

ABRI and its paramilitaries, however, remain an oppressive presence in East Timor. Clashes continue between ABRI and Falantil, and there have been credible reports of arbitrary arrest, detention and torture by the military. Recently, ABRI announced plans to arm more paramilitaries, some of which are implicated in recent killings around Suai. Both sides have committed human rights abuses, particularly, according to reliable reports, in fighting around Alas in November. There are recurring allegations that ABRI massacred large numbers of civilians at Alas, but independent sources, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, have denied the reports.

Radhika Coomaraswamy, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, who visited the territory in late November 1998, was troubled by evidence that rape had been used as a weapon of interrogation and torture, and gained a promise of compensation for rape victims from the military commander in the territory.

Various factors have contributed to continued heightened social and political tensions in East Timor: the widespread ABRI presence in East Timor, the further proliferation of paramilitary groups, the conflict between migrants from other parts of Indonesia and East Timorese, and the rising expectations and growing radicalization of Timorese youth. Bishop Belo and Foreign Minister Alatas have launched separate community reconciliation processes.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada believes that the current situation provides a promising opportunity to reach an inclusive, peaceful political solution for East Timor, through the UN-sponsored talks between Portugal and Indonesia. We believe that the East Timorese should be involved in the UN process and, thereby, have a say in determining their own future. Canada continues to call for the full release of all East Timorese political prisoners, including Xanana Gusmao. Canada has contributed financially to the last three rounds of the All Inclusive Intra-East Timorese Dialogue (AIETD).

Canada regularly registers its concerns regarding East Timor with the Indonesian government. Minister of Foreign Affairs Axworthy raised Canadian concerns with the Indonesian FM Alatas at ASEAN and APEC meetings during 1998. In October, Mr. Axworthy discussed East Timor with the Portuguese, and, accompanied by Secretary of State Chan, with East Timorese spokesperson, José Ramos-Horta. During his October 1998 visit to Jakarta, Mr. Chan met with the imprisoned East Timorese leader, Xanana Gusmao.

A Canadian Embassy mission, led by the Ambassador, visited East Timor from December 13-17, 1998, and enjoyed unusually good access to individuals on both sides. The mission met members of the National Committee of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), Bishop Belo, the Governor, the Military and Police Commanders, NGO activists and many others in and outside of government.

In East Timor, Canada is the third largest donor (\$1.1 million annually). Canadian assistance is delivered through NGOs and targeted at grassroots organizations in the areas of agriculture, education and training, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, and womens' programmes. Canada believes that it is through cooperation at the grass roots level that Canada can best promote democratic values in East Timor. In line with this, CIDA and DFAIT are examining possible capacity- and peacebuilding projects in East Timor.