

Still Backing Dictators

KIDNAPPING OF political dissidents by Indonesia's military is not rare. But Pius Lustrilanang, 30, is the first survivor to describe his harrowing experience, defying threats that bearing witness would bring harm to him or his relatives. A democratic activist since his university days, Mr. Lustrilanang on Feb. 4 was forced at gunpoint into a car, blindfolded and taken to a prison (he never learned which one) where he was interrogated, tortured and held for two months.

Mr. Lustrilanang believes, without proof but based on persuasive evidence, that his captors belonged to Indonesia's armed services. Their commander in chief is President Suharto, Indonesia's autocratic ruler for more than three decades and a longtime U.S. favorite. President Clinton not long ago blamed the Cold War for past U.S. support of dictators who squelched "their own people's aspirations to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities." But the Cold War is over, Mr. Suharto is squelching harder than ever—and the United States is backing billions in aid to his regime.

The arguments for such aid aren't frivolous; nor is it only a matter of looking out for U.S. business interests, as some critics contend. Indonesia is in the middle of a dire economic crisis. Its currency has collapsed, businesses are going bankrupt and millions of people—in the world's fourth-most populous nation—are being driven into joblessness and poverty. Without foreign aid, administration officials fear, these people's plight will become even more desperate, and

their country could plunge into chaos. "The best protection against a political breakdown is the restoration of financial stability," says Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

But surely, the two things work together, that is, financial stability is also no longer possible without political reform. Indonesia's economic crisis is a political crisis, too, brought on in large part by corruption and cronyism among Mr. Suharto's closest aides and relatives. The president has granted no political voice to the millions who are bearing the brunt of the crisis—and who, in the long run, will have to repay the billions in additional debt that Mr. Suharto is now assuming, with U.S. help, on their behalf. Yet, given Indonesia's unresponsive government, there is little assurance that aid will benefit these people. "No one believes that economic stability can be restored without fundamental political change," an Indonesian alliance of nongovernmental groups declared last week.

A pro-democracy movement, led by university students, is gathering strength in Indonesia. Its outcome is highly uncertain, and its participants are taking grave risks, as Mr. Lustrilanang knows; several of his cellmates were released but have yet to reappear. "I am afraid they have been executed," he says. The United States should be making clear, publicly and privately, that it is on the side of this movement—that Mr. Suharto and his army should be assisting now in a peaceful transition to democracy. Only that can bring stability and economic health back to Indonesia.

For more information about East Timor, and to work to change U.S. policy to support East Timorese and Indonesian human and political rights, contact:

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Human Rights in Indonesia

Hearing conducted by the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, Committee on International Relations

United States House of Representatives

Representative Christopher H. Smith, Chairman

Washington, DC

May 7, 1998

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This is an unofficial compilation of the prepared statements presented at the hearing and some additional material, published by the East Timor Action Network. It is not an official transcript from the House of Representatives.

East Timor Action Network/U.S.

## Opening statement by Representative Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ)

Today's hearing is on human rights in Indonesia. I hope our witnesses will address three fundamental questions: First, is it true, as human rights advocates and our own State Department have suggested, that agents of the Government of Indonesia engage in torture, extrajudicial executions, and other gross violations of fundamental human rights? Second, is United States policy toward Indonesia helping or hurting the situation? Third, are the massive infusions of money from the International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions likely to help the people of Indonesia, or will they just further enrich and empower the governing class?

The U.S. State Department's Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 reported politically motivated extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment in Indonesia. The report notes that abuses have historically been particularly numerous in East Timor, Irian Jaya and Aceh, three areas in which there have been strong independence movements. The report notes that "there were few signs of judicial independence" – that the courts were used against political activists and government critics rather than to punish officials who unlawfully harm such people. There are severe restrictions on freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion.

Despite this dismal record, our government has made clear that the top priority in its relationship with Indonesia is trade and investment, not political reform or human rights protection. Even after the 1991 massacre in Dili, East Timor, in which security forces killed hundreds of peaceful mourners – including children in their school uniforms – in a Catholic cemetery, our government continued to lavish assistance,

including military assistance, on Jakarta. I was particularly shocked to learn recently that the United States has been providing combat training to Indonesian military units, including some of those involved in the Dili massacre. This appears to be a dramatic end run around the rules Congress carefully prescribed for military training and education of Indonesian forces, in an effort to ensure that we would not provide them with the means of carrying out further massacres. Year after year the Administration has assured Congress that the provision of "International Military Education and Training" to Indonesia is strictly limited to the so-called "expanded IMET" curriculum: classroom training in human rights and related subjects. We have also been assured that there is no way the Indonesian military could use any of this training against the people of East Timor or Irian Jaya, or against political or religious dissenters in Indonesia itself. To provide training in marksmanship, "psy ops" (psychological warfare), sniper training, and related subjects to some of the very units that have brutalized the people of East Timor is an obvious violation of this assurance.

This revelation is eerily reminiscent of a similar situation in Rwanda, where the United States has provided marksmanship, psy ops, and similar training to the Rwandan Patriotic Army through the JCET program during the very period in which the RPA appears to have been engaged in the mass killing of refugees across the border in Zaire. At a December 1996 hearing, I was assured that our assistance to the RPA consisted of what a Defense Department spokesman called the "kindler, gentler side" of military training, focused on respect for human rights. We found about the marksmanship or the psy ops until eight months later. The Administration has still not been able to determine whether any of the soldiers who took our marksmanship course subsequently participated in the killing of refugees.

In the last five years, U.S. Special Op-

continues to sell ABRI new weapons and spare parts, and to counsel them in strategy and tactics with the message that, as a one U.S. official put it to me "the U.S. is close to and loves the army." This message has devastating consequences for Indonesia's hopes for freedom, as described by witnesses at this hearing.

In one respect, the suspension of JCET is a great victory for it is certain to disconcert ABRI and Suharto as they see their Washington lifeline fray and as they see that grassroots forces have shown fast-increasing political clout.

Not least, it must be frightening to Gen. Wiranto, Gen. Prabowo and the other ABRI leaders as they realize that those who dealt them this defeat are – most of all – the very people whom they have been futilely attempting to "cut to pieces" (in the words of Gen. Feisal Tanjung, now Coordinating Minister for Political Affairs and Security) and consign to silence. Constância Pinto survived torture by the U.S.-trained KOPASSUS to tell his story to the U.S. Congress. Pius Lustrilanang did so just weeks after emerging from a secret torture center from which he was freed as the result of a pressure campaign by fellow activists. And tens of thousands of Indonesian students and workers, in the streets, put their stories on the world's front pages. This, inspiring and joining with international activism, is what has stopped the JCET training.

But this victory will be of little significance unless it is followed by further work that fully severs U.S. complicity with Suharto and the ABRI. At a minimum, Congress should oppose the IMF bailout of Suharto and end all U.S. weapons and spare parts sales and enact a ban on any other form of training or technical support that U.S. agencies might give ABRI.

And while ending Washington's shameful sponsorship of ABRI, Congress can begin to restore decency by endorsing a UN-sponsored referendum – a free election – for occupied East Timor

(as provided for in H.Con.Res. 258 by Representatives Lowey, Lantos [D, California], Smith, Porter [R, Illinois], and 32 cosponsors).

There is no need for the U.S. to "intervene" for freedom in Indonesia and Timor. It merely has to stop arming, training, and financing the dictator and the army that crush it.

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*Allan Nairn broke the story of JCET training for ABRI in a Nation magazine piece released March 11 ("Indonesia's Killers," published in the issue dated March 30, 1998). After holding a Jakarta press conference on the issue he was detained by ABRI police intelligence, interrogated, and deported from Indonesia (Nairn, with Amy Goodman of WBAI/Pacifica radio, was banned from Indonesia and occupied East Timor as a "threat to national security" after surviving and reporting the November 12, 1991 East Timor massacre). He is active in the East Timor Action Network (ETAN) and is currently organizing Justice for All, a grassroots group for human rights and economic justice.*

## Allan Nairn

*The day after the hearing the Pentagon suspended military training for Indonesia. This article describes this decision. It was not presented at the hearing.*

Yesterday (May 8), retreating under heavy political fire, the U.S. Department of Defense announced the indefinite suspension of its Joint Combined Exchange and Training (JCET) exercises for the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI).

This is a breakthrough victory for the pro-democracy movement – both in Indonesia and occupied East Timor and here in the United States. But it is not enough. The JCET training has not yet been formally terminated and banned, and the U.S. still arms, advises, finances, and politically comforts the ABRI. Washington, the ABRI's long-time patron, should now renounce this killer force. At a time when brave Indonesians and East Timorese are risking their lives to demand freedom, the U.S. should not be supporting in any form an institution devoted to suppressing them.

Until the JCET program was exposed and then brought down by grassroots activism, the U.S. military was training the ABRI – and its most notorious unit, KOPASSUS – in lethal tactics including “Advanced Sniper Techniques,” “Military Operations in Urban Terrain,” “Psychological Operations,” “Air Assault” and “Close Quarters Combat.” U.S. Green Berets, Marines, and Air Force commandos would fly into Indonesia fully armed and drill ABRI troops in exercises lasting two to six weeks. There were at least 41 such exercises between 1992 and 1997, and 20 more scheduled for 1998.

This training was in violation of an Executive Branch understanding with Congress, which had cut off IMET (International Military Education and Training) training aid to ABRI after the 1991 East Timor massacre, and which believed that ABRI was now only eli-

gible for limited, U.S.-based classroom instruction (called Expanded IMET) ostensibly stressing human rights.

When the JCET program was exposed in March (in an article in *The Nation* magazine and then in a Washington press conference by the East Timor Action Network and several Representatives), many in Congress reacted with outrage. Megawati Sukarno, the Indonesian pro-democracy leader, wrote immediately to President Clinton saying that “military training from the U.S. directly undermines the democratic movement in Indonesia.”

ETAN and Justice for All launched a U.S. campaign for a JCET cutoff. In April visits to over 150 Congressional offices we found widespread bipartisan support. Even longtime apologists for Suharto said they would not fight the proposal.

On May 6, Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) and 21 initial cosponsors introduced H.R.3802 to terminate ABRI's JCET training (the bill says that any country banned from receiving IMET is also ineligible for other forms of U.S. military training). On May 7, Rep. Chris Smith held this widely attended, heavily covered hearing. Although the Pentagon and State Department were invited to the hearing to defend the JCET program, they declined to appear. The next day, March 8, they announced the JCET suspension.

The suspension is clearly an effort to preempt an embarrassing JCET defeat in Congress and to help salvage the endangered \$14.5 billion IMF replenishment bill. The administration, under fire from some in Congress for bailing out a repressive regime, is now attempting to justify its continued financing of Suharto and his army by claiming that the JCET suspension adequately addresses human rights concerns.

The IMF money will help enable Suharto and his ABRI henchmen to stay in power. And it will free up funds that they can use to purchase lethal training elsewhere. At the same time, the U.S.

erations forces have conducted at least 41 training exercises with the Indonesian military, at a cost of more than three and a half million dollars to U.S. taxpayers. Based on the information provided to Congress so far, it appears that the trainees in most of those exercises were Indonesia's elite Kopassus special forces – the arm of the military accused of committing the gravest human rights violations against that regime's political opponents. The lethal skills taught during those exercises have included: close quarters combat, sniper skills, marksmanship, combat patrolling, small unit tactics, and military operations in urban terrain. Even before the U.S. training was publicly disclosed, those were exactly the skills identified by Amnesty International as “likely (to)... be used in the context of counter-insurgency operations which may lead to human rights violations” in Indonesia. Since this training has come to light, the Administration has emphasized the benefit to U.S. forces as the justification for those activities. But it is obvious that – in the words of the former Commanding General of the Pacific Special Operations Command – this special forces training also “improves the capability of...the host nation” and “demonstrates (the U.S. military's) commitment” to the Indonesian regime. We need a simple and transparent set of rules to govern all our military education programs. The first rule should be that the United States does not give any kind of military assistance whatever to governments that murder their own people.

Finally, the world needs to know what is happening to the billions and billions of dollars it is pouring into Indonesia in response to the ongoing economic crisis. It is no secret that the vast majority of these dollars are going into the coffers of the government itself and of large-scale economic enterprises that helped to create the crisis in the first place. Supporters of the IMF package for Indonesia argue that in return for the money, the government and the economic sys-

tem will reform themselves. They also argue that without a restoration of financial stability there will be no political reform and human rights will be at greater risk than ever. Skeptics argue that the brunt of the reforms in the IMF package – such as reductions in government subsidies for food and fuel – will fall on the poor. They fear that the bailout will enrich and empower the Indonesian government and the large-scale economic enterprises, many of them owned by members of the armed forces and/or the President's family, and that the end result will be more of the same kind of behavior that led to the economic problems. It seems even less likely that the IMF and World Bank assistance will lead to political reform, since the Bank and IMF themselves insist they cannot insist on political conditions – not even the protection of fundamental and internationally-recognized human rights – as a condition on loans or other assistance.

I am particularly happy that four of our five witnesses today are democracy and human rights advocates from Indonesia, East Timor, and Aceh. I hope that these witnesses, and also Dr. Stephanie Freed of the Environmental Defense Fund, will help us understand how the government of Indonesia really works, what levers we should be using to get the government to respect human rights, and whether current and proposed U.S. and international actions will be helpful or harmful. I had hoped that the Administration would send witnesses to the hearing, but they cited schedule conflicts. We have asked them to tell us exactly when their witnesses can come, and we will hold a second part of this hearing on whatever day they choose. Congress and the American people have a right to know what our government is doing in Indonesia and why. I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

## Pius Lustrilanang

### Secretary-General of ALDERA

Mr. Chairman, my name is Pius Lustrilanang and I am an active member of the pro-democracy movement in Indonesia.

I regard myself as fortunate to be able to testify in front of you: I was kidnapped, held for two months and released. Other victims held together with me have disappeared without trace. In my language we differentiate between 'hilang' and 'dihilangkan.' Both mean *disappear* but the second term, *dihilangkan* is the active form, the translation of which is: *made to disappear*.

I am fortunate that I do not belong to the category of those who were made to disappear. When I was taken to the place of detention which was also a torture centre on 2 February, one of the kidnappers told me: "There are no laws here and no human rights. You simply have to answer all our questions. And remember, some people come out of this place alive and some as corpses. If you want to stay alive, you better behave."

My release is the result of domestic and international pressure and also wide exposure in the press. I want to use this opportunity to thank all the human rights organisations, NGOs and individuals around the world that have campaigned for me and the other disappeared. My gratitude goes also to those governments that have made representations to the Indonesian government. My sincere gratitude to all the members of the press who have put disappearances on to the international agenda. I speak on behalf of many others including many of my close friends who are still held in detention.

Mr. Chairman, giving testimony like this is not without risk. It took me more than a week of consideration before I decided to go public. In fact, I'm the first Indonesian victim of disappearances to do so. We all received death threats, not only to ourselves but even worse to our next of kin and the other detainees. Our

abductors warned us if we tell our story it would have nasty consequences. I drew the conclusion that giving a full account of my two month disappearance was worth the risk. It also serves as protection for myself and my family. Exposing myself might also accelerate the release of the other detainees.

I was kidnapped while waiting for public transport in front of the General Hospital in Jakarta. Suddenly somebody with a pistol told me to get into a car. Three persons were sitting in the car. They immediately handcuffed and blindfolded me. We drove in the direction of Bogor and after approximately one hour's drive we arrived at the place where I was held for two months.

The prison compound was quite modern. In the section where I was held there were two rows of three cells, complete with a detector camera. In the two months I was held, I never saw my kidnappers. Either I was blindfolded or they were hooded. But from the people that delivered the food I was able to distinguish at least a dozen people.

The first three days were the worst. They gave me electric shocks, kicked and hit me all over my body. I was put in a tub of water and my head was pushed down over and over again. I thought I would never survive. I was in the hands of professionals, they did everything as part of a routine.

The main thrust of the interrogation was about my activities as coordinator of SIAGA, a loose coalition to support Megawati and Amien Rais, the two main opposition figures. What was the strategy of SIAGA, who else participated in the preparation of actions and so on. It became obvious to me that the kidnappers were safeguarding President Suharto's re-election in March. All stumbling blocks, people like me had to be removed. The ones that were detained with me had the same background. This period was one of the worst periods in the history of the Suharto regime. Hundreds of arrests took place, at least a dozen others were kidnapped like me and

Foundation where I worked as a human rights lawyer for 7 years, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch/Asia).

The refugees are caught in a cycle of daily humiliation and violence. Because of institutionalized state violence and repressive counter-insurgency measures against the supporters of the independence movement, Aceh Merdeka, many Acehnese flee by boat to Malaysia, without official passports or immigration papers. In Malaysia, they are not granted refugee status but put in detention camps, or hunted down by police as illegal aliens. In Indonesia, they are branded as "terrorists" or GPK Aceh Merdeka, and tortured, disappeared or executed extra-judicially. Worst of all, they are not able to leave Malaysia legally, because they do not even have passports.

2. We strongly recommend the formation of an international human rights team, under the auspices of the UN, to conduct an independent investigation of the political situation in Aceh, and the inhuman treatment of refugees in Malaysia. Acehnese should not be forced to return to Aceh where it is certain that they will be killed, tortured or persecuted by the Indonesian military, until such time that fundamental changes occur and Acehnese can live in their own land free of fear (most importantly, that the status of Aceh as a "Special Region for Military Operations" is ended).

3. We strongly urge the U.S. government to grant political asylum to the Acehnese in the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, and to those who are seeking asylum here in the U.S. – who will most definitely be the targets of political repression, if not execution, if they are sent home. Based on the background I have provided, I wish to make a strong plea to members of the U.S. Congress to recognize political refugee status of Acehnese fleeing Indonesia and grant them asylum status.

4. Put pressure on the United Nations and other international human rights commissions to form an investigative

team and open a UNHCR office in Aceh to focus specially on monitoring human rights violations in this region.

5. Bring the Malaysian government to an international court of justice and make it publicly accountable for its illegal actions against refugees resulting in the death of 24 Acehnese and violating international human rights laws.

Thank you very much for your time and patience.

## Jafar Siddiq Hamzah

### *Acehnese human rights lawyer*

Soeharto, after being in power for 32 years, now finds himself in a very difficult political situation. Even though he continues to control political power in his hands in a real sense, in the past few months the strength of the opposition forces that want to bring an end to his authoritarian rule has grown immensely. I feel certain and I have strong hope that in the next few months, Soeharto will be increasingly marginalized, if not overthrown through a "people power" revolution altogether.

A historical analysis of Soeharto's 32-year rule reveals that he is a political figure who reacts violently to criticism and to challenges against his authority. He is not one to reform his policies in response to criticism. On the contrary, Soeharto and the New Order regime respond to internal and international criticism not only in a defensive manner, but through overt military violence – on a psychological level, the most pernicious form of intimidation of civilians to bow to military force. The bloody events in history that occurred during his rule are too numerous to enumerate, among them:

- ♦ the tragedy of 1965, in which about 1 million suspected communists were mercilessly executed, imprisoned and persecuted;
- ♦ the Malari student riots in 1974
- ♦ Tanjung Priok
- ♦ East Timor
- ♦ Aceh
- ♦ Warsidi Lampung
- ♦ the mysterious killings known as Petrus from 1982-83; and several other cases.

Members of the government and Armed Forces who are responsible for these atrocities and who ought to have been put to trial for their crimes not only continue to stay power, but through Soeharto's support have entrenched

themselves in their crony positions even deeper and do not feel accountable to anyone.

I wish to present a few facts about the political violence in Aceh, in North Sumatra, where I come from. In the past few months, the Malaysian government, in close collaboration with the Indonesian government, undertook a forced repatriation policy of thousands of Acehnese who are victims of political persecution, but who were never granted political refugee status in Malaysia.

In the past few weeks, as a consequence of the forced repatriation policy, 24 Acehnese people were killed by Malaysian police. In addition 27 of them were executed extra-judicially after arriving in Aceh. 545 or more other political refugees who were forcibly repatriated are being held in Rancong, Aceh, a Kopassus Special Forces Military Camp known as a torture site.

On April 10, thirty-five Acehnese sought political asylum in different foreign embassies in Malaysia, including eight going to the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, the other to the Swiss, French and Brunei embassies. Fourteen others to the U.N High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuala Lumpur.

With regard to the violent forcible repatriation of Acehnese undertaken by the Malaysian and Indonesian governments working together, I wish to make the following recommendations to the U.S. Congress and the international community:

1. The thousands of Acehnese in Malaysia who are being forcibly repatriated are not illegal immigrants, but political refugees who fled Aceh because of the extremely repressive socio-political situation very similar to that of East Timor and West Papua. Aceh continues to be a Special Region for Military Operations. Since 1989, during the intensification of military counter-insurgency, thousands of civilians have been killed (these human rights violations are very well documented by international organizations, including the Indonesian Legal Aid

an extra 35,000 troops were detached in the capital Jakarta. Holding a peaceful protest in the streets of Jakarta became a virtual impossibility.

I do not possess definite proof about the identification of my kidnappers. I do not believe they were part of an organized crime gang or any of the pro-government political groupings. Everything was far too professional. Sometimes I was able to communicate with the other detainees to compare our experiences. All evidence suggests that we were in the hands of the armed forces. Every afternoon around 3:00 I heard a trumpet, for roll-call. The clearest evidence was on the day of my release on the morning of 3 April. One of the officers revealed that he was an AKABRI (armed forces academy) graduate. He was the one who gave me a final dose of electric shock before my release. A token of remembrance, he said.

The top of ABRI (the Indonesian armed forces) categorically deny their involvement in kidnappings. Commander in Chief and concurrently Minister of Defense General Wiranto and local territorial commanders have said this in public. Police officers do not wear hoods during interrogation. From deducing the facts there is a high probability of the involvement of a special unit within ABRI. I want to remind this subcommittee that in the Indonesian political system, the Head of State is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

I have made a full report in front of the Indonesian National Commission of Human Rights. The Indonesian government is in a particularly weak position. A deep economic crisis goes hand in hand with a growing political crisis. A crisis of legitimacy is also evident. Although it may sound paradoxical, this weakened government has become more vicious and brutal towards voices of dissent. Increased international pressure is paramount. My release is a shining proof that international pressure on the Indonesian authorities can improve the human rights situation.

In these last few days the government has announced that they will set up two fact finding teams. One of the teams has to find out whether members of the security forces are involved in the kidnappings. I welcome this announcement, another proof of positive result due to pressure. But I have to say at the same time that we have bad experiences with government fact finding teams. After the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili, East Timor in November 1991, also due to strong international pressure, similar fact finding teams were established. The results were more than disappointing. No independent inquiry has yet been made and only a few low-ranking officers received minor sentences as sacrificial lambs.

Mr. Chairman and honourable members of the House, I also want to use this opportunity to raise the matter of impunity. President Suharto is by far the longest serving ruler in Asia. In the more than three decades of his rule, fundamental freedoms have suffered greatly. The human rights situation in Indonesia is fundamentally flawed. The annual Human Rights Report of your State Department has over the years recorded most of these violations. The perpetrators of those violations are publicly known. In most cases they are members of the security forces. The tragedy in Priok more than a decade ago, the killings in Lampung and Aceh and the tragic events on 27 July 1996 have occurred without the perpetrators being held accountable. The international community together with the growing democratic forces have to find ways to prevent senseless killings like this and to make sure that perpetrators will appear in court to give an account for their acts.

We also have to use internationally available instruments like the structures of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. It is urgent for your government to press for the sending of special teams to Jakarta. I can mention here the UN Working Group on Arbitrary

Detentions, which is going to visit East Timor anyhow in the coming months. Also the UN Working Group on Disappearances and the Special Rapporteur on Torture are important to investigate the present situation. In cooperation with local human rights organisations, I'm confident, we can improve the situation.

Mr. Chairman, Despite the traumatic experiences of my two months in captivity, I feel very optimistic. The winds of change are blowing in Indonesia. I sincerely hope that our mutual efforts will prevent repetition of what happened to me.

## Aryati

*Pseudonym for an Indonesian human rights activist/researcher*

I come to speak to you with some trepidation. Indonesia is not a free country where one can express criticisms of the government without worry about the possible consequences upon ones safety. I have no guarantees of protection: I am not a prominent leader of a mass organization, nor a member of the elite who has high connections. I am an Indonesian from a middle class background who is scared about telling you my honest opinions.

I take this risk because I feel compelled to. I am one of the youths of my country who will have to bear, for many years into the future, the burden of what mistakes and crimes the government is committing today. I take this risk also in the hope that the U.S. government, so long a staunch and powerful supporter of Suharto's militarism, will reform itself and do something to ensure that Indonesia has a government that respects and guarantees basic civil liberties.

### Military

To understand the Suharto government you have to understand the Indonesian military. We have been living under an institutionalized martial law regime for the past thirty three years. It is

no ordinary military. It has an official "dual function": external defense and internal policing. Imagine for a moment that the U.S. military had overthrown the U.S. government by staging a coup and orchestrating the slaughter of about 500,000 people. Imagine the military then set up headquarters in each state, each county, each city and each town. Imagine that it placed one third to one half of the U.S. military's troops in these headquarters. Imagine that there were no laws governing their actions nor any legislative oversight. Imagine further that the civilian administration was constantly monitored and controlled by the military and that many of the civilian administrators were themselves military officers. If you can imagine this scenario then you have a pretty good idea of how the Indonesian military operates. It is ubiquitous, all-pervasive, and beyond the law.

When the U.S. military speaks about training Indonesian military officers to respect human rights, we can only laugh. The structure of the Indonesian military places it as an all-powerful institution and the laws of our country allow it complete freedom to do what it wills. A few courses in good behavior are not going to alter a very oppressive system of military rule. Besides, we are not even certain that the U.S. military is sincere in claiming that it is providing such training.

The U.S. Congress should feel no qualms about cutting off JCET training if it is thinking about our benefit. Once the JCET training became public knowledge, the Pentagon claimed that it was meant only for the benefit of U.S. soldiers who were given the opportunity to see how another military operates. So, by the Pentagon's own admission, the training was not designed to help the Indonesian military acquire less brutish habits.

Let me explain how the government instills in us a culture of fear and robs us of our basic civil rights. In response to the student protests sweeping the coun-

genital organs was electrocuted. What happened to me and Domingos was incomparable to what happened to Henrique Belmiro, another friend. On the day Belmiro was arrested his finger and toenails were pulled out with pliers during the interrogation. All of these atrocities were committed by the KOPASSUS.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to express in this forum my disappointment with the training of KOPASSUS carried out by U.S. Army and Air Force units in Indonesia under the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) program. The United States should stop all types of military support to a military that is loyal to a dictator that for 33 years has continuously committed gross human rights violations in defiance of the Universal Declaration of the United Nations. Training Indonesian KOPASSUS is just like training Saddam Hussein's troops.

Not to speak of the suffering enduring by the Timorese women. Often the Timorese women were raped in front of their husbands, boyfriends, friends, and families. There are thousands of Timorese women who were subjected to forced sterilization through the implementation of the Indonesian family planning program (KB). According to Miranda Sissons, a graduate student from Yale University, almost all injections of contraceptives were covertly given to women under the guise of vaccinations. Many Timorese women believed that these injections could permanently sterilize them.

Mr. Chairman, today, the Indonesian army has turned its attention on East Timorese youth. Today, the Indonesian army does not view the danger as coming from a handful of the guerrilla fighters in the jungle but the youth in the cities. All peaceful actions and freedom of speech and assembly are considered politically dangerous. Thus, peaceful actions encounter military repression.

One of the prominent examples of the repression against peaceful actions was

the Santa Cruz massacre which occurred in 1991 where more than 271 people were gunned down in cold blood. Those who were wounded were taken into hospitals and later some of their heads were smashed with rocks and others were injected with lethal injection. More than a hundred people were killed this way. Until today, there has not been an independent investigation of the massacre. Those who were responsible for the massacre were sentenced to six months. The organizers of the peaceful actions were sentenced to nine years to life imprisonment, such as in the case of Grigorio Saldanha who was sentenced to life imprisonment. Such repression forced hundreds of young Timorese to leave their homeland. From 1995 to this day more than 200 young Timorese have successfully escaped to Portugal, leaving their families back home. Hundreds more are enduring constant persecution.

Mr. Chairman, to conclude, I would like to reiterate that human rights violations such as torture, rape, persecution, arbitrary disappearances, executions and imprisonment in East Timor have become the daily bread of the East Timorese people.

The Timorese want just one thing; that is that our right to self-determination be recognized. Let us freely choose whatever we want to be. Be it an independent state, integration into Indonesia, or an association with another country. To achieve this, the role of the United States is vital.

## Constâncio Pinto

*Representative of the East Timorese  
Resistance to the U.S. and U.N.*

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the US Congress, ladies and gentlemen, first of all allow me to express my profound gratitude to this prestigious body in allowing me to address before you problems of violations of human rights that my people and my country have endured for almost 23 years under Indonesian illegal and brutal occupation.

My name is Constâncio Pinto. I am Timorese. I was born and raised in East Timor.

East Timor is a small country. Its size is relatively equal to the size of the state of Massachusetts. The population of the territory is 850,000 people. For more than four hundred years, East Timor was under Portuguese colonial rule. East Timor economically is self-sufficient. It has oil, natural gas and agricultural goods. As a colonized people, the East Timorese have aspired to individual freedom and liberty the same as the people of this great country have aspired to them centuries ago during the British colonization. Thus, in 1975 the East Timorese decided to declare independence from Portugal. However, because of greed and power, the independence of the small nation of East Timor could not survive.

On December 7, 1975 Indonesia launched a bloody invasion of East Timor. The invasion was an act of aggression and violated international law and the United Nations resolution 1415 (XV) which strongly observed the right to self-determination of every people under colonial rule.

The invasion of East Timor was comparable to the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein armed forces and slaughtered hundreds of unarmed civilians. I was 12 years old at the time when Indonesia invaded East Timor. In East Timor more than 60,000 civilians of different ethnic groups (Timorese, Chi-

nese, Portuguese, and Australian) and different ages (including children and old men and women) were killed. They were killed inside their houses, they were dropped into the ocean and they were dropped alive from helicopters. I survived the massacre and escaped into the jungle with my parents. In the jungle we faced tremendous suffering, mass slaughter and starvation perpetrated by the Indonesian army. As result of the direct invasion and the illegal occupation of East Timor over 200,000 people have died. They died of mass slaughter, starvation and torture in jail. As many other young Timorese, my life has been affected by the Indonesian invasion.

In 1991, at the age of 28 years old, I was arrested by the Indonesian police and intelligence and I was tortured from 9 o'clock in the morning until 1 o'clock in the morning of the next day. The torture was immeasurable. They kicked my stomach and my knees with boots, they punched my head and pointed the gun at my head and threatened to kill me and all of my family. The intensity of torture was beyond human understanding. Even though they saw I was bleeding everywhere from my nose, my mouth and my ears, they still tortured me. At one point, two of the Indonesian special forces, the KOPASSUS, threatened to throw me alive into the sea. This method of torture is one among many systematic methods of torture carried out by the Indonesian special forces, KOPASSUS. This unit is one of the worst Indonesian armed forces in East Timor. They are the ones that tortured me and continue to do so to other Timorese.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to share with you other related stories that happened to two of my friends Domingos Seixas and Henrique Belmiro. Domingos Seixas was sentenced to 12 years in prison. On the day when he was arrested he was dropped into the ocean with his neck tied up into a heavy rock. For some reason, the rock slipped away and Domingos survived the attempted drowning. Domingos was taken to prison where his

try, the government has decided to intimidate the students by resorting to the tactic of 'disappearances.' According to the leading legal aid organization in Indonesia (Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia), fifty persons have disappeared over the past three months. One student activist who disappeared is Andi Arief. Military personnel kidnapped him from his home, in full view of his family, on March 28. The top generals of our country not only denied that the military had kidnapped him, they joked to the press that he had simply disappeared of his accord. For three weeks, his family, his friends, and his fellow students worried themselves to the point of exhaustion. Knowing how the military operates, they were concerned for his very survival. On April 22, he turned up in the Jakarta central police station. The police had no arrest warrant and no explanation for how he got there. Andi Arief told his lawyers that he had been kidnapped by the special forces, Kopassus, held for three weeks of interrogation, and then dumped at the police station.

One must note that the military did not break the law by kidnapping these fifty activists because none of the laws of our country apply to the military. Thus, Andi Arief's parents can not sue Kopassus for arresting their son without a warrant and holding him in detention without a habeas corpus. This is precisely what makes ordinary citizens so terrified of the military: it is unpredictable and unaccountable.

It has been said that one can judge a government by its prisons. Well then, let us look at Indonesian prisons. There we will find people whose only crime was to criticize the government. Sri Bintang Pamungkas, the leader of an independent political party, criticized the government. He is now in Cipinang prison in Jakarta on charges of subversion. Accompanying him in that prison are 12 members of the banned People's Democratic Party (PRD) convicted of thought crimes. In the language of the prosecu-

tors, they "deviated from the state ideology."

There are presently at least 25 political prisoners in Indonesia's prisons, some are in their teens, some in their seventies. Just in the past three months, 250 people have been arrested on political crimes – such heinous crimes as holding peaceful meetings and holding peaceful demonstrations. We have a government that has a pathological fear of any public assembly that it does not control and any public leader who does not grovel before our president. Every single independent political party and trade union has been systematically destroyed by the government. In regions where there has been serious organized resistance – Irian Jaya, Aceh, occupied East Timor – it has not has been satisfied with arrests. It has resorted to massacres. You can guess what type of society we have. We are a people who are terrified of expressing our own opinions and terrified of getting involved in politics. Politics for us is a spectator sport – and a cruel sport it is. We are daily bombarded by the statements of officials who are barely literate, barely articulate. When faced with public criticism, they speak of 'crushing,' 'smashing,' and 'hacking.' They treat the youth of our country, who are sincerely and peacefully attempting to change society, as though they were foreign agents bent on subversion. We are not citizens of a state; we are subjects of a modern, militarized sultanate.

It is obvious today that Suharto's reign is coming to a miserable end. A necessary condition for democracy in Indonesia is the ending of Suharto's presidency. But it is not a sufficient condition. The military, with its dual function, is prepared to continue Suhartoism without Suharto. What I mean is that the sources of the systematic human rights abuses we see today are not going to vanish with the demise of the Suharto presidency. For genuine democracy to exist in Indonesia, our laws will have to be changed to embody basic principles of human rights and the military will

have to be confined to the barracks and put under civilian oversight.

### Economics

For the past 33 years we have been told that martial law was necessary for our material benefit. The religion of the government, its legitimating ideology, has been economic development, what is called in Indonesian, *pembangunan*. But what do we have to show for thirty years of development? Two hundred families have fat Swiss bank accounts while millions of people have had their land expropriated. A few timber contractors and palm oil companies have accumulated fortunes while chopping and burning down most of the rain forest. Thirty years of development has meant the victimization of many Indonesians. And we have not heard their laments because there is no freedom to criticize what the state calls its 'development program.'

Thirty plus years of development under martial law has meant the accumulation of an enormous debt. For thirty years, the United States, Japan and Europe provided billions of dollars annually as foreign aid to the Suharto regime. The U.S. government, since Suharto took power in 1965 by ordering the massacre of thousands of people, has consistently maintained that his regime provides stability and security. Every single U.S. president since Nixon, including the present incumbent, has, to their shame, celebrated the Suharto regime for its economic accomplishments and political stability. In effect, the U.S. government has said that the Indonesian people were best kept under the thumb of a sultanate and that democracy was opposed to our best interests. U.S. academics and retired Foreign Service personnel, such as those at the U.S.-Indonesia Society here in Washington, have been saying that Indonesians would just have to sacrifice their political freedoms for economic growth. The economic crisis of the past nine months has put an end to these cynical propositions.

Now, after suffering so that develop-

ment could proceed, what is the prospect of the Indonesian people under the IMF bailout? In short, we are now expected to suffer even more to pay off a debt that we did not incur. Thanks to the Suharto regime's deal with the IMF, all Indonesians have been put into debt bondage. Our labor and resources are supposed to be devoted to paying off the debt for the next generation. Meanwhile, those 200 families who contracted the debt have enough money in their own personal accounts to pay it off many times over. Is it possible to deny that this current economic austerity plan by the IMF is a gross injustice? The Indonesian people never approved of accepting all those loans. We weren't even allowed to know what the government's economic policy was for all those years. Not even our farcical showcase parliament was given authority over economic policy, nor is it given any authority now. But the IMF is telling us that we have to share the debt burden equally. While it is apparently acceptable to the IMF that political power is monopolized, it absolutely insists that the debt be democratically distributed. Those governments that have loaned money to the Suharto regime and its crony capitalists for the past thirty years are now supporting the IMF's agreement. Thus, they appear to us like heroin pushers who, after keeping an addict hooked for years and driving him ever deeper in debt, throw him back on his family when he is near collapse, telling them that they have to foot the bill for his rehabilitation and for all his past debts.

Please do not believe that you are doing us any favors by authorizing money for the IMF loans to Indonesia. We need democracy to settle our economic problems but that is not a word you will find in the agreement between Suharto and the IMF. The IMF, with the blessing of the Clinton administration, is hoping to engineer an economic recovery under the conditions of institutionalized martial law. This is, I assure you, an impossible dream. Protests against the Suharto re-

gime have by now reached the point of no return. The Indonesian people, now that they have had the opportunity to express their long suppressed grievances against this regime, are not going to be satisfied until it falls. Democracy is a rare commodity these days but it is no less vital to us than rice.

It is paradoxical that the IMF is willing to dictate terms to Suharto when it comes to managing the economy but not when it comes to fundamental economic rights, such as the right of workers to organize. The IMF refuses to insist that, as a condition for receiving the loans, the government recognize workers rights. It calls that meddling in the internal affairs of Indonesia – when it already controls the government's economic policy. If the IMF's agreement meddled in such a way as to allow the Indonesian people to have a greater voice over economic policy then perhaps the U.S. Congress should support it. But, as it stands, the agreement is a worthless piece of paper signed by a collapsing dictator.

The IMF money is not going to benefit us. As you know, much of the money will be simply transferred as debt payments to foreign banks that made risky loans to the Indonesian government and Indonesian enterprises. These payments are supposed to restore "investor confidence" but one has to wonder what kind of investors believe in being rewarded for bad decisions. It is astonishing that the foreign banks that made risky loans to a corrupt and unstable economic system want to be repaid in full for their bad decisions, and by the Indonesian people.

Look at the tragic conditions Indonesia is now in after thirty years of U.S.-supported stability and development. Indonesia has an abundance of fertile land yet we are now begging other countries to give us supplies of our staple food: rice. The Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that Indonesia needs to be given 2,000,000 tons of rice for the 7.5 million Indonesians who will require "food assistance" within the next year. There is a famine in eastern Indonesia

now. We, living in other parts of the country, hardly hear anything about it and what we do hear are government whitewashes. We have been told by the Suharto regime and the U.S. government to exchange our political freedoms for economic prosperity. We have wound up with neither.

### Recommendations

As U.S. Congressmen, you must realize that the only force that the military appears to feel accountable to is the U.S. government. You greatly determine whether the Indonesian government receives economic aid from the IMF and political legitimacy in international fora such as the United Nations. I can assure you that the Suharto regime, feeling entirely unaccountable to the Indonesian people, does feel beholden to the U.S. government. It panics on seeing any sign of displeasure with it here in Washington.

I urge you to listen to more people than just Indonesian government officials and retired State Department officials. Since the government has not allowed opposition political leaders or parties to exist, it may seem difficult to know to whom one should listen. I suggest that you listen to those who have had the determination to sacrifice for their beliefs and the bravery to risk military violence to assert what they believe to be the truth. You should listen to people such as Sri Bintang Pamungkas who has demanded the international community refrain from loaning money and giving military aid to Indonesia until a democratic regime can be established. You should especially listen to the youth, such as Pius Lustrilanang, who have no interests other than those of the nation.

In conclusion, I recommend that:

- 1) The U.S. military not assist the Indonesian military. The U.S. government should restrict itself to civilian relations with the Suharto regime.
- 2) The U.S. Congress should not authorize money for the IMF to be loaned to the Suharto regime.