

indirectly, against the government. In pushing back the bounds of official tolerance, the Indonesian press, despite government attempts to curb it, encourages public debate on issues such as economic policies, political developments, judicial independence, transparency, corruption and even the activities of the President's family.

The Indonesian National Human Rights Commission continues to prove its independence from government with its thorough investigations into prominent human rights cases, such as the Liquica killings, the Marsinah affair, and the Jakarta riots. It has also opened its first regional office in East Timor and initiated a programme for instructing the military in respect for human rights.

In summary, there is still a great need to resolve the fundamental structural problems that remain at the root of human rights abuses in Indonesia. The military maintains an oppressive presence throughout the country and generally behaves with little regard for human rights and with impunity in dealing with perceived threats to national security. The legal system remains subject to political interference and the political system has no true democratic accountability. The government is rife with corruption at all levels. The slow, gradual improvement in the human rights situation is attributable to the considerable domestic and international pressure. This pressure will likely increase both domestically as a result of improved economic prospects and higher education levels, and internationally as Indonesia seeks to play a more important role commensurate with its economic and political weight.

### CANADIAN POSITION

Canada has been one of the most active and vocal countries in criticizing Indonesia's human rights behaviour especially concerning East Timor. Human rights continue to be discussed at high level meetings between President Soeharto and Prime Minister Chrétien (January 1996), Ministers of Foreign Affairs Alatas and Axworthy (July 1996) and Foreign Minister Alatas and Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) Chan (November 1996). As well, the Canadian Embassy remains active in pursuing Canadian concerns in meetings with senior Indonesian officials and non-governmental organizations.

The development cooperation programme is an important instrument in furthering Canada's human rights objectives as it addresses fundamental social, environmental and economic issues facing Indonesia. CIDA, through its bilateral and partnership channels, cooperates with local organizations that promote human rights in areas such as women's rights, child labour, access to legal reforms, human rights training and religious tolerance. Projects are aimed at strengthening community groups and NGOs, improving governance, and broadening participation in decision making and in the allocation of resources and benefits. Canada has one of the largest aid programmes in East Timor, dedicating \$500,000 from the Embassy-administered Canada Fund for Local Initiatives.

The visit of then Canadian Human Rights Commissioner Max Yalden in April 1995 and the subsequent visit of three Indonesian Commissioners to Canada resulted in the two national Human Rights Commissions participating in a CIDA-funded programme of cooperation. Canada is the only country with such links to Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission.