

**TIMOR-LESTE  
EAST TIMOR**

news

SUBJECT MEMO No. 7/88

Subject Plenary Session of the UN Special Commission on Decononisation

Sources Portuguese press  
Comissão para os Direitos do Povo Maubere (CDPM)  
The group "Peace is Possible in East Timor"  
Nationalist Convergence delegation

Summary

On 12 August 1988 the UN Special Commission on Decolonisation, meeting in New York, discussed the question of East Timor. 21 petitioners and delegates from Portugal, Indonesia and Guinea Bissau (the latter on behalf of the five Portuguese-speaking African countries -Angola, Mozambique, Cabo Verde, São Tome & Principe and Guinea Bissau) intervened on the subject.

Background

- a. The Special Commission on Decolonisation meeting in New York dealt with the East Timor issue on 12 August.
- b. The Commission is the UN's main body responsible for following the progress made towards the self-determination and independence of peoples subjected to colonial rule.
  - (1) At the start of each year the Chairperson of the Commission consults the other members as well as interested parties, and submits recommendations to the Commission as to work priorities and methods. The Commission then decides which issues should be considered directly in the plenary session and those to be considered by its subsidiary bodies.
  - (2) The UN Secretary General draws up background information documents, (based on data gathered from the administrating powers, press and other sources) covering recent events affecting the political, constitutional, economic, social, and educational situation in each of the territories to be dealt with by the Commission. Member countries take part in the Commission's work on the territories they administrate and supply the latest information.
 

(Those requiring the text of the background document on East Timor may send their request to East Timor News)
  - (3) The governments of states which are not Commission members may, if they wish, be invited to speak

GRADA PROVISORNA  
PROVISORNA ADRESA

Rua Pinheiro Magas, 77-29Esq.  
1000 Lisboa  
Portugal

TELEFONE PROVISORIO  
PROVISORIAL PH. NUMBER

374718  
541308

TELEX PROVISORIO  
PROVISORIAL TELEGRAM

before the Commission on any agenda item.

- (4) The Commission examines a certain number of communications, addressed to it by individuals or organisations, concerning the different territories.
- (5) On the basis of the views of its members the Commission draws conclusions and formulates recommendations on the territories, which are then submitted to the General Assembly. Similarly, recommendations are submitted to the Security Council, specialist institutions and other interested organisations.
- (6) The current composition of the Commission is as follows:

Afghanistan	Indonesia
Australia	Irak
Bulgaria	Iran
Checkoslovakia	Yugoslavia
Chile	Mali
China	Sierra Leone
Congo	Syria
Ivory Coast	Tanzania
Cuba	Trinidad & Tobago
Denmark	Tunisia
Ethiopia	USSR
Fiji	Venezuela
India	

- (7) Every year the General Assembly examines the Commission's report and recommendations, on which the Assembly's decision-making on decolonisation is based.
- c. For several years now the question of East Timor has been debated at the Decolonisation Commission. In fact East Timor was on the list of territories being dealt with by the Commission even before 1975, the year in which Portugal's other colonies (Angola, Guinea Bissau, Cabo Verde, Sao Tome & Principe, Mozambique) became independent.
  - d. This year the East Timor question was taken up by the following:

Petitioners

Andrews Wells, Hobart East Timor Committee  
Diana Quick, Parliamentarians for East Timor  
Alexander George, Wolfson College  
Kozaburo Yamada, House of Councillors of Japan  
Jonathan Head, TAPOL  
Sidney Jones, Amnesty International  
Kiyoko Furusawa, Free East Timor Japan Coalition  
Michael Robert, Association de Solidarité avec Timor-Oriental  
Francisco Lucas Pires, Portuguese Euro-MP  
Carlos Encarnação, Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, and member of the Parliamentary Commission on East Timor

Elaine Brière, Comité de Travail Canada-Asie  
 Aryeh Neier, Asia Watch  
 Sottomayor Cardia, Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, and  
 member of the Parliamentary Commission on East Timor  
 Liem Soei Liong, Komitee Indonesia  
 António Pinto Pereira, CDPM  
 Roque Rodrigues, FRETILIN  
 Moisés Amaral, UDT  
 Martin Enda, researcher on East Timor  
 Ana Nunes, Christian group "Peace is Possible in East Timor"  
 Patalísio Finau, Bishop of Tonga, and representing the Pacific  
 Conference of Churches  
 Klemens Ludwig, "Pour les Peuples menacés"

Country delegates

Rui Quartin Santos, Portugal  
 Lopes Cabral, Guinea Bissau on behalf of the 5 former Portuguese  
 colonies in Africa  
 Agus Tarmidzi, Indonesia

(Those wishing details of these statements may send their  
 request to East Timor News).

2. Comments

- a. The interventions throughout the Session were of a good qualitative level, and the coordination of effort among the 21 petitioners - a number only previously reached in 1986 - was in evidence.
- b. There was a noticeable change in the quality of the Portuguese intervention. It did not limit itself to a merely formal and defensive position, but reaffirmed its commitment to the right to self-determination and search for a fair solution for the East Timorese people. It listed the support the East Timor question had gained throughout the year.
- c. The intervention of Guinea Bissau, speaking on behalf of Angola, Mozambique, Cabo Verde, São Tomé & Príncipe, was important in so far as it preceded the celebration of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit by a few weeks (these countries being members).
- d. Indonesia's colonialist practices in East Timor were quite evident at this Session.
- e. It is known that one of Indonesia's aims is to get East Timor taken off the Decolonisation Commission's list of territories. The fact that this debate made a significant impact prevents any such attempts.
- f. The following are the main conclusions reached in a meeting held on 13th August, attended by the majority of the petitioners:

- (1) This year, the difficulty in receiving information from the interior was felt to an even greater extent due to a worsening in East Timor's internal problems. In the meantime, FRETILIN and UDT are increasing their efforts to improve communication channels.
- (2) It was felt politically important to get PET\* launched in different countries. The need to create a permanent secretariat able to receive and distribute information was also felt.
- (3) The aim for next year should be to get more parliamentarians, from different countries, to take part as petitioners, and to get the discussion on East Timor prolonged for further days.

ooOoo

\*PET = Parliamentarians for East Timor