
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Tapol bulletin no,147, July 1998

This is the Published version of the following publication

UNSPECIFIED (1998) Tapol bulletin no,147, July 1998. Tapol bulletin (147). pp. 1-28. ISSN 1356-1154

The publisher's official version can be found at

Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository https://vuir.vu.edu.au/25993/

tapol
The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

ISSN 1356-1154

TAPOL Bulletin No. 147 July 1998

The end of Suharto

21 May 1998 will go down in world history as the day when the bloody and despotic rule of Suharto came to an end. His 32-year rule made him Asia's longest ruler after World War II. He broke many other world records, as a mass killer and human rights violator. In 1965/1966 he was responsible for the slaughter of at least half a million people and the incarceration of more than 1.2 million. He is also responsible for the deaths of 200,000 East Timorese, a third of the population, one of the worst acts of genocide this century.

Ignoring the blood-letting that accompanied his seizure of power, the western powers fell over themselves to welcome Suharto. He had crushed the world's largest communist party outside the Soviet bloc and grabbed power from President Sukarno who was seen by many in the West as a war-mongering, pro-communist leader.

Anti-communism and stability

Many in the West believed in the domino-theory, which held that all Asian countries would fall into communist hands. Hence the fall of Sukarno was seen as a triumph. It is a public secret that the CIA and MI6 contributed substantially to the communist witch-hunt and the subsequent downfall of Sukarno. Within hours of taking over the command of the Indonesian armed forces in October 1965, Suharto set about constructing a virulent anti-communist regime which attracted international support. His claim to have foiled an alleged 'communist coup attempt' provided his regime with one of its pillars of legitimacy.

Once he had been officially installed as president in 1967, development aid started pouring in. Even after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the international community continued to support Suharto's rule. But in the past three years the enthusiasm for Suharto began to erode.

Suharto's other pillar of legitimacy was stability which he was able to guarantee by means of harsh repression, with the help of the military. For many years foreign investors were grateful for this, turning a blind eye to the lack of fundamental freedoms like freedom of association and speech. But stability began to disintegrate during the early 1990s when workers' protests and land disputes became daily events. In the face of popular resistance, brutal military oppression became increasingly ineffective.

In the last two years, other forms of social unrest took hold: assaults on local police, fury against the privileges

From the editors: We apologise for the late arrival of this issue. Suharto's downfall had obvious consequences for the production of this issue. We hope to catch up in the coming months.

CONTENTS

POLITICS
The end of Suharto p1
First impressions of the post-Suharto era p6

SOCIAL ISSUES
Glodok revisited p8
Sexual abuse used to terrorise minorities p11
Social upheaval in the regions p12

HUMAN RIGHTS
'Disappearance' victims speak out p14
Political prisoner releases stalled p28

UK-INDONESIA TIES
Ethical foreign policy in ruins p16

EAST TIMOR
Army strikes hard at Timorese protest p19
East Timor: Is change in the air ? p20

ACEH
Refugees, prisoners and 'disappeared' in Aceh p23
Acehnese want region demilitarised p25

WEST PAPUA
Atrocities leave scores dead p26

enjoyed by transmigrants from Java or Madura, anger of local businesses unable to withstand competition from modern super-markets. In many instances, these turned into anti-Christian and anti-Chinese riots. The hallmark of the Suharto regime was no longer stability but instability, making it a liability for foreign investors. The ultimate explosion occurred a week before he stepped down when large swathes of Jakarta's Chinatown were reduced to rubble. Thousands of Chinese families fled the country. The army stood by as gangs of provocateurs took over the streets.

Meanwhile in cities and towns across the country, tens of thousands of students were out in force, demanding that Suharto must go. With the economy in deep crisis and a power vacuum at the top, market forces made it clear that Suharto's rule was no longer sustainable.

Crisis of legitimacy

The crisis in Indonesia took on biblical proportions. A number of catastrophes came together. The political crisis which had been simmering for years; the cyclical El Nino; the disastrous man-made forest fires and the economic free-fall, all contributed to Suharto's crisis of legitimacy.

sis hit Indonesia, it became clear to everyone, at home and abroad, that Suharto was the problem.

In January 1998, nineteen members of LIPI, the highly-respected Indonesian Academy of Sciences, called on Suharto to step down, defying regulations that civil servants must not criticise the government. Then a group of high-profile women civil servants took to the streets with the same demand. These two seemingly small incidents piled on the agony for the despot.

But as history shows, dictators never depart gracefully. Even when it was clear in March this year that his days were numbered, Suharto insisted on being 'elected' by his hand-picked MPR for a seventh term and appointing a cabinet of cronies, including his daughter Tutut. His arrogance shocked even his most loyal devotees.

Suharto and the *Orde Baru*

Suharto's *Orde Baru* began with a massive bloodbath in 1965 followed by many massacres during the next 32 years. The *Orde Baru* started off as a military regime with Suharto as the leader of the junta. But the military junta disappeared swiftly as he removed generals once they had managed to build their own power base.

In the seventies, attempts were made by top-ranking generals to create a rotating system of executive power but by then Suharto's power base was beyond control. In 1980



The political crisis dates back to July 1996 when the PDI headquarters which was occupied by supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri was attacked by hired thugs and police units on 27 July 1996, severely damaging Suharto's image. Peaceful rallies were met with brute force. The general public exploded in anger and Jakarta was plunged into the worst protests and riots since 1965. From then on, Indonesia lurched from one crisis to another.

Gradually news about Indonesia shifted from the inside to the front pages, no longer soft news but hard news. Articles began to appear everywhere about the Suharto dictatorship: about nepotism, human rights violations, about East Timor. From being the darling of the West, Suharto's Indonesia was now a pariah state. When the economic cri-

a group of dissident officers set up *Petisi 50,* one of the first organised opposition groups. But this was also the beginning of the Suharto regime proper. From that moment on, the *Orde Baru* regime and the Suharto regime became synonymous. A vertical line of power was consolidated. Everyone given a top position became totally dependent on and subordinate to Suharto.

Republic of fear

The hallmarks of the *Orde Baru* were depoliticisation and fear. The few political freedoms inherited from the authoritarian Guided Democracy period of Sukarno were dismantled. All basic freedoms were snuffed out and the doctrine of the 'floating mass' was introduced. This asserted that the rural masses were too ignorant to get in-

volved in politics as this would only disrupt development. The slaughter and mass arrests of 1965 inculcated an atmosphere of fear which persisted into the nineties. As activists often said, fear had become a part of Indonesian culture.

The main instrument of repression was *KOPKAMTIB,* the Command for the Restoration of Security and Order, created by Suharto early in October 1965. Military commanders at all levels were invested with special powers to arrest people and control political activities. This was the Indonesian version of the *Gestapo,* but integrated into the army structure.

The politics of the eighties will go down in Indonesian history as the dark ages. Suharto set out to bulldoze everything suspect. In the name of *Pancasila,* the state doctrine, the entire country was forced to comply. The political system was forced into a strait-jacket corporatist model. M*onoloyalitas* was the buzzword and every citizen had to take a *Pancasila* course. Like Hitler before him, Suharto wanted to create a new kind of Indonesian super human being. It took a great deal of courage in the eighties to be a dissident. Just organising an discussion group could result in a prison sentence of up to years.

As we know from Orwell's 1984, states like Suharto's *Orde Baru* cannot last long. *Demokrasi Pancasila* was nothing less than a regime based on fear, without democratic space, and as such, it became increasingly inept. Suharto's demise means the demise of the *Orde Baru* but it could take several years before some of the structures disappear. The holding of free elections scheduled for 1999 should accelerate the process of consigning the *Orde Baru* to the scrap-heap of history.

Ekonomi NKK

According to received wisdom, Suharto rescued the Indonesian economy from the ruins of the Sukarno regime. The Sukarno government left an external debt of US$2.5 billion and spiralling inflation. Suharto has left an external debt of around US$120 billion; the economy is expected to contract by 15 to 20 per cent this year and inflation could exceed 100 per cent. As for the rupiah, it now stands at 14,500 to the US dollar as compared with 2,400 last July. Worse, when Suharto took over, Indonesia's forests and natural resources were still intact. Suharto's legacy is a crippled Indonesian economy, natural resources have been squandered, along with irreversible ecological damage.

When Suharto took over, the West and its multilateral institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, hardly waited for the bodies of the slaughter victims to be disposed of before showering the Indonesian economy with aid. For more than 30 years, an inhumane and unjust social-economic system enjoyed the unstinting support of the free world. Every year, IMF and World Bank economists heaped praise on Indonesia's robust economy.

POLITICS

In the mid eighties large parts of East and Southeast Asia were obsessed by 'Asian tiger' hype. It started with the exploitation of cheap labour, producing consumer goods for the global economy. But by the early nineties, Asian export-oriented economies like Indonesia moved into more risky ventures. A casino economy emerged, with capital being invested in high risk projects like real estate and petrochemical plants or making a fast buck by speculating in shares or in the foreign currency market. The flow of foreign capital seemed unlimited, foreign bankers were only too eager to throw billions of dollars at the Indonesian economy, lending to Indonesian conglomerates that were as empty as inflated balloons.



A new coalition of women's organisations calling for Suharto to be sacked.

This casino economy was combined with *Ekonomi NKK* (Nepotism, Corruption, Collusion) run by the Suharto family. Anyone wanting to do business in Indonesia had to take on board one or other of the hundreds of companies owned by the Suharto offspring. One analyst has made a tally of 1,247 corporations within the Suharto business empire. The web of corruption is only now coming to light while the free fall of the economy is still far from over.

Suharto and ABRI

Over the years Suharto's relationship with ABRI has become much more complex. Until the first economic crisis struck in 1973/4 when the state oil company, Pertamina had to be bailed out of US$10 billion of debts, military rule was uncontrolled. The *Dwifungsi* (dual function) military doctrine penetrated everywhere. Suharto and his generals ruled over Indonesia as if it was their private fiefdom. State corporations were used as milk cows; on retirement, every general would be rewarded with a forest concession or a juicy business deal. But gradually, things began to change.

The national political and economic cake became too small to go round. An entrepreneurial class of ABRI officers did not emerge. Unlike Thailand where top-ranking officers became part of the economic elite, ABRI generals

were told to concentrate on military professionalism. Officers like Ibnu Sutowo and Thahir, who had amassed fortunes from running state companies, became a thing of the past. Senior officers were reduced to making extra earnings from mafia practices, or extorting protection money from the emerging Sino-Indonesian entrepreneurial class.



While it proved relatively easy to keep ABRI out of big business, it was not so easy to keep them out of politics. By the early nineties, Suharto had discarded his most loyal generals, even men like Ali Murtopo who had stage-managed the 'act of free choice' in West Papua and introduced the 'floating mass' doctrine, or Benny Murdani who had commanded the invasion of East Timor. From now on, top posts in ABRI were reserved for family members like Wismoyo Arismunandar and Prabowo Subianto or former adjutants. But the apex of the pyramid of officer postings had become so thin that it was impossible to satisfy everyone and ensure solid ABRI loyalty towards Suharto.

The emergence of factions in ABRI, with different degrees of loyalty meant that, even though the top generals were hand-picked by Suharto, loyalty was no longer automatic. As protests spread throughout the country, Suharto became a beleaguered man, no longer knowing who he could trust.

Like all dictators, he tried to cling to power to the bitter end. In the end, his top generals were the ones who realised that Suharto had become a liability and persuaded him to stand down because they were no longer able to control the situation. For the top brass, maintaining their own political (and economic) privileges had become their priority. Maintaining the *Dwifungsi* without Suharto became the solution.

The last days of Suharto

There are several accounts of the sequence of events before and after Suharto's fall. They read like thrillers, full of suspense., with events swirling round an aging dictator who had lost all sense of reality.

As the political crisis was reaching its climax, Suharto decided to attend a conference in Cairo, wanting to show he was still in control. Back home, the crisis lurched from bad to worse. Tens of thousands of students were demonstrating in force in campuses right across the country.

On 12 May, four students were shot dead at Trisakti University, Jakarta, during a peaceful demonstration. These deaths sent shock-waves across the country as students came out in even greater numbers, flying flags half-mast and saying prayers for the dead.

The day after the killings, riots broke out in Jakarta, devastating the main commercial centres, gutting shopping malls and vehicles. Suharto was forced to cut short his visit. He returned to a different country. The rioting in Jakarta had left the country in a political vacuum. Instead of coming out to protect the victims, the army had done nothing. It was not until weeks later that investigations revealed that more than a thousand people had died in the infernos, while scores, perhaps hundreds, of Chinese women had been systematically gang raped. Evidence is now linking the riots to army factions that helped organise the mayhem which wrecked the system of food distribution, making economic conditions even worse.

While in Cairo, Suharto hinted that he might be prepared to step down and play the role of *lengser keprabon,* an elder statesman guiding things from behind, like other authoritarian Asian leaders, Ne Win in Burma and Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore. His statement was met with scepticism; student demonstrations continued to demand that Suharto should resign and should go on trial. By then it was clear that Suharto's demise was just a matter of time.

As Indonesia's best known writer Pramoedya Ananta Toer said: "I was not at all surprised. Suharto was no longer a force for determining the process of change. He was like a small stone that could be kicked around by the feet of the students" [*Washington Post,* 7 June 1998].

While Suharto tried to save his presidency, the three days of rioting had convinced even his staunchest followers that it was time for him to go. Different cliques within the regime came up with their own scenarios. On 18 May, with the Parliament building under siege by thousands of students, Harmoko, one of his most loyal lackeys and chair of DPR/MPR (Parliament/People's Congress), stunned everyone by announcing that that it would be better for Suharto to resign and announcing that impeachment procedures would be started if he failed to do so. A few days earlier, his house in Solo had been gutted by an angry crowd. A few months earlier, this same Harmoko, as chair of the ruling party GOLKAR, had proclaimed to everyone's astonishment that: "After making a check throughout the country, it is evident that the Indonesian people still want Suharto as President". Harmoko's vault over the

fence was spectacular but not exceptional. He was just one of the many rats leaving the Titanic.



But Harmoko's thunderbolt was greeted with a public slapdown by General Wiranto who said that Harmoko's proposals were 'illegal and unconstitutional'.

Constitutionalism rules the day

On the same day, 18 May 1998, real moves began on how to ditch Suharto. The buzz word was *konstitutional,* a typical concept of the *Orde Baru* where constitutionalism is form with no substance. Everything in Indonesia must be constitutional: if you want to slap a heavy sentence on a human rights activist, just find a suitable article in the criminal code. The *Orde Baru* legal system was never based on the rule of law and the division between the three powers was non-existent. Everything had to be done according to the law (*konstitutional*). In the end, Suharto received the same bitter medicine he had applied to his political enemies.

By now student demonstrations had spread from the campuses onto the streets with everyone joining in. Amien Rais had announced that he would bring out one million people in Jakarta on 20 May, National Awakening Day, and no one doubted this could happen. But the night before, a top general, undoubtedly General Wiranto, phoned him with a warning: 'Go ahead and you will have a Tien An Men on your conscience.'

The rally was called off. It could not have happened anyway as the streets leading to the huge square where it would have taken place were sealed off by hundreds of tanks (including many British Scorpions) and tens of thousands of troops. On 20 May, the heart of Jakarta was under siege by the Indonesian army. Later that day, Amien Rais angrily accused the army of state terrorism.

By now Suharto's position was hopeless. He negotiated with key members of his crony cabinet who told him to resign. He conferred with the top brass who told him the situation had become uncontrollable. He asked for advice from nine key Muslim leaders who told him bluntly to step down. In the meantime, the four factions in parliament, including ABRI, had decided that Suharto should step down.

Habibie, an historic accident

It was General Wiranto who emerged as the constitutional fixer. He consulted seven constitutional experts for their views on possible successions. Should it be Amien Rais, the leader of Muhammadiyah, or a reform council of mainstream opposition figures that would hold new general elections? The third possibility was to hand over power to Vice-President Habibie. It became clear that for ABRI, the third option was the most attractive, even though their past conflicts with the man were legendary. They could not control Amien Rais or a reform council; Habibie would be much easier to control as he lacked a power base.

When this alternative was presented to Suharto, he gave vent to serious doubts about Habibie's abilities (even though he had chosen the man to be his vice-president). This was all the more reason for Wiranto to opt for Habibie because the era of *Orde Baru tanpa Suharto* (New Order without Suharto) was now taking shape.

Early on 21 May, a forlorn Suharto announced his resignation and his decision to hand over to Habibie, as his daughter, Tutut, stood weeping in the background. Habibie took the oath of office after which Wiranto grabbed the mike to say that ABRI would protect the person and the interests of the dictator who they had just deposed.

Many people in Indonesia still have to get used to the idea that Suharto is no longer in charge. More than half of the population are under 30 years of age and have only known Suharto as President. Yet ironically, they were the ones who sounded the death knell for a dictator who had wrought such damage on a vast and beautiful country like Indonesia. ⊗

---

continued from page 7

With the economy in such dire straits and literally thousands of businesses and banks technically bankrupt, vultures are ready to pounce, foreign investors eager to buy up companies at bargain prices. Only democratic institutions in Jakarta and in the regions will be able to put the democratic process on the right track.

Last but not least, there is the military, now playing for time while it heals its own divisions. General Wiranto has pledged support to the Habibie government and some of his henchmen suggest that they are considering taking a 'back-seat' role. Popular democratic institutions will be essential to prevent a new strongman from emerging or, still worse, a military take-over. ❁

First impressions of the post-Suharto era

Rudy Habibie as President? Few people, including himself, ever imagined such a thing. Analysts call it an historic accident. The new President can hardly be called a politician. He has no reform programme and his notion of economics has been described as 'bizarre'. Most people see him as the pawn of his predecessor, chosen more for loyalty than ability. Students are already demanding that the Habibie family fortunes should be investigated and that he should stand down.

After only a few weeks in the job, Habibie has been forced to admit that he is just a transitional figure. He has said repeatedly that he will stay on as president until the next elections and has no intention of standing then. The economic crisis and political upheavals are obviously too much for the aeronautics engineer. His cabinet is much the same as Suharto's final cabinet, minus some of the more glaring cronies. It can hardly be called a team and from the outset, senior economics minister Ginandjar Kartasasmita has insisted that Indonesia needs a new government with a new mandate from the people.

Financial Times, 8 June 1998



Catch 22 situation

While Habibie's presidency is little more than an historic accident [see also article on Suharto's downfall], the economic meltdown is helping to keep him in power. Other mainstream candidates like Amien Rais, Megawati and former cabinet minister Emil Salim know only too well that taking over the reins of government in a period of economic crisis could damage their chances in the forthcoming elections.

The other option would have been to create a council or Presidium of people with impeccable reputations, to function as a transitional government. This was the preferred option for the more radical groups in the pro-democracy movement but the appointment of Habibie stage-managed by General Wiranto pushed this off the agenda for the time being at least.

Another possibility was for Habibie to dump the cabinet he inherited from Suharto and set up a Reform Council composed of leading reform advocates, but most leading opposition figures rejected this as it would have meant supporting Habibie who is so closely identified with the Suharto regime.

It is a fact of life that any new Indonesian government will need the overwhelming support of the people, otherwise it will be impossible to steer the country out of the economic quagmire. Any unpopular economic measure can only be successfully implemented if people believe that the government has a clear alternative economic strategy that is based on promoting the interests of the common people and not big business and the foreign bankers. There is no one promoting such a strategy at the moment. The IMF and the international community know very well that their strategy will involve highly unpopular measures that Habibie will not be able to deliver. Indeed, unpopular measures forced on Suharto by the IMF in May were a major contributory factor to his downfall.

Democratic space

With Suharto out of the way, there is plenty of democratic space. Political parties have been set up, quickly turning Indonesia in a multi-party system. The Habibie government has little credibility and everybody realises that his government will not last beyond the next elections.

The power vacuum has created unlimited possibilities for political freedoms. The press, until recently so tightly controlled, is now enjoying unprecedented freedom. People in the regions [see separate article] are taking matters into their own hands, staging sit-ins in provincial government

buildings and demanding the sacking of corrupt officials. After more than three decades, freedom of expression has suddenly become a reality. Everyone speaks as if *Orde Baru* has been already been transformed into *Orde Reformasi.*



Four-star General Wiranto decided to opt for Habibie as President

In the meantime the structures of the *Orde Baru* are disintegrating. Golkar, the ruling party, has now split three ways. The Muslim party, the PPP, has fallen apart while the PDI wing that was backed by the government has lost its legitimacy and its headquarters have been taken over by Megawati supporters. Other bastions of the old regime, the governors and district chiefs, are being targeted by the people. One of the first to fall was Colonel Sri Roso Darmo, the district chief of Bantul, in Yogyakarta, who was dismissed following massive demonstrations. He ruled over Bantul like a fiefdom and tolerated no dissenting voices. He is also held responsible for the murder of Fuad Muhammad Syafruddin, in August 1996, the journalist who fearlessly exposed his misdeeds.

The weak Habibie government is unable to define the boundaries of political space. For the time being at least, everybody, including ABRI, the armed forces, has to show that they are advocates of reform. For the first time in almost forty years - since before Sukarno's 'guided democracy' - leftist politics, labour activism, democratic reformers, human rights campaigners, feminist activists and regional campaigners, are able to campaign freely and openly.

Delegitimisation

The fall of Suharto also means the beginning of the end of the *Orde Baru.* But this does not mean that old structures will disintegrate automatically. While some political structures withered away in days, others will need to be eradicated by positive actions and legislation.

Most people agree that the 1945 Constitution will need major changes or will have to be replaced. There can be no place any longer for the military doctrine *Dwifungsi. Orde Baru* history books will have to be rewritten, especially their version of the events in 1965 and Suharto's seizure of power. The *Pancasila* indoctrination courses will have to end. The legal system will have to be drastically overhauled, restoring the independence of the judiciary.

On a more practical level, de-Suharto-isation is happening every day. Members of the DPR and the MPR, Parliament and the People's Congress, all appointees of the Suharto era, are beginning to resign, under strong pressure from all sides. Those who have already taken the hint include the wives, sons and daughters of highly-placed officials and army officers. It remains to be seen whether the Suharto clan will follow suit. As we write, rumours abound that the middle son Bambang and the oldest daughter Tutut want to retain their positions in GOLKAR.

Some members of the Habibie cabinet such as Interior Minister Lt. General Syarwan Hamid, are having to endure daily protests because of their murderous behaviour during the Suharto days. The Information Minister, Lt-General Yunus Yosfiah, has been seriously implicated in the murder of five television journalists in Balibo, East Timor in October 1975, incurring a protest from the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.

Hardly anybody defends Suharto and *Orde Baru* these days. Almost everybody has left the sinking ship, behaving as if they had always been reformers. To be seen as one of the Suharto gang is now a huge liability. Even some relatives of the former dictator are trying to extricate themselves, proclaiming that their business empires had nothing to do with any Suharto connection.

The economic tailspin

While the political thaw has brought a sense of euphoria, there is deep disquiet with the economic wreckage inherited from Suharto. The economic collapse remains the major stumbling block for real reform in Indonesia. The Asian crisis has forced three leaders out of office, in South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia. But while in the first two, the political crisis was resolved by the succession, the Habibie succession has resolved neither the political nor economic crisis. The dark side of Indonesian society could emerge in different forms.

One imminent danger is another wave of anti-Chinese riots [see separate article]. Smaller outbreaks of rioting and looting have already erupted, disrupting the fragile economic distribution system and creating more hardship for the population.

Some analysts worry about the eventual break up of Indonesia, a nation-state of many islands and ethnic groups. Indonesia which did not exist as an entity before the Dutch brought the islands together, was held together during the *Orde Baru* not by nationalist fervour as in the Sukarno days but by iron-fisted and heavily centralised control, kept together by ABRI. A future Indonesia will need to grant full autonomy to the regions, allowing local people to decide how to deal with their natural resources and handle their economic and social affairs. ***continued on page 5***

Glodok revisited

A week after three days of rioting in Jakarta, President Habibie made a high-profile visit to Glodok, the centre of Chinatown in Jakarta. The usually busy and thriving business and shopping centre was in ruins. His call for an end to racism has been met with cynicism. Instead of promising better protection by the security forces, the new President suggested that the Sino-Indonesians form their own vigilante squads for self defence.

The three days of rioting in Jakarta from 13 till 15 May resulted in 1,188 deaths. According to preliminary findings by *Komnas Ham*, the National Commission of Human Rights 40 large shopping malls, 4,083 shops and 1,026 private homes were attacked, burned or looted. 383 offices and banks were gutted plus 1,119 vehicles. Places like Medan and Tanjung Balai in North Sumatra and Solo in Central Java were also heavily affected by riots.

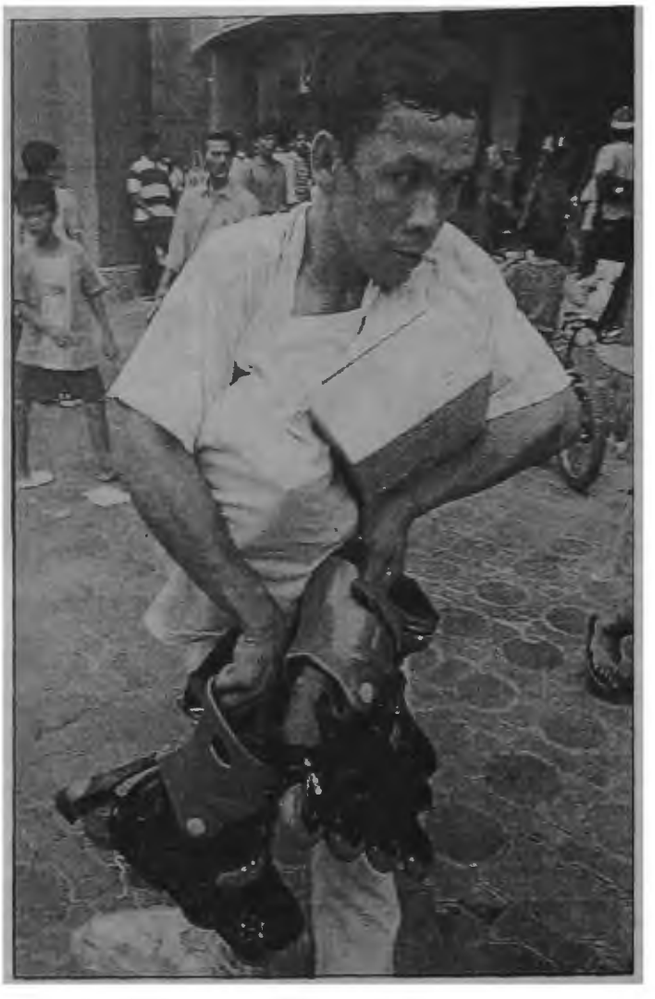
Some analysts estimate direct losses of US$ 900 million in Jakarta alone. It will be difficult to assess the indirect losses resulting from the interruption of business activities. The impact on the distribution of food and industrial goods is immeasurable. The destruction of Glodok and Mangga Dua, the main Jakarta shopping and business centres, is the worst incident since the birth of the Indonesian Republic. In previous anti-Chinese pogroms, Glodok and Pasar Pagi, as Mangga Dua was formerly known, were left unscathed. They were seen as being untouchable because of vast amounts of protection money Chinese businesses paid to the military. But in a collapsing political system, nothing can be taken for granted.

It is also symbolic that the private home of Liem Sioe Liong, Indonesia's richest businessman and close associate to Suharto was attacked and destroyed by the angry masses. A platoon of *Kopassus* elite troops who guarded his home day and night fled.

Stage-managed

Several groups have been monitoring the three horrific days, *Tim Relawan untuk Kemanusiaan* (Voluntary Team for Humanity) and two women's groups *Kalyanamitra* and *Mitra Perempuan*. Large-scale anti-Chinese pogroms have in the past been organised by third parties. *Tim Relawan,* run by the popular Jesuit priest Romo Sandywan, has identified certain patterns in the attacks and subsequent looting and burning of the shopping malls and concluded that they happened in a systematic and professional way.

It started by taking a crowd to a certain spot and spreading the news that people were looting at shopping mall X. The atmosphere was further fuelled by burning tires and wood nearby. Then a group of people would appear to incite the crowd to join in the looting. The groups were variously described as youngsters with student or high school accessories such as university jackets or tough-looking types with crew-cuts, military types or muscular men with body tattoos. After inciting the crowd



Looting is the name of the game

with anti-Chinese yells, they remained outside while the crowd got on with the looting.

In several cases the youth groups arrived in trucks or mini buses and started fires with molotov cocktails or wet towels soaked in kerosene. Targeted shopkeepers later testified that their shops already had been daubed with three letters *BMC* (*Basmi Milik Cina,* Destroy Chinese Property) on the shopwindows.

Full investigation needed

Demands for a full investigation about the riots are growing. With much greater freedom of the press, many reports have spoken of the possibility that army units were involved in masterminding the riots. Amien Rais, a leading opposition figure, wrote an emotional article in the political

weekly *Adil,* after meeting hundreds of Sino-Indonesians at the Cengkareng airport in Jakarta. Most had been victimised and were desperately trying to leave the country. He writes of the traumatic experiences of many Sino-Indonesians during those days. Such was the press coverage that President Habibie felt obliged to call on ABRI to carry out a thorough investigation. He said: *"I particularly ask the armed forces leadership to reveal the truth over allegations that an organised group was seen inciting people to burn and loot buildings in several areas where disturbances occurred"* [*Jakarta Post,* 12 June 1998].

So far the army leadership has declined to comment. Commander in chief Wiranto has dismissed speculations that ABRI personnel were behind the riots as a way to justify their security and order role. In the past three decades, violent incidents were often provoked by ABRI, so as to then come forward in the name of security and order.

Small and big business

The Glodok district has been a busy shopping district since Dutch times. In the evenings, the district is flooded with crowds of shoppers, milling round food and clothing stalls in the many small streets, a scene that can be replicated in many Southeast Asian cities. Most of the trade is in the hands of small and medium-size traders, who work long hours to earn a living. Many stories in the press are heart-breaking. Thousands of small shopkeepers have lost everything. With the exception of the new high rise department stores and super markets, none of the Glodok merchants can be described as rich. Glodok is located in the old heart of Jakarta, also known as *Kota,* the traditional Chinatown. Big business has long since moved elsewhere.

Rioting and burning also occurred in other suburbs. The Jakarta neighbourhood patterns are very similar to any mega-city, slum areas cheek by jowl with middle-class areas and posh neighbourhoods. Shopping malls are often the only meeting place between the two; some go to spend and others to gaze at goods they cant afford. Places like Yogya Plaza in Klender, Jatinegara Plaza in Jatinegara, the shops at the Kampung Melayu bus terminal and Mall Puri Indah in Kebon Jeruk are located close to densely populated, poor urban neighbourhoods. The economic meltdown has made such places extremely volatile.

The head offices of the conglomerates are situated in a new area, the Golden Triangle around Jalan Sudirman and Jalan Gatot Subroto. This is where big money circulates and all the important economic transactions are made. None of these high rise buildings were affected by the riots.

Although some turmoil could have been predicted as the end of Suharto approached, no one could have foreseen the extent of the rioting. Back in March, as Suharto was being 're-elected', many Sino-Indonesians left for short holidays to Singapore, Hongkong and Australia while the more wealthy ones were transferring capital abroad. The small shopkeepers in Glodok were not well-enough endowed to do this. When the riots started, the big Sino-Indonesian conglomerates were beyond the reach of the rioters.

Structural reforms

For many years the *Orde Baru* was like a paradise on a vulcano. Sooner or later the vulcano would explode. An unjust and inhumane system was nurtured by a small group of people around Suharto and his family. This includes



Matahari Department Store in Solo in flames. Looting and destruction was huge in Solo, comparable to the inferno in Jakarta

major business groups run by Liem Sioe Liong (Sudono Salim), Prayogo Pangestu (Phang Djun Phen) and The Kian Seng (Bob Hasan), while others benefited from the system. Instead of slowly building a just society, the *Orde Baru* became a system based on grabbing, robbing and looting. When the vulcano did burst there was nothing left but decay and bankruptcy. With a few exceptions all the big conglomerates have collapsed. They were not based on sound economic policies but on favouritism, monopolies and easy lending.

There have been several periods when so called *pribumi* (indigenous) businessmen got special treatment. It was tried in the fifties and the seventies with woeful results. In desperation Suharto summoned the conglomerates and told them to commit a percentage of their profits to the scheme but nothing worked because of nepotism, corruption and collusion. The small traders never stood a chance. The rate of extra levies, much of it paid to the army, is estimated at around 30 per cent of production costs. Only big business can cope with such a burden. No wonder supermarkets and department stores, practically all owned by Sino-Indonesians and the Suharto clan, were the target of the angry masses all over Indonesia. These were the companies that had destroyed the livelihood of many small traders.

A future Indonesian government will need to pave the way for the development of a new merchant and industrial middle class, providing legal protection through anti-trust laws, anti-corruption laws and laws to promote small and medium-sized businesses.



A crowd attacking the home of Liem Sioe Liong, Suharto's closest business associate.

The silent minority

Racism against the Sino-Indonesians is nothing new and has existed since the Dutch period. In those days, some Chinese traders grew prosperous while the indigenous population remained at the bottom of the social ladder. During the Dutch period Chinese were segregated into Chinatowns and restricted to certain professions like running pawnshops.

Inequality and economic hardship often provide the base for social jealousy and racist attitudes. While in neighbouring Southeast Asia, tensions between the locals and Chinese have eased in the last three decades, the racist policies of the *Orde Baru* have only exacerbated the situation. The other countries have also benefited from the rise of an indigenous middle class, which hardly exists in Indonesia.

Illegal levies have a strong racist element. Sino-Indonesians are likely to have to pay more for public services like passports and ID cards. They are for ever having to show proof that they are Indonesian citizens while those who adopted Indonesian names are required to show their naturalisation papers. In many regions, Sino-Indonesians carry have a special code in their ID card, WNI which stands for Indonesian citizen. It has become second nature for most Sino-Indonesians to be silent and pay up. Shopkeepers or company-owners are constantly being pestered for money by officials, military or local maffia gangs.

Structural racism starts already with the Indonesian Constitution which states that the President of the Republic must be *orang Indonesia asli* (an indigenous Indonesian). Structural racist policies [see *TAPOL Bulletin* No. 146, April 1998] have affected the minds of the average Indonesian. The restrictions on Sino-Indonesians finding jobs outside commerce are taken for granted.

Slogans daubed on victims' houses like: *"Chuck the Chinese out of Indonesia"* or *"Cina PKI"* are a reflection of racist state policies. It has driven the Sino-Indonesians into becoming economic animals with hardly any social-political outlet (which hardly existed in the *Orde Baru*). The Sino-Indonesians have increasingly become a silent minority.

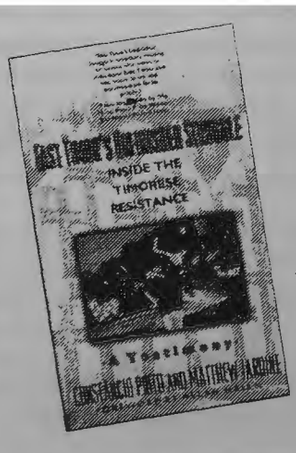
New political parties

The recent anti-Chinese rioting has ended the silence of the Sino-Indonesians. In the last few weeks two new political parties have been set up. *Partai Reformasi Tionghoa,* the Indonesian-Chinese Reform Party, want to narrow the gap between the *pribumi* and *non-pribumi* and see themselves as part of the Indonesian people. *Parti* uses the term Tionghoa instead of the derogatory *Cina*, which was foisted on the country by the military after 1965.

Parpindo (*Partai Pembauran Indonesia,* the Indonesian Assimilation Party) is, as its name suggests, strongly assimilationist. In the early sixties a group of right-wing Sino-Indonesians propagated the concept of total assimilation. They wanted to deny their ethnic background and advocated total immersion with the "Indonesian race". These were the people who that promoted the idea of people giving themselves Indonesian names. While elsewhere in the world, multi-ethnic society has been gaining ground, Indonesia's *Orde Baru* was set on implanting the totalitarian concept of creating a single Indonesian identity. This new party, like its predecessor, wants to put a halt to multi-ethnicity in Indonesia.

Committee against Racism

Probably more interesting than the two parties is the emergence of a Committee of Indonesian Youth for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination. This new group will fight alongside the victims of discrimination, raise public awareness and prepare a class action against the government for failing to protect its citizens. It will also urge the government to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and introduce new anti-discrimination laws. A plan of action has been designed, including assistance to the victims. This initiative enjoys the support of a broad range of people. The chair of the working group is Esther Yusuf, a lawyer from LBH, the legal aid institute. Former student activist Enin Supriyanto is also one of the founders. ❁



East Timor's Unfinished Struggle
Inside the Timorese Resistance
By Constâncio Pinto and Matthew Jardine
(ISBN 0-89608-541-4
$16.00)

Sexual abuse used to terrorise minorities

Shocking reports have been made public about the mass raping of scores of Sino-Indonesian women during the riots that devastated much of Jakarta's Chinatown from 13 - 15 May. From the evidence being pieced together by women's groups, a picture of well-organised assaults against women is now emerging. One activist has described it as 'state-sponsored violence' against women.

It has taken weeks for the extent of the tragedy to emerge, largely because so many of the women attacked are still too traumatised to talk about their experiences. Dozens of women are now in psychiatric hospitals, suffering from mental disorders caused by the tragedy while many are known to have committed suicide rather than face the humiliation they suffered from what happened to their bodies.

Suffering in silence

Some of the first revelations were made during church services when witnesses felt emboldened to speak out. During one service at a church in west Jakarta, an Indonesian women stood up and asked for forgiveness for not coming forward earlier to report what she had seen in her street. 'She described how a mob surrounded a house with two Chinese women inside and said if they did not come out, the house would be burnt. But the women preferred to die rather than be raped by the mob so they stayed inside and were burnt alive. It turned out after the service that almost everyone had heard similar stories.' [*The Guardian,* 4 June]

Ita Nadia who chairs Kalyana Mitra, a women's aid centre which has carried out much of the investigations, said that for many of the victims, death would have been preferable. 'Their experiences have cast a shadow over every second of their lives and the tears falling from their mournful eyes are unstoppable'. Some of the attacks went beyond rape and abuse. 'A man told us that his wife's attackers mutilated her genitals with a razor blade after first raping her.' Another man told how his teenage sisters were raped by at least seven men. The rapists then threw them into the fire which they had started in the family home, Ita said.

One young woman had a lucky escape after her taxi was stopped by a mob in the middle of the night on 14 May. She was forced out and ordered to undress in front of the crowd. 'Then a man pushed through the crowd, pulled me out and gave me Muslim clothes to wear, the woman recalled.' [*Jakarta Post,* 10 June]

The reports indicate that girls as young as ten were raped. Some women were gang-raped in front of crowds in the commercial district of Glodok. 'Some of the rapists said: "You must be raped because you are Chinese and non-Muslim."' The consensus among human rights workers and rape counsellors is that the attacks were mostly organised by unknown groups, in the same way that the arson and looting were deliberately instigated. Witnesses spoke about men with muscular builds and military haircuts, and one woman said she had been raped by men who had a military uniform in their car. [*International Herald Tribune,* 11 June]

An example which has been described in several reports tells of passengers on a bus being separated along ethnic lines. The Chinese women were told to get out, take off their clothes and walk. They were herded towards bushes lining the road. The good-looking ones were raped while the others were told to march on naked. In another incident, a group of ten men entered a bank and sealed the door. Inside the Chinese women were ordered to dance without clothes on.

Organised violence

All the evidence suggests that the rapists were not local people or neighbours who were entering shops and looting. Rather, they were organised gangs of men operating in groups of five or more. Some descriptions of the men suggest that they may have been from the military but pinpointing individual rapists is proving extremely difficult.

In an interview with Radio Netherlands, Ita Nadia said: 'The acts were well-planned and carried out like a military operation. The men would come to a certain place, loot shops and then rape the women, something which is very common in military situations.' Speaking for the women's groups conducting the investigations, she said 'Our targets are not the guilty individuals since it is difficult to produce evidence, but we want to raise the awareness and solidarity of the public. Society itself will have to militate against this kind of injustice. These assaults were carried out systematically, not by any single individual.'

Kalyana Mitra activists have themselves been intimidated. On one occasion recently, they received a packet containing a hand grenade, with the message: 'There will be more to come.'

Speaking of her organisation's work since it was established ten years ago, Ita Nadia said: 'We have been dealing with rape cases for ten years but we have never encountered anything quite as barbaric as this. The victims ask for protection because they fear reprisals if the details of their cases are revealed.'

She pointed to a political message:

'If you want reforms and democracy, there is a price you have to pay. They want to create a state of terror in order to intimidate people so they pick on ethnic Chinese, on women and non-Muslims because they are the most vulnerable. We are extremely angry that women are being targeted and subjected to sexual violence as a means to intimidate people. This is state-sponsored violence.' [Interview with Radio Netherlands, the English translation of which was published on the Internet on 16 June] ❁

Social upheaval in the regions

During the mass actions to get rid of Suharto, most reports focused on what was happening in Jakarta with hardly any mention in the international press of events taking place elsewhere. In many places huge crowds took to the streets calling for Suharto's resignation and drastic reforms. Local demands were also raised. From Medan in the west to Ambon in the east, people demanded autonomy and called for corrupt officials to be sacked.

Comparisons can be drawn with the social revolution that erupted in 1945 after the defeat of Japan. In those days too, there was a power vacuum in a number of places in the young republic. In 1945, district chiefs who collaborated with the Japanese or Dutch were being ousted. Today, corrupt, power-hungry officials are being targeted by the people.

All over Sumatra, from Aceh [see separate article] in the north to Lampung in the south, people took to the streets in huge numbers. In many places they occupied the local assembly and other government buildings, as well as local state radio or television stations. These actions are still continuing in many places.

These days, the Indonesian press is full of reports about such local actions, so much so in fact that it impossible to do justice to the extent of the upheavals. On this occasion, due to lack of space, we have decided to give our readers little more than a taste of what has been going on. Hopefully, regional action groups will produce more comprehensive accounts in their own publications.



Action in Medan. The banner says: Sack Suharto and put him on trial!

Actions before 20 May

In April a consensus had been reached between groups throughout the archipelago that action against the Suharto regime would reach a climax on 20 May, National Awakening Day commemorating the 90th anniversary of the emergence of the first Indonesian nationalist movement against Dutch colonialism. By that time, local actions had been going on for weeks.

The 19 May issue of *Media Indonesia* gives an impression of the range of local activities: Students in Semarang, the capital of Central Java, had occupied the local state radio station and the governor's office. Some 2,000 students from the Universitas Bung Hatta in Padang, the capital of West Sumatra, had occupied the local assembly. Members of the assembly, including the chairperson, had to flee the building after refusing to sign a charter calling for comprehensive reform for the whole nation. The students had vowed not to leave the building until the local authorities accepted their Total Reformation Plan.

In Bandung, the capital of West Java, tens of thousands of people went to the local assembly to present similar demands. In front of the local assembly building a free speech podium was erected for use in the next few days. In front of ITB, the Bandung Institute of Technology, a similar free speech podium had been installed where students and lecturers mingled and held discussions about the current crisis.

In Ambon, the capital of the Moluccas, actions had been going on for several days. Demonstrators marched to the local assembly and then to the governor's office where Governor Latuconsina was forced to listen to the reform demands of the people. They also called on the governor to stop the uncontrolled fishing of waters surrounding the Moluccas because big corporations and corrupt officials were the ones to benefit from such exploitation. The students also demanded the revocation of forest concessions which had all gone to influential people in Jakarta. They complained that these concessions were destroying the tropical forests while local people gained nothing.

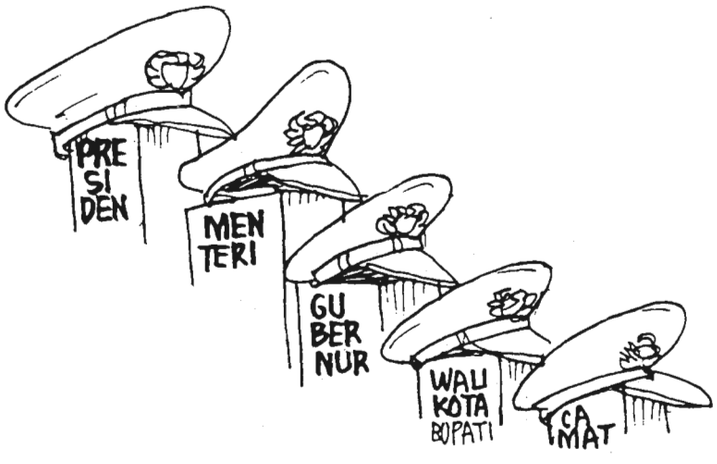
Also on the same day, *Media Indonesia* reported that thousands of students from the state university, USU, in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra, were continuing to press for a full explanation about the shooting of three students. This related to an incident three days earlier, during a mass action, when students spotted a military intelligence agent taking photos of students. When he produced his identification documents and they realised who he was, the students started chasing him off the campus. But suddenly

other military personnel opened fire, injuring three students.

In Lampung, South Sumatra some 5,000 students demonstrated along with more than 200 lawyers. They delivered two wreaths to the local parliament, one to mourn the death of the four students at Trisakti University in Jakarta and the other to symbolise the death of parliament. The newspaper reported that whereas in the past few months, serious clashes had occurred between students and the security forces, on this occasion there were no conflicts. In Pekanbaru, also in West Sumatra, there was a public debate involving 3,000 students, the university rector, the local authorities as well as the city's military and police commanders. In West Java, demonstrations were held in Serang and Tasikmalaya demanding total political reform.

Events on 20 May

While the people power demonstration which was to have taken place in Jakarta had to be cancelled in the face of military threats [see article on Suharto's demise], in many other places, the streets were filled with people taking part in peaceful protests.



The military doctrine DWIFUNGSI in reality

The national parliament in Jakarta, situated on the outskirts of the capital, continued to be occupied by tens of thousands of students. Even though only students were involved, the occupation acted as a rallying point for people in Jakarta and elsewhere from all walks of life.

The most impressive show of people power occurred in Yogyakarta, Central Java, where almost one million people took part in a peaceful march to the centre of the city, converging from all directions, including tens of thousands of people from the countryside. People from other cities, Semarang, Magelang, Klaten, Solo, Purworejo and elsewhere took part in the Yogya rally, along with the Sultan of Yogya, Hamengkubuwono X.

ABRI absent

The organisation which was in the hands of a number of political and social-religious organisations proceeded very smoothly even though such a huge crowd had gathered. People assembled at twelve assembly points. Many of the groups marched for several hours but not a single shop was attacked. Shop owners also unfurled banners saying: *We support Reform.* Some banners read: *Yogya is ready to take over as capital.* This was a reminder that during one period of the independence struggle when Jakarta was occupied by the Dutch, Yogya became the capital of the Republic.

The most interesting feature of people power in Yogya was that the security forces were nowhere to be seen. They stayed in their barracks with the result that the huge rally was peaceful from beginning to end.

People power in the other places was also very impressive. In Semarang a few hundred thousand people held a rally which ended in a free-speech forum with speakers demanding the resignation of Suharto and total reform.

In Surabaya, the capital of East Java, tens of thousands of people took to the streets, but on this occasion, the security forces decided to step in. As a result, thirty people were injured, ten vehicles were destroyed and a hotel was ransacked.

In Pekalongan, Central Java, thousands of students joined by the general public marched through the city; they then occupied the local assembly. A similar thing happened in Medan, the capital of North Sumatra, involving tens of thousands of demonstrators. Smaller actions along the same lines occurred in Blitar, Pasuruan, Jember, Tuban, Situbondo, Kediri and Jombang, in East Java, as well as in the cities of West Java, Tasikmalaya, Ciamis, Cirebon, Sukabumi, Cianjur, Bogor and Krawang where huge crowds poured onto the streets.

Never before in the history of the 32-year old *Orde Baru* regime had people showed such a united commitment to the demand for the removal of Suharto and total reform. It was this peaceful mass action that struck the final blow at the Suharto regime. ❁

continued from back page

Muslim prisoners

According to lists published in June by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, there are thirty Muslim prisoners, all of whom are serving very harsh sentences including eleven life sentences, and most of the rest, upwards of 14 years. There has been no mention by anyone in government about their chances of amnesty. Most were arrested in the mid 1980s.

West Papuan and Acehnese prisoners

Nor has there been any mention, officially, of what is likely to happen to these prisoners. According to AI/HRW lists, there are twenty-three West Papuans, most of whom are serving very harsh sentences. NGOs in Jayapura believe that the figure is much higher than this because of the number of people in local prisons.

The Acehnese behind bars according to AI/HRW total no fewer than fifty-five, the largest single group of all. Most of their sentences are upwards of fifteen years.

Given that these prisoners are deemed to be 'separatists', they too may have to wait for a post-Habibie era before enjoying the freedom that is rightfully theirs.

The sinister hidden force behind the promised amnesties is of course the armed forces. Without the green light from them, neither Habibie nor Muladi are likely to move. ✶

'Disappearance' victims speak out

Several activists who disappeared earlier this year into secret military torture centres took the bold decision to speak out after they were released and returned home. Their revelations contributed greatly towards further discrediting the Suharto dictatorship in the months leading up to Suharto's downfall. At least nine of the 'disappeared' have still not been accounted for.

The armed forces clearly hoped to instil terror in pro-democracy activists in the months preceding Suharto's re-appointment to a 7th term in March, by kidnapping people and whisking them off to secret locations. 'Disappearance' has long been a form of abuse in East Timor. Its re-emergence in Indonesia was a sign of desperation on the part of Suharto and ABRI as opposition grew in intensity.

At least a dozen activists were made to 'disappear' in early 1998 in addition to five people who 'disappeared' in the run-up to the general elections in May 1997. This does not include more than a dozen people who are still unaccounted for following the armed attack on the PDI head office in Jakarta on 27 July, 1996.

It was the decision of **Pius Lustrilanang**, 30, general-secretary of *SIAGA,* the solidarity forum to support Amien Rais and Megawati Sukarnoputri and a member of the pro-democracy group, *Aldera,* who disappeared on 3 February after visiting a friend in hospital, to go public that stunned public opinion in Indonesia. Before he resurfaced, he had been warned of dire consequences by his captors, against himself or against those still being held in the same secret location. Three weeks after returning home to his parents in Palembang, he went to Jakarta, reported what had happened to the National Human Rights Commission, *KomnasHAM,* held a well-attended press conference and left immediately for the Netherlands where his revelations were widely reported by the media. Within days, he was on his way to Washington to testify before a US Congressional sub-committee and his account became front-page news in several major US publications.

Domestic and foreign pressure

As soon as a pattern of 'disappearances' emerged, the abuse was given wide coverage in the national press. Several groups and individuals, especially the playwright Ratna Sarumpaet, coordinator of *SIAGA,* campaigned hard to force the security forces to divulge their whereabouts and release them. Foreign governments also expressed concern. Few people were taken in by professions of innocence by the then army's chief-of-staff, General Wiranto, who denied that any army units were under orders to kidnap people. His official spokesman, Brigadier-General Wahab Mokodongan, even mocked the victims, alleging that they are probably 'wandering around in the jungle'.

The matter was also raised at the UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva in April where an earlier victim of this kind of abuse, Hendrik Dikson Sirait, presented testimony on what happened to him when he was kidnapped in August 1996 by a still-unidentified army unit and tortured, after attending a court hearing of a case brought by the Megawati-led PDI. Hendrik's Geneva appearance led members of *KomnasHAM* to warn publicly that Indonesia could be censured by this UN agency. All this forced ABRI to order the unit involved to release some of their captives.



Pius Lustrilanang in Amsterdam

The nine who are still unaccounted for are:

Herman Hendrawan, a student activist, who disappeared in March after attending a press conference at the Legal Aid Institute, YLBHI, in March this year.

Petrus Bima Angerah (Bimo), a PRD activist, missing since March 1998. His parents reported him missing to the police on 12 April.

Suyat, a student activist and member of the PRD student organisation, SMID. He went missing after being arrested in Central Java in February 1998.

Yani Avri (Rian), missing since 26 April 1997, after being taken into custody during the parliamentary elections for allegedly planting a bomb.

Sonny, also missing since 26 April 1997.

Dedi Hamdun, who went missing on 29 May 1997, the day of the parliamentary elections. He is a businessman and supporter of the PPP, one of the three parties officially permitted to contest the elections.

Ismail and **Noval Alkatiri** have also been missing since 29 May.

Mochamad Yusuf has been unaccounted for since he went missing in Jakarta on 7 May 1997.

Pius Lustrilanang has confirmed that Sonny and Dedi Hamdun were held at the same place as him and fears that they may now be dead.

Terrifying experience

Lustrilanang was seized in a busy Jakarta street, forced into a vehicle with a pistol held in his back, immediately blindfolded and hand-cuffed. As he alighted one hour later, unsure of where he was, one of his captors barked: 'There are no human rights here, no law. What you must do is answer all our questions.' Throughout his time in captivity, whenever his blindfold was removed, his captors wore masks so he was unable to identify anyone.

On arrival at the detention and torture centre where he was to spend the next two months, he was immediately given electric shocks. His most frightening experience came later that day when he was plunged into a tub of water reaching up to his chest. When the level reached his nose, the men kicked his head under the water for a few moments and pushed it down again repeatedly. Pius later wept as he described this, saying he really believed he would never survive.

All he could say about his place of detention was that he was held in one of six small cells, each holding one person. With the passage of time, he was able to make voice contact with the others and discover their identities. A camera was constantly trained on each cell. He remembers hearing low-flying aircraft for several hours every morning and late evening, suggesting that he was near an air-base. At three every afternoon, he heard a trumpet sounding for roll-call. The men handling him always wore masks so he only saw their eyes. They also wore heavy raincoats making it difficult for him to judge their size. The men bringing his food changed every two days and he reckons there were at least fifteen men involved. Very loud music was played all day and for most of the night, probably to prevent any noises from inside the centre reaching the outside world.

On his last day in captivity, he was summoned by an officer and told that he would get another shot of electricity as a 'souvenir'. They gave him a new set of clothes and packed him off to the airport with a ticket to Palembang.

While at home, he received a number of phone-calls every evening warning him not to go to Jakarta or tell the press about what happened to him. With his family's support, he finally decided to take the risk and go to Jakarta to tell his story to the world.

Kopassus was probably in charge

It is clear from Lustrilanang's account that the unit in charge was highly professional and very well equipped. Pius said: 'The men involved were not just ordinary soldiers. They were well-trained in terrorising people.' This lends credibility to the suspicion that *Kopassus*, the special forces command, well-experienced in intelligence activity and the use of torture and for long associated with Prabowo, Suharto's son-in-law, was responsible for the 'disappearances'.

US investigative journalist, Allan Nairn, is quite certain that the abductors were from *Kopassus*. From interviews with Indonesian army officers and US embassy personnel, it has emerged that the abductors were from its Group 4 unit, which has kept in close liaison with the US embassy in Jakarta. Colonel Chairawan, commander of Group 4, told Nairn that he liaises regularly with Col Charles McFetridge, the Defence Intelligence Agency attache at the US embassy who was aware throughout of the abductions and their perpetrators. It was only after public protest mounted that the State Department put pressure on Prabowo to release some of the 'disappeared'.

SMID leader also tells all

One of the top leaders of the People's Democracy Party (PRD), **Andi Arief,** who escaped arrest in 1996 and went into hiding, was captured by unidentified men on 28 March 1998, while staying with his sister in Palembang, South Sumatra. He was rushed to Jakarta and incarcerated in the same centre as Pius. He resurfaced nineteen days later but not as free man; he was handed over to the Jakarta police on 17 April and is almost certain to face charges soon. Andi is from the PRD's student organisation, SMID.

Andi's experiences were made public by his father and elder siblings who met him at police headquarters in Jakarta after he re-emerged. He told them he was handcuffed and blindfolded, with a pistol aimed at him throughout the journey by ferry to Java and then the one-hour trip from Merak to the place of detention. Once there, his hands and feet were both cuffed, with an extra cuff chaining his legs to the table. This meant he couldn't move around even to pray or go to the toilet. 'They treated him like a dog,' said his sister, telling him to urinate into a tin can.

She says he was not tortured but had pistols trained on him all the time, sometimes as many as eight.

After being delivered into the hands of the police on 17 April, the police claimed that he had been in their custody right from the start, a claim vigorously denied by Andi Arief himself. His lawyers later told the press that Andi would refuse to collaborate in any interrogations, either as witness or suspect, until those responsible for his kidnap were called to account.

He also said that one of his abductors told him during their journey from Palembang to Jakarta that he had recently returned to Indonesia after completing a course of training in the UK. [See separate article on UK's relations with Indonesia.]

Another of the men who went missing, Desmond Mahesa, the director of the Bandung-based Legal Aid Institute, LBH-Nusantara, took some time before he was willing to go public. Early on, he told the press, he had asked for a safety guarantee from the armed forces before agreeing to speak, saying quite frankly that he was 'dead scared' of what could happen to him. He would only confirm that his own experiences paralleled those made public by Pius Lustrilanang.

But Haryanto Taslam, a deputy secretary-general of Megawati's PDI, who also went missing for weeks, has refused to speak out of fear of the consequences for members of his family. ❁

Ethical foreign policy in ruins

The downfall of Suharto was accompanied by the demise of Labour's ethical foreign policy as commercial interests held sway over ethics. British military equipment was used against defenceless students, and Ministers outdid each other in their rush to avoid blame. But campaigners continued to demonstrate their support for those fighting against oppression and injustice.

Two images will remembered in Britain from the end of the Suharto regime. They feature Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, exchanging smiles and handshakes with the then President, and Scorpion tanks and water cannon on the streets of Jakarta confronting student protesters. Nothing more need be said to demonstrate the bankruptcy of British policy on Indonesia.

The Cook report

The picture of Cook and Suharto appears in a remarkable report, *Human Rights 1998*, published by the Foreign Office and Department for International Development on 21 April. This glossy publication confirms that the ethical foreign policy is little more than a public relations exercise, devoid of substance. Bizarrely, it said the British government had entered into a 'constructive partnership' with an Indonesian regime, which will go down in history as one of worst human rights violators this century.



Robin Cook and the deposed dictator

The report contrasts starkly with the heavyweight US State Department annual human rights report, which runs into several hundred picture-free pages with critical reports on a large number of countries.

Even as the report was published, British military equipment was being used to quell peaceful protest. The April front cover of the journal, *D&R*, showed a water cannon spraying students from Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Central Java. On 6 April, *Forum Keadilan* published a picture of a water cannon in use against students on the UNS university campus in Solo, Central Java. On 8 April, Reuters reported that police in Surabaya used tear gas and water cannon to stop students leaving their campus during an anti-government protest. A witness said the water cannon used 'discoloured water that looked like it was from a septic tank, and the stinking water made dozens of others vomit and run away'. The Foreign Office later confirmed that yellow dye - presumably to assist the security forces in identifying those involved - was used.

Later, TV pictures showed water cannon and Alvis scorpion tanks being used on the streets of Jakarta by security forces who had shot and killed four student demonstrators.

Ministerial hypocrisy

Embarrassed Ministers embarked on a damage-limitation exercise which involved blaming everyone but themselves. Robin Cook appeared on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme to point out that the export licences had been granted by the previous administration, a fact former Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind attempted to deny on BBC 2's *Newsnight*.

Foreign Office Minister, Derek Fatchett, won the prize for hypocrisy and duplicity, however, when he stated in the House of Commons on 19 May, 'I do not think that we shall hear from the Labour Benches any support for Suharto, the regime in Indonesia and the mistakes that have been made over the years.'

This audacious U-turn in policy came after the Labour Government had between May 1997 and March 1998, granted 52 arms export licences for Indonesia (the total had risen to 67 by June 1998) and refused only six, had allowed the sale of water cannon, armoured vehicles and Hawk aircraft to go ahead despite its clear power to revoke licences that had been issued by the previous government, and had consistently supported the IMF bailout of the Suharto regime at an estimated cost to the British taxpayer of $700 million.

The British Government remained committed to the Suharto regime to the bitter end because policy on Indonesia was driven not by ethics but by the perceived interests of British businesses, especially arms contractors and investors.

Arms sales and military training

In 1996, arms sales worth £438 million accounted for half the UK's exports to Indonesia. The arms trade is subsidised by the taxpayer through guarantees provided by the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). It is also indirectly supported by the provision of military training and education for army officers likely to be future power holders.



Scorpion tanks in one of the main streets of Jakarta on 20 May 1998

In April, the ECGD's cover for Indonesia amounted to £1,773 million, of which £848 million related to arms sales. The Government says it does not expect Indonesia to default on its loans, despite its severe economic difficulties. With the likelihood increasing of Jakarta defaulting on massive foreign debt, the government has little reason to be so sanguine. Since 1990/91, the cost of military assistance to Indonesia has been £3.57 million.

ECGD cover for the Hawk deal alone is £531 million and delivery of the aircraft was due to commence in May 1998. Two RAF officers are currently assisting the Indonesian Air Force with the introduction into service of Hawk aircraft purchased in 1993.

Three Indonesian military officers are on training courses at the Royal College of Defence Studies, HMS Dryad, and the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Bracknell.

Ten officers are attending a Masters of Defence Administration course at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham provided by Cranfield University. A further eighteen army officers are enrolled at non-military educational establishments. Ten of those officers - seven of whom are from the special forces, *Kopassus* - are at Hull University on a security studies course in the 'theory and practice of strategy and security form the perspective of the defence professional'.

It is worth remembering that, until his controversial appointment as Vice-President and then President, B J Habibie headed Indonesia's military industrial complex and was responsible for the purchase of the Hawk aircraft from British Aerospace.

Investments threatened

Britain is Indonesia's largest foreign investor after Japan. Since 1967, direct investments have totalled $30.6 billion. Even the economic meltdown may not have deterred British companies. In 1997 alone, investment commitments amounted to $5.5 billion, and the UK tops the most recent list of investment approvals with $1.62 invested in 23 projects from January to 15 May 1998.

Major investors include Shell, BP, Rio Tinto, GEC, Thames Water, British Gas, National Power, Power Gen and Unilever.

Following Suharto's downfall, many investments were threatened by their association with the family of the former dictator. Under the system of patronage and 'crony capitalism' nurtured by Suharto, the extended first family and cronies acquired stakes - ranging from 10 to 70 per cent. - in projects as joint venture partners by simply facilitating deals without providing any capital input. The family built up its wealth to levels estimated at anywhere between $10 and $40 billion (the latter being just short of the $43 billion promised by the IMF to bail out the economy).

This corrupt system, now popularly known as KKN - *Korupsi, Kolusi dan Nepotisme* - is being targeted by the new overnment which is attempting to establish its reforming credentials.

Companies affected claim that they could not have done business without entering into corrupt deals. They were, however, fully aware of the political and economic risks involved and could have chosen not to invest Their collusion helped to sustain the system for many years and they cannot now complain.

A deal to supply water to half of Jakarta by Thames Water was threatened by the participation of Suharto's eldest son, Sigit. Following frantic negotiations - involving Derek Fatchett on a two-day visit to Jakarta at the end of May - the deal was saved by the formation of a new joint venture minus Sigit.

A project to build a 60 km. toll road in West Java, involving Trafalgar House (now owned by Kvaerner of Norway) and a company controlled by Suharto's daughter, Tutut, was initially suspended in September 1997 in response to the economic crisis. The concession to build and operate the toll road may now be renegotiated because of Tutut's interest. Trafalgar House's future involvement is unclear. The project was partly funded under the British Government's Aid and Trade Provision and the taxpayer may lose several million pounds if Trafalgar House is excluded.

PowerGen has been affected by both the political fallout of Suharto's downfall and the precarious financial position of the state electricity company, PLN. PowerGen has a 35 per cent. stake, worth £400 million, in the Paiton II power

station project in East Java. One of the partners in the joint venture - known as PT Jawa Power - is the Bimantara Group of Suharto's son, Bambang. The contractual arrangements between PLN and PT Jawa Power became untenable when the rupiah plunged against the dollar. PLN's revenues from retail sales are set in rupiah whereas the power supply contracts are denominated in dollars. PLN is contracted to buy power at rates ranging from 5.74 cents to 8.50 cents per kilowatt-hour, but now recoups only 1.9 cents from its retail sales. The head of PLN has threatened to cancel existing power contracts, but it is more likely that they will be re-negotiated. The Ministry of Mines and Energy has said it will honour all existing contracts.

Speculation also surrounds Rio Tinto's investment in the three-billion dollar Freeport copper and gold mining operation in West Papua. The Suharto family invested in Freeport through PT Nusamba, which is owned 80 per cent. by Suharto-controlled charitable foundations and ten per cent. each by Sigit and Suharto's crony, Bob Hasan.

Other companies affected by links with the Suharto family and cronies include BP, Rolls Royce, British Aerospace, Taylor Woodrow, GEC Alsthom, Bank of Scotland and United Biscuits.

In the present political climate, the recovery of the wealth amassed by the Suharto family is a priority. But it may be the case that few companies will suffer in the long run as the Government is anxious to regain the confidence of foreign investors. British companies which remain should learn from the mistakes they made in supporting the Suharto regime for so long.

In particular, companies must make a positive contribution to the political and economic reform process by avoiding corruption, by supporting their workers' right to freedom of association and their right to organise, by ensuring that human rights are respected in their business operations, and by ensuring that their investments are of the highest quality in terms of their contribution to sustainable development.

UK campaigning

Campaigners in Britain were delighted by the fall of Suharto and those attending a demonstration outside the Foreign Office on 20 May even claimed some credit for his decision to resign the very next day! Several MPs attended the rally, including Ann Clwyd, Jenny Tonge and Alice Mahon. Most, however, are still cautious about future prospects and are committed to continuing their actions.

Ironically, Habibie himself was one of the main focuses of the protest directed at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in London on 4 April. A coalition of organisations convened to deliver the message that peace, freedom and democracy are essential for economic and social development. A vigil was held outside the conference centre and up to 2,000 demonstrators passed by on route to a rally in Trafalgar Square addressed by John Pilger, Carmel Budiardjo of TAPOL, indigenous representatives from Southeast Asia and members of the coalition groups. The day before, anti-arms trade activists unsuccessfully attempted to make a citizen's arrest of Habibie, who was attending ASEM on behalf of Suharto.

The Foreign Office demonstration on 20 May - Indonesia's Day of National Awakening - was held to express solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of Indonesians planning to rally to call for Suharto to stand down and to mark the 90th anniversary of the birth of Indonesia's independence movement. In the event, Muslim leader, Amien Rais, was forced to call off the rally when heavily-armed troops occupied and surrounded Jakarta's main square.

British Aerospace remains a primary target of campaigners. Many attended the AGM in London on 29 April to make their voices heard both inside and outside the meeting. Two Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) activists attracted most attention - including a front-page, colour picture in the next day's *Independent* - by climbing on to the roof of the nearby DTI building and unfurling a 50 ft. banner, which read 'BAe Murder by Proxy'. Inside the meeting, the Board was challenged once again on the ethics of arming repressive regimes.

Earlier, on Easter Monday, 13 April, three East Timorese exiles and nine Britons entered the British Aerospace factory at Warton, Lancashire where they held a Christian liturgy to remember the dead of East Timor. All twelve were arrested, but were later released without charge. At the same time a group of CAAT supporters launched a new campaign, Churches in Solidarity with East Timor (CiSET), with the object of encouraging churches to become active on East Timor.

Meanwhile, there will be no let-up in the campaign against arms sales to Indonesia. The 'Stop the Hawks Coalition' has been renamed the 'No Arms to Indonesia Coalition' (NATIC) and will be launched at a meeting on 28 July. Its primary purpose will be to facilitate the sharing of information on arms sales and on campaigns by member organisations. NATIC hopes to produce a newsletter every three months.

The campaign against military training has been directed mainly at Hull University. A public meeting held at the University on 14 May revealed strong feelings against the presence of the Indonesians. A group of students have written to the Vice-Chancellor, demanding that no more Indonesian army officers be admitted. The issue has attracted national press interest with articles and correspondence in the *Independent*. The Association of University Teachers (AUT) has passed a resolution in support of members who refuse to teach the Indonesians. One member of staff at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham has said he will no longer teach Indonesian officers.

Rio Tinto remains a focus of attention for many environmental and human rights groups. Company practices were heavily criticised at the AGM in London on 13 May. Campaigners handing out leaflets drew attention to how the company 'dumps on human rights' with the aid of a strategically-placed dumper truck.

Shareholders who spoke at the meeting included a representative from Indonesia who described how communities around the Kelian mine in East Kalimantan had been forced off their land, denied adequate compensation and has suffered from pollution caused by the mine.

A leader of West Papua's Amungme community, Yosepha Alomang, was also due to address the meeting about human violations by the military around the Grasberg mine, but the military prevented her from travelling to London. ❁

Army strikes hard at Timorese protest

Several battle-hardened units of the Indonesian army brutally charged into hundreds of peaceful East Timorese demonstrators who had gathered in the forecourt of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry in Jakarta on 12 June and forced them to leave. The operation, which left many people wounded, came one day after President Habibie had called on the armed forces to show respect for human rights in dealing with disturbances.

The Timorese who had assembled in Jakarta from towns right across Java and Bali had gathered on the premises of the Foreign Ministry, demanding to meet Foreign Minister Ali Alatas or other senior ministry officials and hold a dialogue about a number of demands, focusing on the need for a referendum in East Timor.

Demands

In a three-page petition, the East Timorese described the invasion of East Timor as a violation of the Indonesian Constitution, meaning that Law No 7/1976 legalising the 'integration' of East Timor was also unconstitutional. The Petition called for the repeal of this law and for the withdrawal of all army personnel from the country and the release of all East Timorese political prisoners.

It called on the United Nations to revise the tripartite format of talks under the UN's auspices, opening the way for representatives of the resistance to take part, especially the resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao and the two 1996 Nobel Peace Prize laureates, Bishop Belo, SDB, and José Ramos Horta. The UN should urge Indonesia to make preparations for a referendum to test the views of the East Timorese, a UN office for human rights should be opened and a Special Representative for East Timor should be appointed to prepare for a referendum.

It also called on the international community to halt the sale of all arms to Indonesia.

Its final plea was addressed to the Indonesian pro-democracy movement, to support the demands contained in the Petition and to recognise that a referendum for East Timor was an integral part of the total reform now being sought in Indonesia.

Outnumbered by troops

The action, organised by the East Timor National Youth Front, began at 8.30 on the morning of Friday, 12 June when a huge crowd of Timorese occupied the forecourt of the ministry. There were speeches by those present about the demands of the East Timorese.

By mid morning, however, troops from the Marines, the Military Police, the army strategic command, KOSTRAD, and the cavalry, had arrived along with thirteen large trucks and started ordering the Timorese to leave. The many hundreds of troops outnumbered the demonstrating Timorese. They pushed them back towards the iron railings, injuring many people. The operation grew increasingly brutal as troops started lashing out at the defenceless men and women with bayonets, truncheons and rifle butts. By 1.30 pm, the evacuation had been completed and all the Timorese had been driven away to several locations. Altogether 27 people had to be rushed to hospital, a number of whom were seriously wounded.



An East Timorese demonstrator in Jakarta

One Timorese activist and two Indonesians from a small support contingent were driven off to the Military Police headquarters in Jakarta for questioning. They were later released.

International protests

In a statement later that day, TAPOL said that although democratic space was being given to Indonesians calling for basic democratic reforms, 'occupied East Timor is still treated by the army as their special project.' It called on

the European Union to protest vigorously at this use of violence against East Timorese students and urged the EU to adopt a comprehensive decision on East Timor at its summit meeting in Cardiff three days after the brutality in Jakarta.

Amnesty International expressed shock that a peaceful demonstration had been broken up violently. 'Just yesterday, President Habibie called on the Indonesian armed forces to demonstrate their professionalism through respect for human rights in dealing with riots and demonstrations. Today, these same forces have forcibly broken up a peaceful political demonstration and detained the participants which is worryingly reminiscent of practices under the Suharto presidency,' said Amnesty.

In Ireland, the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign urged the Irish government to summon the Indonesian ambassador from London (there is no Indonesian embassy in Dublin) to register its anger at the incident.

Follow-up actions

The security forces tried to force all the Timorese to leave Jakarta and return to their places of residence but more than four hundred defied these orders and took sanctuary at a University of Indonesia campus in Depok on the outskirts of the capital and at the secretariat of the Catholic students organisation, PMKRI, in Central Jakarta. ❁

East Timor: Is change in the air?

Suharto's fall from power has removed one key obstacle to the resolution of the long-standing East Timor tragedy. But the army is still very much in control. East Timorese have used the democratic space available following the change in government in Jakarta to intensify demands for a referendum while international clamour for change has mounted. So how soon can things begin to move?

It has been acknowledged for years that an act of self-determination in East Timor would never happen until Suharto fell from power and that any successor government would have to confront East Timor as its main foreign policy headache. Now that we have the 'New Order without Suharto', slight shifts are perceptible. The issues that Habibie, Suharto's chosen successor, must now confront are: the release of resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao and other political prisoners, the status of East Timor and an end to the atmosphere of fear which would require the removal of Indonesian troops from the territory.

Early on, President Habibie made what he hoped would be seen as a conciliatory move, saying that his government would grant 'special status' to East Timor within the Republic. The offer was brushed aside by Bishop Belo in Dili and resistance leaders abroad as meaningless.

On 18 June, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas presented new proposals to the UN to resolve the issue 'once and for all'. These were later spelled out by President Habibie, in an interview with Australian journalists as being: the release of Xanana Gusmao (whose sentence would be reduced to the time already served), special status for East Timor and a reduction in troop presence to the national standard. In exchange, Portugal and the UN should recognise *integrasi* and 'the whole world should stop making problems' about East Timor. The proposals were immediately rejected by Portugal and by Xanana himself in an interview smuggled out on video and shown on CNN. He was speaking on 20 June, his 52nd birthday, when a group of East Timorese were permitted to visit him for a birthday celebration.



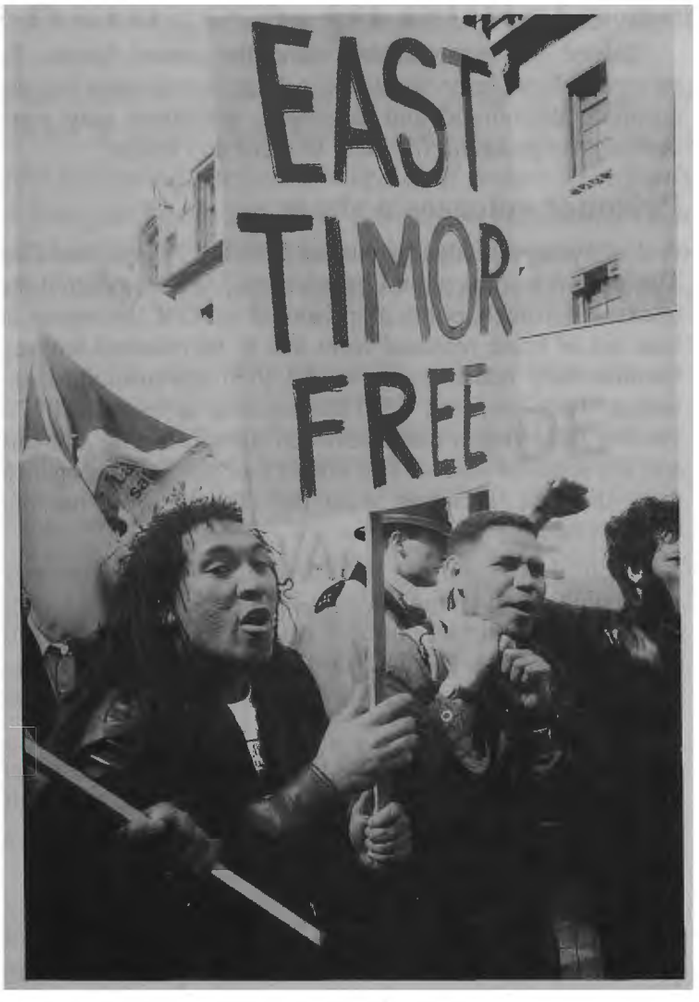
Xanana Gusmao in Cipinang prison, with young Timorese visitors

East Timor after Suharto

While the proposals made by Jakarta have failed to take the issue forward, the changes in Indonesia following Suharto's downfall have certainly had an impact in East Timor. The forces of occupation appear to be under orders not to take action against demonstrators, hoping perhaps to make *integrasi* more acceptable to the East Timorese.

Some changes in Jakarta may have reverberations in East Timor. Lieutenant-General Prabowo Subianto, son-in-law of Suharto, is universally hated by the East Timorese as a psychopath who has killed or ordered his men to kill with impunity. He rose rapidly from the ranks of the special forces, *KOPASSUS,* to become its commander two years ago and has funded and organised youth gangs to inform on young activists in the territory. He was

also the political mainstay of the present provincial governor, Abilio Osorio Soares. His swift removal, two days after Suharto's downfall, as commander of the army's strategic command, *KOSTRAD,* in a power struggle with armed forces commander-in-chief General Wiranto, has removed one of the bleaker aspects of the Indonesian occupation by clipping the wings of the *KOPASSUS* troops operating there.



East Timorese demonstrating in London Photo Paul Slattery

The death of Colonel Salamat Sidabutar, the military commander of East Timor, in a helicopter crash, along with half a dozen top military officers in Dili and Bali, may also have relieved the pressure.

The disintegration of the business empire of Suharto and his offspring will also halt some projects in East Timor where the family has sifted off the cream of investment projects. A sugar-cane project owned by Tommy Suharto is now reported to have been abandoned. Tens of thousands of hectares were seized with the help of Governor Soares, forcing many local people from their land. This is likely to be one of a number of projects for which the governor will be called to account.

Former Fretilin president Abilio Araujo, who became a fervent admirer of Suharto and a business associate of his daughter Tutut, will also see his investment plans in East Timor go up in smoke.

The grave economic crisis in Indonesia has borne down heavily on Timor. Basic commodities are always dearer in East Timor and the discrepancy has hit local consumers hard as prices of everything have soared. But the crisis has also hit soldiers and their families, with reports of demoralisation and of soldiers going absent without leave. It remains to be seen how long Jakarta can afford to fund the occupation at the current level of troops. With 20,000 troops, the occupation is estimated to cost $1 million a day or more. As the coffers run dry, it may soon be difficult for the government to pay members of the armed forces and civil servants.

Thousands demonstrate daily

The East Timorese, however, are using the new situation to press their demand for self-determination with renewed vigour.

Mass demonstrations have become a daily event in Dili. Students at the University of East Timor, UNTIM, held free-speech forums despite attempts by the Rector to stop them. While uniformed security forces kept a distance, intelligence agents - *intel* - mingled with the crowds and some students went into hiding after being intimidated.

When Governor Abilio Soares convened a meeting of politicians and leading personalities in East Timor on 6 June, it was his intention to garner support for autonomy for East Timor within the Republic. Some years ago, he tried to sell the idea to Suharto as a sop to the people but the dictator would have none of it.

Far more people turned up for the meeting than had been invited, including hundreds of young people who unfurled banners calling for a referendum and for the release of Xanana Gusmao.

When former governor, Mario Carrascalao, whom Soares had asked to chair the meeting, urged people to 'speak their minds' and to ignore the *intel* agents who he said, were 'toothless' now that Suharto had gone, cheers rose to the rafters. Soares, it seems, found himself in a minority of one as speaker after speaker rose to reject autonomy, and to call for a referendum, for the release of Xanana Gusmao and for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops. Carrascalao later announced that these results would be presented to the Habibie government, while Soares told a Jakarta daily that he was 'deeply disappointed' with the outcome.

Meanwhile the security forces were nowhere to be seen, having been told no doubt that this was the governor's event and it would not oppose integration.

On 15 June, 1,500 students from UNTIM and other institutions went en masse to the local assembly and presented demands for a referendum and the release of Xanana Gusmao to assembly members. They were received by the assembly chairperson who promised to pass on their demands to Jakarta, reflecting the atmosphere of greater openness now that Suharto has been disposed of.

Young Timorese shot dead

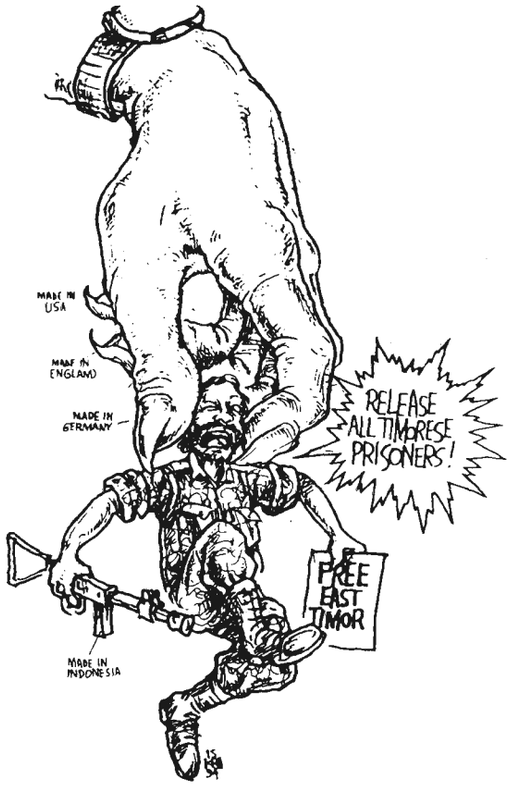
But East Timorese lives are still cheap for the taking and trigger-happy soldiers are still in the habit of shooting people in cold blood.

On 16 June, a young man was shot dead near Manatuto. **Herman Dasdores Soares,** 21, and a friend, Olandino Soares, were shot at without warning, as they were loading firewood onto their pick-up truck. Herman was hit twice in the stomach and died as he was being transferred from a clinic in Manatuto to Dili. When the tragedy was reported by the young man's parents to Bishop Belo, the news spread rapidly, bringing thousands onto the streets.

The army responded fast by apologising for the accident' for the first time ever and taking the soldier who pulled the trigger into military police custody. The apology was greeted with contempt while the killing renewed demands for the total withdrawal of Indonesian troops. The tragedy only further renewed calls for the military to withdraw from the territory.

Xanana Gusmao must take part in talks

One core demand inside East Timor, in Indonesia and abroad is for the release of Xanana Gusmao, along with all the scores of Timorese political prisoners now being held. Xanana's release is widely seen as being crucial to reaching a solution through negotiations.



As the students who demonstrated at the Foreign Ministry in Jakarta stated in their Petition, the present format of UN-sponsored talks involving the foreign ministers of Indonesia and Portugal is leading nowhere. The format must include the resistance leader, alongside East Timor's two Nobel Peace laureates, Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta in direct talks with Jakarta.

On a visit to Jakarta soon after Suharto fell from power, Britain's Minister of State, Derek Fatchett, representing the European Union, visited Xanana in prison, held a joint press conference with him and later called for his release. A few days later, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote to President Habibie pledging his commitment to the talks and calling for the release of all East Timorese political prisoners. While not mentioning Xanana by name, the implication was clear.

In Indonesia, trade union leader, Muchtar Pakpahan, one of the first two political prisoners to be released in Jakarta, immediately called for Xanana's release. Deputy chair of the National Human Rights Commission, Marzuki Darusman, has added his voice, saying that most Commission members support the demand.

Jakarta's response has been predictable. Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, who has spent most of the past ten years defending Indonesia's bankrupt and indefensible policy on East Timor, repeated the mantra that the East Timorese leader was convicted on criminal charges and his release was 'out of the question'. However, it would be another matter, he said, if Portugal and the UN were willing to accept integration, in which case, Xanana could be free tomorrow.

Behind the manoeuvring stand the armed forces. To surrender EastTimor would be a huge humiliation but the political, diplomatic and economic pressures may soon become too powerful for them to resist any longer.

Prisoner releases a sham

Following a pledge by Justice Minister Muladi that East Timorese prisoners would be released, Habibie ordered the release of fifteen political prisoners in Dili. However at least six of those released were due to be released anyway because they had already served their seven-month sentences. They were all UNTIM students arrested last November following a clash between demonstrating students and the security forces. The others had the charges against them dropped, although what the charges were has not been revealed.

Political prisoner lists published on 4 June by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch included the names of 87 East Timorese political prisoners. The two NGOs acknowledged that the lists are far from complete and nine of the prisoners released by the authorities were not included on their lists.

The six who were released from Becora Prison, Dili, refused to leave the jail for 24 hours, in solidarity with their co-prisoners who were not covered by the amnesty.

Unrest at Becora Prison

Becora Prison in Dili, which holds convicted East Timorese prisoners, has been in a state of ferment. Early in June, scores of prisoners became very ill after eating rotten fish. Many had to be rushed to hospital for treatment. When six of the inmates were released, the farewell became an occasion for protest against the food poisoning incident.

On 20 June, all the prisoners staged a protest against their continued incarceration by holding a sit-in on the prison forecourt. They unfurled banners and flags calling for a referendum and for the release of all East Timorese political prisoners, including Xanana Gusmao. They had their belongings with them and said they were determined to leave the prison. Within half an hour, 15 truckloads of the special police, *Brimob,* arrived to force the prisoners back into the prison. The prisoners refused to return to the cells for days and faced continued confrontation with *Brimob* forces. ❁

NEW PUBLICATION :

EAST TIMOR: OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE
Edited by Torben Retbøll
IWGIA Publication Document 89, June 1998
288 pp, ISBN 87-984110-7-1
Order from TAPOL, price: £ 12.00 incl. postage

Refugees, prisoners and 'disappeared' in Aceh

A decision by the UNHCR in June to grant refugee status to 22 Acehnese who took refuge in the UNHCR office and the US embassy in Kuala Lumpur is a sharp rebuttal of Indonesian and Malaysian refusal to acknowledge that many hundreds of Acehnese now in Malaysia have legitimate cause to fear for their safety if forced to return to Indonesia. It highlights the need for legal protection for all those still in Malaysia and reinforces fears for those forced to return in March. Meanwhile scores of prisoners hope for release while tens of thousands of people remain unaccounted for.

Since the late 1980s, hundreds, perhaps thousands of Acehnese, have fled to Malaysia to escape persecution and military operations against the Free Aceh Movement in Aceh. Only a handful have been granted residential status. Others have tried to make a living without proper documents, while many have been held in police lock-ups. The UN High Commission for Refugees has been consistently denied access to the detainees for the purpose of making a determination of their claim to political refugee status.

Early this year, as the economic crisis hit the Malaysian economy, the Malaysian government launched *Operation Go Away* to return home tens of thousands of 'illegal' Indonesian migrant labourers. It was under the cover of this operation that the Malaysian authorities, under pressure from Jakarta, decided to force Acehnese refugees back to Aceh and into the hands of their Indonesian persecutors.

As reported in *TAPOL Bulletin* No 146, altogether 545 Acehnese were forcibly repatriated on 26 March. The Malaysian authorities admitted at the time that eight Acehnese died during the operation at Semenyih detention camp while Acehnese refugee sources in Malaysia believe that the death toll was three times as high.

Now, new light has been shed on the atrocities that accompanied the forced repatriations.

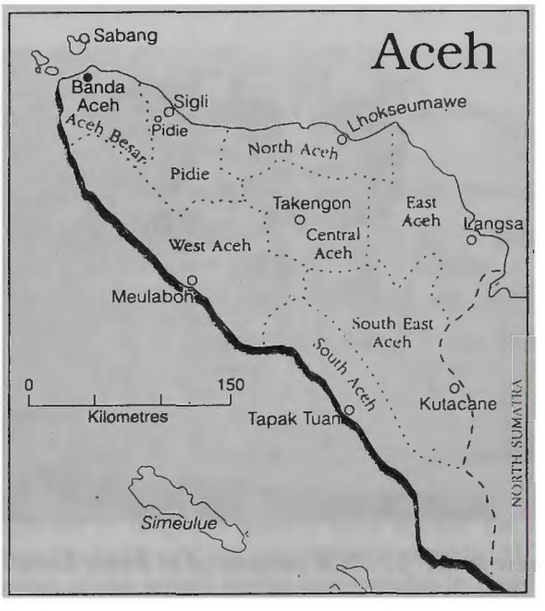
Acehnese poisoned and shot dead

The targeted Acehnese were being held at four camps, Macap Umbo, Lenggeng, Juru and Semenyih. A few hours before the operation to empty the camps began, detainees at the Macap Umbo camp started vomiting blood and fainting after eating the evening meal of rice, dried fish and water. When those who had not drunk the water did not vomit, the cry went up: 'They are poisoning us.' Detainees at Semenyih also complained that they had been poisoned.

One Indonesian who was being held at the camp, later told an English journalist:

'*In block after block people were vomiting blood. We knew the guards were poisoning us. From 9pm to 4am the next day, all the Indonesians were rioting. Then the police shot in the air and fired teargas as us, three times.*

'*At 5am, 1,800 police from the Federal Reserve Unit came to the camp and we were surrounded. They had helmets, guns and whips. The riot finished and the police took control. At dawn they went to Block E where the Acehnese were.*



JOHN WADDINGHAM

'The police beat the Acehnese. Their leader was shot in the head. The Acehnese's friend hit the police sergeant with a block of wood. This man was shot in the stomach and was killed. A third man went to help the second and he was shot in the thigh and was killed. The police took eight of the Acehnese away and they were never seen again' [John Sweeney in *The Observer,* 26 April 1998].

Another witness also confirmed that he had seen three men shot dead.

Regarding the deaths at Semenyih, the Malaysian authorities claimed that the police had acted 'in self defence' and that the violence was started by the detainees. However, a photograph of police officers prodding the dead and injured showed that at least two of the corpses were bound hand and foot. The photograph was reproduced in our last *Bulletin* but these horrific details were not clear to us until we saw the same photo reproduced in *The Observer* to illustrate Sweeney's article.

22 granted refugee status

Four days after the tragic events on 26 March, fourteen Acehnese refugees, driving in a truck, all of whom had escaped from the Lenggeng detention camp, crashed through the gates of the UNHCR's office in Kuala Lumpur and asked for asylum. They were allowed to remain.

Then on 10 April, 35 more, all escapees from Lenggeng camp, made their way into the French, US and Swiss embassies and a rest-house belonging to the Brunei authorities in Kuala Lumpur, also seeking asylum. Only the eight who entered the US embassy were allowed to remain. The French, Swiss and Brunei embassies called the Malaysian police to have the asylum-seekers removed from their premises, in gross violation of the provisions of the UN Protocol on Refugees. All these governments were criticised for such a blatant violation of the UN Protocol on Refugees. Shamelessly, French embassy staff are quoted in one report as saying that the refugees looked weak and frail and were in no condition to resist when the Malaysian riot police, armed with batons came for them. No wonder they were in such a state. They had been in hiding for two weeks already, after escaping from the horror camp.



Acehnese in the UNHCR compound in Kuala Lumpur

Political asylum granted

On 11 June, it was announced in Kuala Lumpur that all the twenty-two Acehnese taking refuge on UNHCR and US premises had been granted political refugee status and would be found third-country asylum in due course. 'The commission has studied the cases and decided they are political refugees and not economic migrants, therefore warranting political asylum', US embassy information officer James Warren told the Malaysian daily *The Sun* [11 June].

The other 27 who had been re-arrested by the Malaysian police were still in custody. The UNHCR made it known that they were seeking the permission of the Malaysian government to meet the Acehnese with a view to considering their request for asylum.

This suggests that many if not all of those forcibly returned to Indonesia or still held in lock-ups would also have been eligible but were denied their rights by the Malaysian, French, Swiss and Brunei authorities.

Fate of the returnees

As for the 545 forced back to Indonesia, they were taken straight to Rancong detention centre, a centre run by the special forces unit, *Kopkamtib,* where prisoners are known in the past to have been severely tortured or maltreated.

Once back in Indonesian custody, it became very difficult to monitor their circumstances as access was denied to journalists and to relatives. At the request of the UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) sought and were eventually granted permission to visit the returnees on 20 April. By that time, however, many of the prisoners had been dispersed to other locations or allowed to return home while being kept under strict military supervision.

ICRC prison visits to Aceh had been suspended in March 1997 so this was the agency's first visit to the region in more than a year. In effect, this means that no agencies, domestic or foreign, are monitoring the conditions of the scores of political prisoners in Aceh, let alone the prisoners just returned from Malaysia. Nothing is known about ICRC's findings as these would only be made known to the Indonesian authorities and presumably also to the UNHCR.

Jailed and 'disappeared' Acehnese

Of the known political prisoners in Indonesia listed by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch on 4 June (not including East Timorese prisoners), about one third are Acehnese, a total of 55. Most are serving extremely heavy sentences, upwards of ten years and almost all were charged under the anti-subversion act. In the various statements issued so far by members of the Habibie cabinet regarding the release of political prisoners, not a word has been said about these Acehnese prisoners.

In June, two women went to Jakarta from Aceh to lobby about their husbands. Ibu Mauizah's husband, **Hasbi Abdullah,** a lecturer at Syiah University in Banda Aceh, was sentenced to nine years in 1994. She said he and others arrested with him had been tortured to confess that they were involved in the Free Aceh Movement. She wants her husband to be released without delay. Cut Ima Keumala's husband, **Mahdi Yusuf,** is one of many thousands of Acehnese who have disappeared since 1990. She said he was taken from home by Second Lieutenant S. Thamrin and two other soldiers in October 1990 and has never been heard of since.

Emboldened by the actions of these two women, a group of women from the sub-district of Mutiara, Pidie district in Aceh, have started campaigning openly to demand information of the whereabouts of their husbands. A report in the Banda Aceh daily, *Serambi* [23 June], lists the names of twelve men who were taken from their homes over a period of more than a year, from March 1997 until March 1998. None has been heard of since. In most cases, the abductors drove up in grey or dark coloured vehicles that were often seen driving around villages. When abductions occurred in the night, the village electricity was cut off so that it was impossible to read the number plates.

After first taking their complaints to the local legal aid institute, they then went to the regional assembly. 'We only hope that our husbands will be returned. If they are dead, please let us know where their graves are, why they were

arrested and what they were guilty of,' said Nyak Ubit, one of the women.

Lawyers in the region say that more and more women are coming forward to demand information about lost husbands or sons who have been abducted.

One human rights organisation in Aceh believes that there are no fewer than 39,000 women who were widowed following disappearances during the four years of military operations from 1989 until 1993. For years, no one dared to speak publicly about these 'disappearances' for fear of being branded 'GPK' or 'security disrupter gangs' as the opponents of Indonesian rule in Aceh, West Papua and East Timor are known. Now with the change of government in Jakarta, they have begun to speak out.

Woman detainee severely tortured

Meanwhile, an Acehnese woman who was arrested in April and held for two months is now known to have been badly tortured during her incarceration.

Cut Sari, 30, was involved in helping workers who were seeking employment in Malaysia. She was taken into custody shortly after the forced repatriation of the 545 Acehnese from Malaysia but no charges were brought and the reasons for her arrest are not clear. No arrest warrant was ever issued during the two months she spent in the custody of the security forces in Arun, Sigli in the district of Pidie. What is clear however, is that she was so badly tortured that her husband could hardly recognise her when she returned home because her face was covered in swellings and bruises. She also had a number of injuries on her body and was in need of hospital treatment.

The YPBHI, a human rights organisation in Sumatra, has lodged a strong protest with the government at the way she was treated. ❁

Acehnese want region demilitarised

Since the downfall of Suharto, a movement for an end to militarisation has swept the province of Aceh. The people of Aceh have a proud history of resistance against the Dutch at the end of the last century. Since independence, dissatisfaction with control from Jakarta spawned an Islamic movement in the 1950s and later the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Since the late 1980s, thousands of lives have been lost and thousands of people are unaccounted for. Women who have been widowed are playing a prominent role in the demand for change.

Aceh is one of two regions in Indonesia that has been granted 'special status', which is supposed to be a designation of privilege granting local people rights over religious affairs and educational matters. But in 1980, special status took on a different meaning when the province was declared to be a *daerah operasi militer* (DOM) or military operational area, the army alleging that this was the only way it could be protected from the GPK, the regime's way of referring to the Free Aceh Movement. As a result, for decades, the people of Aceh have been subjected to intensive surveillance, road-blocks, curfews, raids and arrests. In addition, Aceh's DOM status in reality has provided the cover for government officials and military personnel to engage in systematic corruption.

It is worth pointing out that the offer of 'special status' for East Timor is invariably linked to Aceh as an example of a region that 'enjoys' such a status. What this means in practice is a special role for ABRI, the Indonesian armed forces.

Local NGOs and many sections of the community are also calling for the release of political prisoners and for investigations into the thousands of 'disappeared' and other human rights abuses for which they hold the military responsible. [Also see separate item.]

Campaign to end DOM

The demand for the withdrawal of DOM has the support of people from all walks of life. Besides the physical and psychological impact of army repression, militarisation has put off many potential investors who fear the prospect of having to rely on the military for everything, which always means plenty of bribes

Hundreds of religious leaders have backed the demand and even the leader of the provincial assembly, H.T. Djohan, wrote to the armed forces commander-in-chief saying it was time for DOM to end.

On 6 June, six students from several universities in Banda Aceh went on hunger strike, saying that they would not end their action until the authorities had agreed to withdraw DOM. The students, whose number swelled to thirteen, refused to take food and would only drink water. Some students were forced to give up as they grew faint, but others took their place. They have received a great deal of moral and material support not only from the general public but from government officials, NGO activists and students from as far afield as Medan, North Sumatra, Lampung, South Sumatra, Jakarta and Bandung.

The response of the army and local government officials to this demand has been less than encouraging. Army chief-of-staff, General Subagyo Hadisiswoyo would only say that ABRI would meet with local government leaders 'to consider the request'. A few days earlier, on 11 June, the National Human Rights Commission and the governor of Aceh had told the students to end their action as their demand was under consideration, but they refused to do so.

Lt.General Fachrul Razi, ABRI chief of staff for general affairs, said that if DOM were withdrawn, 'the people of Aceh would have to take responsibility for their own security', adding cynically that the 'GPK would return and the students would have to be given weapons to deal with them'. [*Waspada,* 10 June] The next day, Major-General Ismed Yuzairi, regional military commander, declared that

'the withdrawal of DOM is completely out of the question'. [*Waspada*, 11 June]

Corruption

As in other regions throughout Indonesia, corruption is now a key target of local protest and the main focus of the protest is the provincial governor, Syamsuddin Mahmud. When his five-year term came to an end recently, there were widespread calls for him not to be re-appointed. He stands accused of buying the votes of a number of members of the provincial assembly to guarantee his re-election. This secured him a majority in the assembly but the leader of the assembly has warned that he would be pressing for a police investigation of this case of bribery. Other corruption scandals involving the governor include the construction of the *Harapan Bangsa* sports stadium, the management of a local bank and various aspects of local government funding. [*Serambi*, 5 June]

Syamsuddin's installation for a second term was much delayed because of the strength of feeling against him but it finally went ahead on 19 June. Soon afterwards, the students on hunger strike declared that if he failed to support the demand for the withdrawal of DOM within a week, they would intensify their action by refusing to take water as well as food.

Calls for Interior Minister to resign

The fact that it was the Minister for the Interior, Lt.General Syarwan Hamid, who swore the governor in added insult to injury.

Several NGOs in Aceh have been demanding that President Habibie sack Syarwan Hamid because he was responsible for scores of atrocities during his tour of duty as a military commander in Aceh. According to the Aceh-based YPBHI, the Foundation for Education and Human Rights, more than a hundred people were murdered or disappeared in the sub-district of Peulak alone during the time this man was military commander of the district military command of North Aceh from 1990 until 1994. Local people hold him responsible for these atrocities. ❁

Atrocities and famine leave scores dead

Eleven villagers were killed, shot or stabbed to death, many more were wounded and scores died from hunger and disease during Indonesian army operations aimed at flushing out OPM fighters allegedly operating east of the giant copper-and-gold mine run by Freeport and Rio Tinto. The military operations followed in the wake of the release of hostages held for four months in 1996.

The atrocities were documented in a report presented to the National Human Rights Commission on 25 May 1998 by the leaders of two Protestant churches and the Catholic church in Mimika. It reveals that villagers were driven from their villages and prevented from returning by a heavy military presence. Many of those killed or wounded were shot in cold blood by troops when visiting their gardens in search of food. Unable to tend their gardens, the villagers were struck down by famine and disease, which resulted in at least 126 deaths.

Scores of houses and churches were burned down, as reported by church activists who visited the region on three occasions from August 1997 till April this year. The monitors found army posts everywhere. Intimidated by the army's presence, more than a thousand villagers from one of the congregations fled and hid in forests or caves. Away from their gardens, they suffered hunger and malnutrition.

The military operations which resulted in such heavy loss of life were aimed at hunting down members of the OPM and protecting the Freeport-Rio Tinto mine, now called a 'vital project' and enjoying special protection by the armed forces.

The atrocities occurred in and around five villages located in the concession area of the Freeport/Rio Tinto mine, Bela, Alama, Jila, Mapnduma and Ngeselama, the area where hostages were held by the OPM, the Free Papua Movement, from January till May 1996.

The region has since been closed by the army; even to church leaders. Last year, church leaders in Jayapura, asked the National Human Rights Commission to persuade the army to give them access, but their pleas were ignored.

Shot in cold blood

Most of the eleven killed were shot when returning to their gardens. Here are details of a few of these murders:

Marthen Kemong, 16, left his refuge with some friends to see whether it was safe to go to the family garden. They found it occupied by troops and fled, but Marthen got entangled in vegetation and fell. As he emerged, he was shot and killed. His body was thrown off a cliff where it was found five days later by his friends.

Zakari Katagame, 14, had managed, with friends, to collect food from their garden. On the way back to their refuge, they stopped to cook the food. *Kopassus* troops approached them and opened fire. Zakari was hit in the head. The others escaped the hail of bullets. The troops had just spread leaflets urging people to return to their villages.

On the way back to their garden, **Ninuor Kwalik,** 50, and **Daugunme Kwalik,** 12, passed a deserted military post full of food. They returned with friends to take the food but troops were nearby. The two were shot dead in a hail of bullets while others were packing the food.

Marinus Deikmom, 16, had returned to his family's garden with friends. While outside the fence, Marinus was

shot and killed. Those inside managed to flee. Marinus' body was later found half buried, near the fence.

Ikadius Deikmom, 20, was shot at close range near his family's garden. The force of the gunfire blew off his head. His body was covered with leaves and abandoned. It was later found and buried by relatives.

Pastor Wenesobuk Nggiwijangge, 48, left his church on 12 October 1997 to check whether a trap he had laid had caught a tree kangaroo, but ran into two soldiers. A struggle ensued and he was thrown into a pit and shot dead. The sound of gunfire was heard in nearby Mapnduma.

Later relatives went searching for him. Soldiers said they had not seen him but a little further on, there were signs of a struggle. Two soldiers order them to leave or be shot as members of the OPM. About 200 people went back again and found his body stripped naked and covered with gunshot, knife and stab wounds. The villagers were later told by soldiers to say the pastor had died a natural death.



Give back our ancestral land !

Hamlets and churches destroyed

The report documents the razing of hamlets in Bela and Alama. In every hamlet, the investigators found houses and churches in ruins, torn down to make way for army posts or used for firewood. Witnesses told them:

As soon as soldiers entered and took over a hamlet, they began shooting indiscriminately, causing people to flee for safety to caves or jungles near their homes. From there, they witnessed their homes and churches being destroyed or burnt, one by one, until their hamlets were a sea of fire. They also tore down clinics, used the roofing for firewood, as well as taking the belongings inside.

The buildings destroyed included thirteen churches, 166 houses, 29 mens' houses, one *honai* and two clinics.

Scores of villagers died from famine-related diseases after being separated from their gardens because of the military operations. At least 15 villagers from Bela and Alama died while in hiding and eighteen more died after returning home in December 1997. This year, the death rate has risen. From January to March, 28 more died and in April, another 65 were reported dead.

Armed forces must be called to account

A statement by the Irian Jaya Human Rights Concern Group stressed that the Indonesian armed forces, ABRI, must take responsibility for the tragedy. It called for the court-martial of five senior army officers: Brigadier-General (now Lt.General) Prabowo Subianto, who commanded the operation to free the hostages, along with his deputy, Brigadier-General Gasing. Prabowo, son-in-law of Suharto, was recently removed as commander of the strategic army command, *Kostrad,* in a power struggle with General Wiranto, ABRI commander-in-chief. The others were the two former military commanders of Irian Jaya, Major-General Dunidja, and Major-General Johnny Lumintang, and Colonel Franz de Wana, district military commander in Manokwari, and J.B. Wenas, also an army man, district head of Jayawijaya.

It demanded the immediate withdrawal of all troops from the five villages and from the central highlands.

Freeport must end mining operations

As for the mining giant that has been exploiting the region since 1968, the Group said that its presence in the country was a threat to the native inhabitants and had caused many deaths. The company was financing the army to protect its mining operations which had led to the atrocities. The Freeport contract of work had been signed during the Suharto regime and should therefore be scrapped. The Suharto family had profited from its operations whereas local inhabitants whose land had been seized had not felt any benefits.

The Group also called on the UN to conduct an investigation into the abuses, given that past experience of investigations by the National Human Rights Commission had been far from satisfactory. But the Group, which published its demands during a demonstration in Jayapura on 29 May, challenged the Commission to send a fact-finding mission to the region without delay.

It is essential, the Group said, for the region to be accessible to outsiders and for villagers to be allowed freedom of movement to till their gardens and to hunt.

International Red Cross called to account

The Groups also said that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) must take responsibility for allowing a helicopter to be used to transport troops who landed in Mapnduma while the hostage crisis was still underway and attacked villagers in Mapnduma. This tragic incident occurred on 9 May 1996 when troops landed in Mapnduma in a helicopter bearing ICRC insignia and shot at villagers who mistook the aircraft for a Red Cross transport. This incident which is believed to have resulted in a number of deaths has never been investigated.

National Commission visits Timika

Following demonstrations in Jayapura by the Human Rights Concern Group, the National Human Rights Commission sent two Commission members to Timika on 11 June. After visiting Jila and Bela and speaking to witnesses, seeing graves and burnt churches, they agreed that many atrocities had occurred. They decided to send a larger mission which returned to the central highlands two weeks later. ❁

Political prisoner releases stalled

One of the very first pledges to emerge from President Habibie's 'Reform' Cabinet was that Indonesian political prisoners would be released. Justice Minister Muladi made so many statements on the matter that it really seemed as if we were entering a new era. After a month, however, only four prisoners have been released.

There are numerous categories of political prisoners held under a variety of laws and in connection with a whole range of 'political crimes'. The lists read like a rich mosaic of all the political groups and ideologies which the dictator saw as grave threats to the stability of his regime.

The 1965 prisoners

The longest-serving political prisoners are the thirteen men held for alleged involvement in the October 1965 alleged coup attempt which brought Suharto to power and in which he has been implicated. Five of these men have been living under the shadow of death sentences since the late 1960s. The others are all serving life sentences which Suharto, vengeful to the end, refused to change to fixed-term sentences that would have enabled their release.



Many pleas have been made on behalf of these men on humanitarian grounds. They are all elderly, frail and suffering from physical or psychological disorders. In August 1996, Amnesty International published a list of fourteen names in a report entitled: *The 1965 Prisoners: How Many More Will Die in Jail?* It recorded the recent death of one 1965 prisoner. Since then, Sukatno, who was described as seriously ill has also died.

Habibie, like Suharto, has closed his ears to these pleas. Justice Minister Muladi who, until his appointment, was a member of the National Human Rights Commission, also cannot bring himself to release these men and has specifically excluded them from any amnesties he says the government is contemplating. The anti-communist phobia still runs deep, proof if any were needed that not much has changed. As Habibie said, 'all political prisoners will eventually be released unless they are Marxists or Communists'. [*Jakarta Post,* 28 May]

Party or union prisoners

A number of the people incarcerated by Suharto had had the temerity to defy his corporatist system and set up independent parties or unions. On 26 May, two high-profile prisoners were released to great media attention. They were: **Sri-Bintang Pamungkas,** chair of PUDI, the Indonesian Democratic Unity Party, and **Muchtar Pakpahan,** chair of SBSI, the Indonesian Prosperity Labour Union. Both were already serving sentences under earlier convictions and were being tried on new charges, but were granted amnesties. A few days later, **Nuku Suleiman,** chair of the reform group PIJAR, and **Andi Syahputra** convicted for helping to print the newsletter of the independent journalists alliance, AJI, were released. Since then, the releases have stalled. [See separate article about East Timor releases.]

The twelve members of the People's Democratic Party, the PRD, or its affiliates who were put behind bars by Suharto on anti-subversion charges, have been branded as the reincarnation of the outlawed communist party. Their political programme was dedicated to the establishment of a multi-party political system which is what is now coming into being. Without massive pressure at home and abroad, their chances of release appear at present to be pretty slim.

continued on page 13

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Annual Rates (six issues)	UK	Europe & overseas (air only)
Individuals	£16.00	£16.00
Unwaged	£ 8.00	£ 8.00
Institutions	£22.00	£22.00

Girocheques and Eurocheques are welcome.
TAPOL's Giro account No. 56 781 4009

Please NO Australian, Canadian or US personal cheques to UK

Australian subscribers may pay in A$ to:
TAPOL (Australia)
PO Box 121, Clifton Hill, Vic 3068
Rates for Individuals A$40, Unwaged A$20, Institutions A$70

Dutch subscribers may pay in Dfl to:
S.L.Liem
Binnenkadijk 267, 1018 ZG Amsterdam
Postbank 4637291
Rate for Individuals Dfl48, Unwaged Dfl24, Institutions Dfl80
Kindly state the payment is for TAPOL subscription

Canadian and US subscribers may pay in C$ or US$ to:
TAPOL-Canada, c/o ETAN-Canada
PO Box 562, Station P, Toronto M5S 2T1
Rate for Individuals $35, Unwaged $18, Institutions $70

All other subscriptions and all correspondence to:
TAPOL, 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath,
Surrey CR7 8HW, England, Tel.: 0181 771 2904,
Fax: 0181 653 0322, email: tapol@gn.apc.org

PLEASE NOTE: DONATIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME