people.
6. International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET) – An organization based in Leiden, The Netherlands composed of lawyers-jurists supporting the struggle of the East Timorese.
7. International Federation for East Timor (IFET) – Composed of various solidarity groups all over the world supporting a peaceful resolution of the East Timor issue.
8. Oporto University, Portugal – an established Portuguese academic institution and host of the annual international symposium on East Timor.
9. Servizio Civile International (SCI) – Composed of Italy-based volunteer groups of Europeans advocating various progressive and humanitarian causes.
10. Asian Council for People's Culture (ACPC) – A network of progressive workers and artists in Asia that provide trainings and other services in the cultural field.
11. TAPOL – the British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia
12. British Council for East Timor (BCET) – An organization of British advocates of the East Timorese struggle for self-determination.
13. East Timor Action Alert Network (ETAN) – Composed of Americans and Canadians that actively support the East Timorese cause.

Philippine Conveners Group

1. Renato C. Constantino, Jr. Chairperson
2. Sedfrey Candelaria, Vice chairperson
3. Augusto N. Miclat, Jr. Coordinator





4. Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), Secretariat
5. Alex Padilla, Legal Counsel
5. Ateneo Human Rights Center
6. Bukluran sa Ikauunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa (BISIG)
7. Council for National Freedom and Democratic Rights (Confreedom)
8. Ecumenical Bishops Forum (EBF)
9. Lean L. Alejandro Foundation (LLAF)
10. Moro Human Rights Center (MHRC)
11. Movement for Popular Democracy (MPD)
12. Partido Demokratiko-Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP)
13. Consortium for People's Diplomacy (CPD)
14. Philippine Council for International Solidarity and Peace (PCISP)
15. Sandigan ng Lakas at Demokrasya ng Sambayanan (Sanlakas)
16. Siglo ng Paglaya (Siglaya)
17. University of the Philippines Student Council (UP-SC)
18. Women's Legal Bureau (WLB)

Annex 2

List/Profile of Affiliates, Contacts, and Partners

Annex 3

Council Members

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Australian Coalition for East Timor (ACET) | Australia |
| 2. Australian Solidarity for Indonesia and East Timor | Australia |
| 3. East Timor Independence Committee (ETIC) | New Zealand |
| 4. Center for Information and Reformation Action Network (PIJAR) | Indonesia |
| 5. Free East Timor Coalition | Japan |
| 6. Friends of the Third World (FTW) | Sri Lanka |
| 7. Indonesian People in Solidarity with the Maubere People (SPRIM) | Indonesia |
| 8. Korean East Timor Solidarity (KETS) | Korea |
| 9. Philippine Solidarity for Indonesia and East Timor (PhilSETI) | Philippines |
| 10. Solidaritas Timur Timor Malaysia (SOLTIMTIM) | Malaysia |
| 11. Solidarity Group for East Timor | Taiwan |
| 12. Thai Friends for East Timor (TFET) | Thailand |
| 13. Asian Students Association (ASA) | Youth |
| 14. All Asia Women's Association (Japan) | Women |
| 15. APCET Secretary-General/Coordinator | Secretariat |





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Annex 4

Steering Committee Members

1. PIJAR (Indonesia)
2. FTW (Sri Lanka)
3. ACIET/ACET (Australia)
4. FETJC (Japan)
5. PhilSETI (Philippines)
6. SOLTIMTIM (Malaysia)
7. TFET (Thailand)





Notes

1. Jack Woddis, *Introduction to Neo-Colonialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1967).
2. Reynaldo Ty, "The General Crisis of the World Economic System," *Beyond the Cold War, Philippine Perspectives on the emerging World Order*, eds. Carmencita Karagdag and Augusto N. Miclat, Jr. (Quezon City, Philippines: People's Training Program for Philippine NGOs c/o Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement [PRRM], 1992).
3. Attempts to improve inter-country economic relations started at bilateral levels and eventually expanded in the form of often contentious multilateral international negotiations to reconfigure global trade. As anyone might guess, these negotiations culminated in the coming to force of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995.
4. For additional background on the terms "North-South dialogues" and "South-South dialogues" the reader may refer to *Breaking the Silence: The Story behind APCET*, published by the Initiatives for International Dialogue.
5. *Decolonization in East Timor* (Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia, undated book). For a more detailed profile see also *East Timor for Beginners*, 2nd ed. (Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor (APCET) in cooperation with the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), 1998). Additional general information on East Timor may also be found in Pedro Pinto Leite, "The Right of Self-Determination and the Question of East Timor," *East Timor, Asia-Pacific Coalition on East Timor Report and Proceedings* (Initiatives for International Dialogue, 1994).
6. This would be approximately 11.33% of the total land area of the Philippines. Another estimate puts Timor's land area at 32,200 sq. kms.
7. Another source places the figure at 18,900 sq. kms.
8. *East Timor for Beginners*.
9. Carmel Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *The War Against East Timor* (1984).
10. According to Pedro Pinto Leite, some 98 percent of these were Timorese, the rest were Chinese, and a smattering of mestizos and white people (mostly Portuguese and members of the military).
11. Culled from the East Timor Action Network file.
12. Unless otherwise indicated, data in this section is from Budiardjo and Liong.
13. J. Dunn, *Timor, A People Betrayed*, quoted by Budiardjo and Liong, 24.
14. Sarah Niner, ed., *To Resist is To Win! The Autobiography of Xanana Gusmão* (Aurora Books in association with David Lowell Publishing, 2000).
15. Most of the data in this section is from Budiardjo and Liong and Niner combined.
16. See GusmãoNiner.
17. See Budiardjo and Liong.
18. Niner.
19. Budiardjo and Liong.
20. Niner.
21. Niner and Budiardjo and Liong.
22. Niner.
23. Budiardjo and Liong.
24. Ibid.



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25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. East Timor for Beginners.
28. Niner.
29. Budiardjo and Liong.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Niner.
33. Budiardjo and Liong, and Niner.
34. Niner.
35. Ibid.
36. Budiardjo and Liong.
37. M. Leifer, Indonesia's Foreign Policy, quoted by Budiardjo and Liong, 155.
38. Niner.
39. Budiardjo and Liong.
40. Budiardjo and Liong offer an explanation for this (and the apparent silence of Western and other nations on the Indonesian invasion): "All western governments have established close economic ties with Indonesia since the military coup in 1965 [that ousted President Sukarno]. The Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) was set up in 1967 on the initiative of Japan, who has become Indonesia's chief trading partner and primary source of capital investment. It has met annually in [T]he Netherlands ever since to coordinate economic support for the military regime on the basis of the assessments and advice of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The other members of the IGGI are the USA...Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and almost all the Western European governments. The IGGI's deliberations have remained totally unaffected by Indonesia's invasion of East Timor: the level of western aid and investments steadily increased throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. Military support (for Indonesia) has also grown substantially since 1975, with the USA being the major western supplier. Others include Australia, [T]he Netherlands, Britain, West Germany, France, and Sweden. No country has allowed Indonesia's naked aggression to stand in the way of selling weapons, aircraft and naval vessels, as Indonesia modernizes its Armed Forces thereby strengthening their capacity to cope with a protracted war against East Timor (8)."
41. Helen Hill, Fretilin: The Origins, Ideologies and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement in East Timor, quoted by Budiardjo and Liong, 98.
42. Elizabeth Traube, Cultural Notes on Timor, quoted by Budiardjo and Liong, 87.
43. Ibid.
44. Budiardjo and Liong.
45. The following passage comes from Carmel Budiardjo, "The International Solidarity Movement for East Timor: A Weapon more powerful than Guns," May 17, 2002, TAPOL website.
46. Budiardjo and Liong.
47. Niner.
48. Rina Jimenez-David, "Sobering thoughts on APCET comedy," At Large, Philippine Daily Inquirer, May 31, 1994.
49. Timeline inserts are from GusmãoNiner.
50. "\$700-M investments periled by Timor confab," The Manila Times, June 2, 1994.





51. Francisco S. Tatad, "What a Mess," *The Manila Times*, May 30, 1994.
52. Aurora Roxas-Lim, "Tremors over Timor: Conflicting issues on East Timor," *The Philippine Star*, May 27, 1994.
53. "Timor flap raises questions about FVR government's skill," *Manila Standard*, May 31, 1994.
54. "Sin Slams Ramos on Timor Ban," *The Manila Times*, May 31, 1994.
55. "Suharto hails Ramos decision on Timor meet," *The Philippine Star*, May 25, 1994.]
56. "FVR gov't gets flak overseas," *The Manila Chronicle*, June 2, 1994.
57. "QC court stops holding of East Timor meeting," *The Philippine Star*, May 28, 1994.
58. "Timor conference to go on," *Manila Standard*, May 31, 1994.
59. Ibid.
60. "Timor meeting gets Supreme Court nod," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June, 1994.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Rina Jimenez-David.
64. Max Stahl, *Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET) Reports and Proceedings*, May 31-June 5, 1994, published by the Initiatives for International Dialogue.
65. Daud Maliga, Spokesperson of the National Democratic Front, Western Mindanao Region in a solidarity statement, May 31, 1994.
66. HIVOS Report, 1998.
67. Kua Kia Soong, ed., "Mob Rule, The East Timor Conference in Malaysia," *Aliran Monthly* (*Suara Rakyat Malaysia* [Suaram], November 9, 1996).
68. These organizations had attended APCET I in Manila in 1994.
69. "NGOs urged to reconsider meeting," *New Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), November 5, 1996.
70. "NGOs to host meeting on East Timor," *The Star* (Kuala Lumpur), November 4, 1996.
71. "Apcet II organizers face action if there is backlash," *New Straits Times*, November 7, 1996.
72. Ibid.
73. "Malaysian police deport Sanlakas head," *The Manila Chronicle*, November 8, 1996.
74. Eleven Filipino delegates were among those held for immediate deportation. They were Bishop Gabriel Garol, chairperson of the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA); Augusto Miclat, Jr., APCET coordinator; Jude Cabusao and Egoy Bans of the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID); Ellen Sana of the People's Global Exchange; Rafael Albert, secretary of Bukluran sa Ikaunlad ng Sosyalistang Isip at Gawa (BISIG); Earl Parreño, reporter of *Manila Times*; Irene Luansing, Dr. Jumail Kamlian, and Mohammad Kusain from Mindanao, and Linda Cabaero, who was based in Hong Kong.
75. Soong.
76. "Umno Youth defends action to stop meet," *The Star*, November 15, 1996.
77. "Indonesia appreciates Malaysian attitude," *Jakarta Post*, November 12, 1996.
78. "Four demonstrators to be charged; A-G decides not to take action against 60 participants of APCET II," *New Straits Times*, January 31, 1997.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
- 81.
82. Withaya Sucharithanarugse, Director, Asian Studies Institute, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, quoted by the *Bangkok Post*, March 4, 1998.
83. Media Release, March 3, 1998.
84. A financial crisis hit Southeast Asia in 1997.

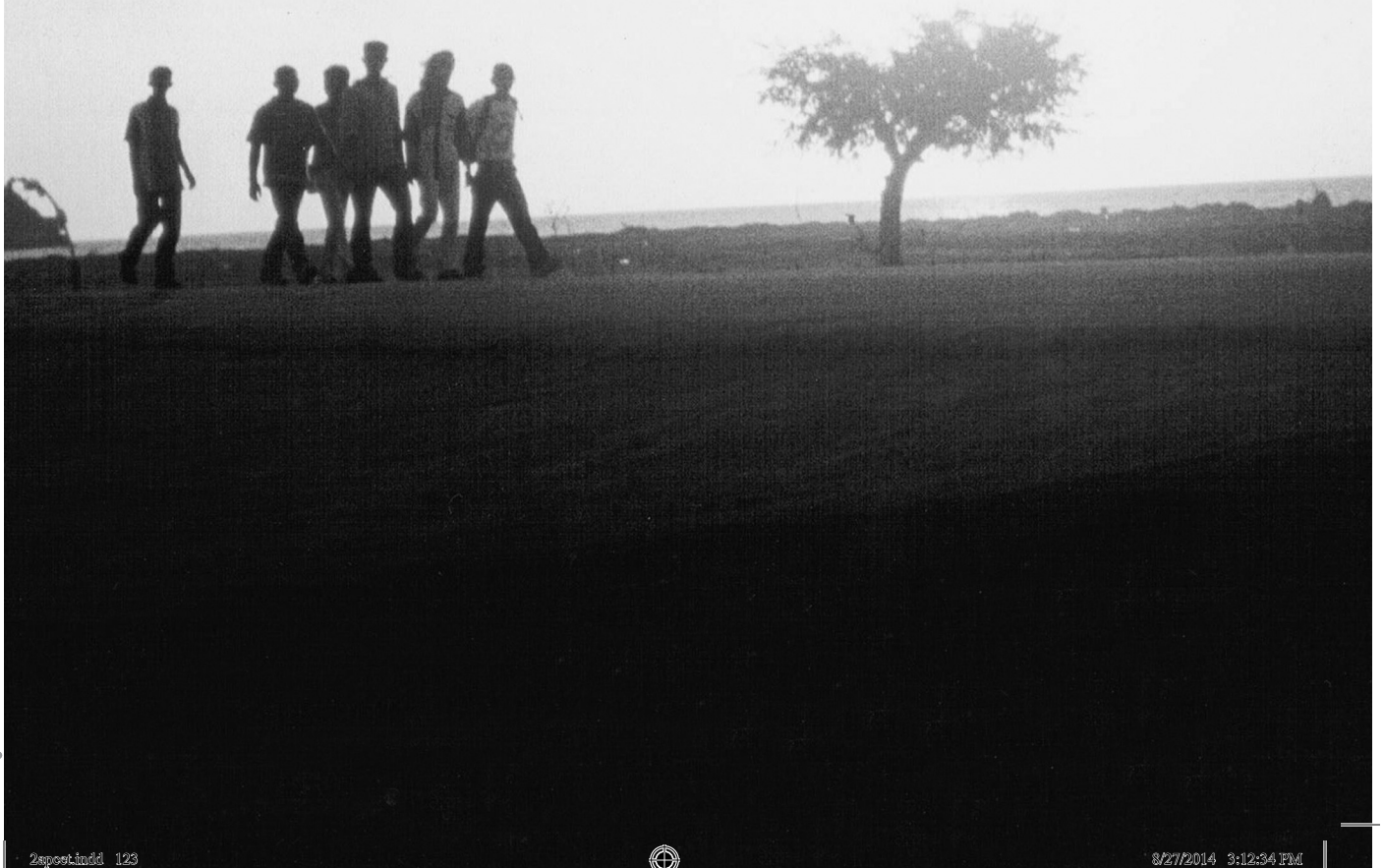


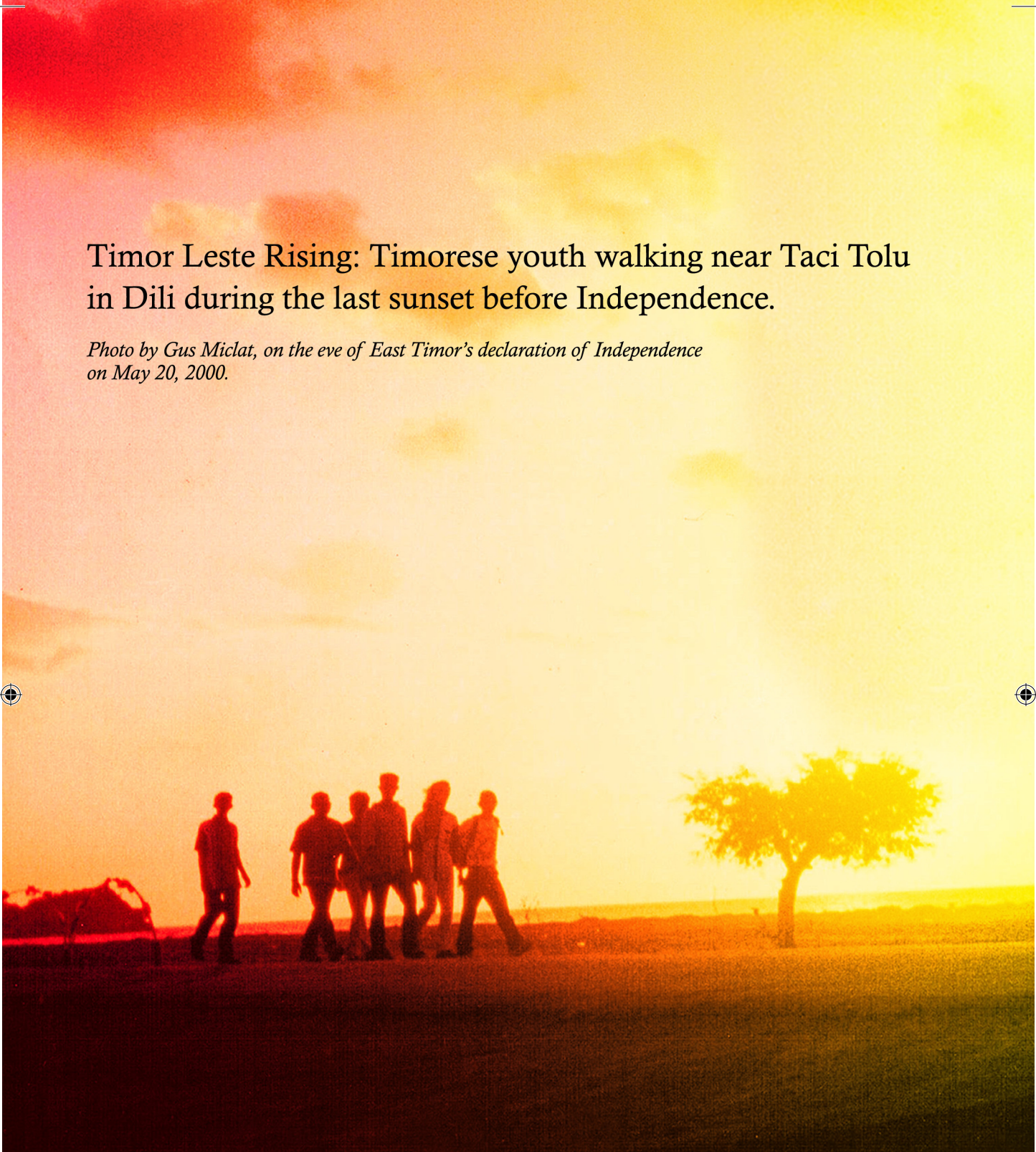



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85. Niner.
86. Niner.
87. Renato Constantino, Jr., "Our Continuing Responsibility," Keynote Address, APCET IV, November 26-30, 2000, Baucau, East Timor.
88. Niner.
89. José Alexander Xanana Gusmão, record of proceedings, "APCET IV: Building an independent East Timor, Empowering the Grassroots, Consolidating Civil Society," Baucau, East Timor, November 26-30, 2000.
90. Carmel Budiardjo, record of proceedings, "APCET IV."
91. Renato Constantino, Jr., record of proceedings, "APCET IV."
92. José Ramos-Horta, message, "APCET IV: Building an independent East Timor, Empowering the Grassroots, Consolidating Civil Society," Baucau, East Timor, November 26-30, 2000.
93. "Leste" is Portuguese for "east."
94. APCET V, Dili, Timor-Leste, May 16-19, 2000.
95. Gen. Wiranto did not join the 2004 Indonesian presidential elections.
96. The Center, in conjunction with international agencies, provides humanitarian services, investigates human rights abuses, counsels women victims of violence, and disseminates accurate information to refugees on repatriation in order to combat militia intimidation.
97. The timeline is from Niner.
98. Budiardjo, "The International Solidarity Movement."
99. Flor Caagusan, ed., Handbook on Advocacy Strategy and Techniques Development (Institute for Popular Democracy, 2003).







Timor Leste Rising: Timorese youth walking near Taci Tolu in Dili during the last sunset before Independence.

Photo by Gus Miclat, on the eve of East Timor's declaration of Independence on May 20, 2000.



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