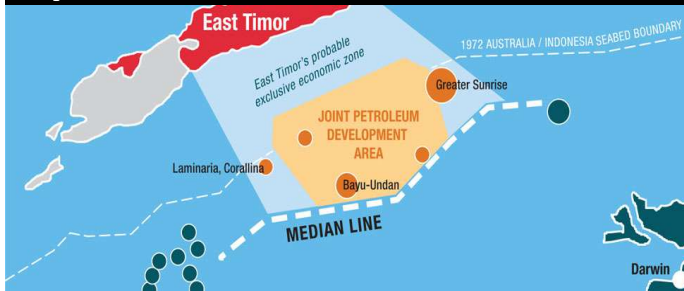




AETFA

April 2014

No. 31



### WE GET TIMOR LESTE'S OIL, OUR NEIGHBOURS GET OUR ASYLUM SEEKERS - sounds fair doesn't it?!

Prime Minister Tony Abbott is so concerned about "protecting OUR borders" that he won't let Timor Leste have theirs. Our maritime border extends two thirds the way to Timor and we have the largest maritime acreage of any country in the world. Our treatment of asylum seekers in Australia, on the high seas and in the overseas detention centres (prisons) is appalling. It's no wonder our neighbours consider Australia to be greedy. We are also regarded as bullies in the region by poor, small countries such as Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Nauru and other Pacific Island States, not to mention West Papua.

The Timor Sea Justice Campaign (based in Melbourne) – and supported by AETFA SA - is up and running again. They have started an online Open Letter to PM Tony Abbott, which can be signed by connecting with the TSJC website:

<http://www.timorseajustice.com/TSJC/action-updates>

### Stop Spying On Timor, Court Tells

#### Australia

By Tom Clarke 5 March 2014

<https://newmatilda.com/2014/03/05/stop-spying-timor-court-tells-australia>

*In a world first, the International Court of Justice has ordered Australia to stop spying on East Timor, writes the Timor Sea Justice Campaign's Tom Clarke*

Yesterday, the ICJ delivered a provisional decision in a case that East Timor brought against Australia, following dramatic ASIO raids that occurred late last year on the Canberra offices of Timor's lawyers. The lawyers had been preparing for a significant legal proceeding challenging an oil and gas treaty when ASIO seized the legal team's documents and the passport of a key witness.

Concerned that this would give Australia an unfair advantage in the case, East Timor launched an injunction-like legal action to have the documents handed back or given to the ICJ for safe keeping.

The ICJ has accepted assurances from Australia's Attorney-General, George Brandis, that he has made undertakings to ensure no one will read the seized files until the court has made a final decision on the legality of the raids and whether the documents will need to be returned.

However, the ICJ also delivered a clear, binding legal order for Australia not to use national security as an alibi for conducting commercial espionage and insisted that Australia cease inferring with East Timor's communications with its lawyers. *(Continued page 2)*

### Global day of action for Papuan political prisoners. Police violence against protestors in Jayapura.

From Free West Papua Campaign newsletter April 2014



*Demonstrators outside the Indonesian embassy in London*

On 2nd April people around the world demonstrated in solidarity with over 70 political prisoners currently being held in West Papua. Demonstrations took place in Jayapura, London, Melbourne, Brisbane, Wellington, Auckland, the Hague and Edinburgh. *(Continued page 2)*

AUSTRALIA EAST TIMOR FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION SA INC

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING/PUBLIC MEETING

Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> April

2pm AGM; 3pm Public Meeting

at FILEF Centre 15 Lowe St Adelaide (side entrance)  
Public Meeting Speakers: **Dr Michael Sullivan** on oil and Timor Sea justice issues; and

A **Representative** from the Timor SA Student Group on development issues in Timor Leste

Refreshments provided

EDITOR: Bob Hanney ([bohan@bluebottle.com](mailto:bohan@bluebottle.com)). Assisted by AETFA committee members and friends.

Except where explicitly stated, news, commentary and discussion are provided for educational and informational purposes and do not represent the official position of the AETFA Committee.

**Global Day of Action for W Papua** (cont. from p.1)

The demonstrations were a huge success, giving hope to the prisoners, reminding them that they have not been forgotten and sending a clear message to the Indonesian government that the world condones the imprisonment of so many people just for standing up for their right to freedom.

People across the world wore placards representing [76 political prisoners](#) currently behind bars. The demonstrators had tape over their mouths to represent the denial of freedom of speech in Papua and wrists handcuffed together. Banners called for the release of the prisoners and highlighted the fact that political arrests in Papua had doubled from 2012 to 2013. The visual impact of the demonstrations received press coverage in New Zealand, Australia, across the Pacific and crucially in Indonesia itself.

A large demonstration took to the streets of Jayapura (the capital of West Papua) in a further show of solidarity.

**The demonstration began peacefully but was violently dispersed by large numbers of armed police who taunted the crowd by calling them ‘monkeys’ before firing shots.**

Two protesters, Alvares Kapisa and Yally Wenda, were arrested and badly beaten with one of them requiring stitches. The Indonesian police meting out exactly the sort of treatment the demonstrators were peacefully protesting against. The two have since been released.

The following message was received from prisoners in Abepura prison in response to the global demonstrations of solidarity today:

**“We have been imprisoned because of our peaceful actions in the struggle to have the Papua nation’s sovereignty returned that was annexed into Indonesia in the 1960s.**

**We are extremely grateful to all who continue to support us in international solidarity especially your actions this day to uphold truth, justice, democracy and human rights.**

**Your support in solidarity in any form helps us so much to make reality the hopes of our ancestors for our people to finally be free and independent.”**

Ian Okoka, a Melbourne-based Papuan independence activist, said: *“Papuan are losing their right to freely express themselves and many have fled to the jungle for fear of being put in jail.*

*Papuans who are seeking independence for Papua through peaceful means are facing threats of arrest and violent intimidation by security forces. Often those arrested, are charged with treason or incitement which can carry lengthy prison sentences.”*

According to updates published by the [Papuans Behind Bars](#) monitoring collective, political prisoners in West Papua are frequently tortured and forced to confess. Most are beaten and they are often subject to cruel and degrading

treatment such as having their heads shaved, being forced to beat one another, and being denied food and medical treatment.

Severe restrictions on international organizations and foreign media working in West Papua mean that many abuses take place in secret and independent reporting is almost impossible. This is a serious concern in a territory that is reported to host one of the highest concentrations of security forces in the world.

Both Peter Tatchell and Benny Wenda spoke powerfully at the London demonstration.

Benny spoke about his experiences of being in held in terrible conditions in prison in West Papua before he escaped to exile in the UK. He told how he got messages of support from around the world in his prison cell and the international attention he received gave him hope and forced the guards to move him from a cell full of excrement to better conditions and remove his handcuffs. On behalf of all the people of West Papua he thanked everyone who took to the streets to show solidarity with and give hope to the prisoners in West Papua.

**Stop Spying On Timor** (continued from page 1)

This is a wake up call for Australia. The highest legal authority in the world has warned that you can't send in the spooks in order to short-change your neighbours in your commercial dealings.

While this particular case is merely a sideshow to the main attraction — Timor’s challenge to the CMATS treaty, covering the Greater Sunrise gas field, worth an estimated \$40 billion — it does once again highlight Australia’s selective approach to recognising the ICJ’s authority. Australia’s acceptance of the independent umpire’s decision on this matter is in stark contrast to our refusal to accept the same umpire’s decision on the positioning of permanent maritime boundaries between Australia and East Timor. Australia was willing to send an elite legal team of QCs, barristers and solicitors to defend itself in what is essentially a squabble about whether these documents seized by ASIO are in sealed envelopes or not. However, when it comes to the problem at the core of this entire episode — the absence of permanent maritime boundaries between Australia and East Timor — Australia will not even consider showing up to court.

Just months before East Timor became independent in 2002, Australia withdrew its recognition of the maritime boundary jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal on the Laws of the Sea.

This means East Timor has no legal avenue in which to challenge Australia’s stubborn refusal to establish permanent maritime boundaries. Instead, in order to benefit from its own oil and gas resources, it has had to resort to a series of temporary deals with Australia that short-change East Timor out of billions of dollars.

Turning your back on the independent umpire as Australia has done isn’t the act of a country that is confident of its own legal position. It’s the act of a bully.

It doesn't matter how many times former Foreign Minister Alexander Downer is wheeled out to peddle antiquated arguments about "prolonged continental shelves" or myths about "unravelling boundaries with Indonesia", the perennial question remains: if Australia is so confident of its legal position, why does it refuse to consider having an independent body, such as the ICJ, arbitrate the dispute? Agreeing to independent arbitration, in case an amicable solution continues to prove elusive, would demonstrate that both parties are acting in good faith and are willing to play by the rules. East Timor has made this commitment. Australia has not.

International law overwhelmingly favours median line boundaries in situations such as this, when coastlines are less than 400 nautical miles apart. That simply means drawing a line half way between the two coastlines, meaning if a field is closer to Timor it would belong to Timor and if it was closer to Australia it would be ours.

In 2004, when Australia and New Zealand established a maritime boundary to resolve overlapping claims off Norfolk Island, Australia agreed to a median line boundary. This is yet another example of Australia's selectiveness when it comes to adhering to international law. Evidently, adhering to the rules is easier when billions of dollars in government revenue from oil and gas resources are not at stake.

The CMATS treaty splits government revenue from the \$40 billion Greater Sunrise gas field 50/50. At first glance this may sound fair. However, if permanent maritime boundaries were established in accordance with current international law, East Timor's probable exclusive economic zone would encompass all of the Greater Sunrise field as well as all of the joint development area it already gives Australia a share of.

When allegations surfaced that Australia had bugged the Timorese cabinet room during negotiations over CMATS, Timor saw its chance to revisit this unfair deal.

A former high ranking Australian spy came forward with evidence of espionage for economic gain after he learnt that former Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, after leaving parliament, had gone on to perform paid consulting work for Woodside Petroleum — the company currently with the rights to develop Greater Sunrise.

It's these matters that are covered in the more significant legal proceeding underway in the Court of Arbitration at The Hague. The question is: did Australia gain an unfair advantage during negotiations over CMATS through the dirty tactics of spying? If so, the CMATS treaty that so dramatically short-changes East Timor out of billions of dollars can be torn up.

Unfortunately, this game of legal snakes and ladders would see us back at square one — East Timor wanting permanent and equitable maritime boundaries and the Australian Government refusing and also shunning the independent umpire.

What will break the deadlock? History tells us that when enough Australians take note and get active, we can change our Government's policy towards East Timor. The Australian public is once again required to demonstrate to our Government that we believe East Timor deserves a fair go in the Timor Sea.

## Vanuatu calls for action from UN on West Papua situation

5 March 2014

Radio New Zealand International

**The Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Moana Carcasses had called for international action on West Papua at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.**

Mr Carcasses outlined the human rights challenges that have affected people of West Papua since 1969 and said roughly 10 percent of the indigenous population have been killed by Indonesian security forces since 1963.

He says that between October 2011 and March 2013, 25 Papuans were murdered but nothing has been done to bring the perpetrators to justice.

*"Why are we not discussing it in this Council, why are we turning a blind eye to them and closing our ears to the lone voices of the Papuan people, many of whom have shed innocent blood because they want justice and freedom."*

Moana Carcasses urged the Council to consider adopting a resolution to establish a country mandate on the situation in West Papua, which would include an investigation of alleged human rights violations, and provide recommendations on a peaceful political solution.

## MOVEMENT AGAINST THE OCCUPATION OF THE TIMOR SEA



*Protest at Australian embassy in Dili, Timor-Leste, December 5, 2013.*

### Press Release

For many years, Australia has been stealing the oil and gas from the Timor Sea, in an area which belongs to Timor-Leste under international legal principles. Sadly, Australia has shown its manner and its greed to make our small and poor country in this region lose our resources and sovereignty.

After it became aware of the oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea, Australia supported Indonesia for more than two decades as it committed genocide against the people of this land, stealing and using its strong economic and political power to trample us, making themselves rich by leaving us in poverty.

A few days ago, the Australian government used its intelligence service to seize documents from Timor-Leste's lawyer in the CMATS (Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea) arbitration case, and to put pressure on a "whistleblower" so that he could not testify. These are not the practices of a nation which values democracy, freedom and morality. In addition, Australia's leaders showed their disrespect for the Timor-Leste people – a small, poor people who generously helped Australia during the Second World War against Japan, at the cost of 40,000 Timorese people's lives.

Today, the Movement Against the Occupation of the Timor Sea asks the Government of Australia to:

1. Stop stealing and occupying the Timor Sea, but show your good will as a large nation which follows democratic principles to accept a maritime boundary which follows international law principles.
2. Australia should set an example as a sovereign nation which respects and recognizes the rights of Timor-Leste's people.
3. Australia should not promote or continue neocolonialism against Timor-Leste's people, who have suffered this for centuries. We will no longer be your slaves.
4. The Abbott government should apologize to the Maubere people, who have been hugely discriminated against by Australia from the past to the present. If not, we will continue to demonstrate at the Australian Embassy for the indefinite future.

This concludes our press release, and thank you for your attention.

The struggle continues.

Dili 5 December 2013

Juvinal Dias

Representative, Movement Against the Occupation of the Timor Sea

Contact number (+670) 77348703/77126417

## Brandis moves to protect what Australia knew of Indonesian war crimes

*Philip Dorling*  
*The Sydney Morning Herald*

*January 27, 2014*  
*smh.com.au*

Federal Attorney-General George Brandis has moved to block the release of secret archives that would reveal the Australian government's knowledge of Indonesian war crimes in East Timor.

Senator Brandis has issued a public interest certificate that will prevent Associate Professor Clinton Fernandes of the University of NSW from being present at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal on Tuesday. It is the day the government will argue that Justice Duncan Kerr should reject Dr Fernandes' application for access to Australian diplomatic papers and intelligence on Indonesian military operations in East Timor more than 32 years ago.

Consequently, Dr Fernandes will be unable to read, hear or directly challenge the government's arguments for continuing secrecy.

In the latest round in a six-year bureaucratic and legal struggle to secure declassification of records relating to Indonesia's invasion and occupation of East Timor, Dr Fernandes is seeking full access to two Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade files that contain reports about a major military offensive across the island in late 1981 and early 1982.

Known as the "fence of legs", the Indonesian military operation involved more than 60,000 conscripted East Timorese civilians being forced to form human chains that moved across large areas of land with the military following behind them to flush out pro-independence guerillas from their hiding places.

The operation ended with a massacre of several hundred East Timorese civilians. The use of civilians as human shields is also a war crime.

The documents sought by Dr Fernandes include records of discussions between Australian diplomats in Jakarta and a senior officer of Indonesia's state intelligence co-ordination agency – then known as Bakin – as well as Australian diplomatic cables and intelligence reports, and assessments by Australia's intelligence agency the Office of National Assessments (ONA).

The Defence Department has previously acknowledged that the Defence Signals Directorate, now the Australian Signals Directorate, closely monitored radio communications of the Indonesian military in East Timor.

However, the National Archives of Australia has argued that release of some information sought by Dr Fernandes would be contrary to Australia's agreements with the United States for the protection of classified information.

The National Archives also says disclosure of other documents would "reveal information about Australia's intelligence sources, methods, operations and capabilities, including the nature and extent of the intelligence Australia collects from foreign countries".

Last Thursday Senator Brandis certified that disclosure of a confidential affidavit by ONA deputy director-general Jim Hagan and any related evidence presented to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal would be contrary to the public interest because it would "prejudice the security, defence or international relations of Australia".

In a covering letter to Dr Fernandes, Senator Brandis acknowledged that "where a certificate is issued it presents certain challenges to a party that is not allowed access to the certified information".

Dr Fernandes said the Attorney-General "should have provided a better explanation for this unnecessary secrecy, which serves only to prevent the public's understanding of Australia's international relations. After 32 years the only people who have anything to fear are officials who knew of major atrocities and covered them up."

Former prime minister Malcolm Fraser has told Fairfax Media that he would like to see the declassification of all the records of his government that relate to East Timor. He wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ian Watt, late last year but was told the issue was a matter for the director-general of the National Archives, David Fricker. Mr Fricker is a former deputy director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

Justice Kerr will begin hearing the matter in Canberra on Tuesday.

*This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/brandis-moves-to-protect-what-australia-knew-of-indonesian-war-crimes-20140127-31igo.html>*

## We Live In Terror, Mr Abbott

By **Selpius Bobii** 23 Oct 2013

Tony Abbott has never experienced the brutal oppression that West Papuans are forced to live under - and his misguided comments will endanger lives, writes imprisoned Papuan leader Selpius Bobii

**“People seeking to grandstand against Indonesia, please, don't look to do it in Australia, you are not welcome ... The situation in West Papua is getting better, not worse.”**

These are the words of Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on 7 October.

Tony Abbott is wrong, and his words are extremely hurtful to the people of Papua. The situation for the Indigenous population of Papua is getting progressively *worse*, not better. Even Lukas Enembe, the governor of Papua, has stated that the province is experiencing a decline in key areas such as health, education and the economy.

Enembe also acknowledges the well known fact that Papuans are an increasing minority in their own land. Space for even some minimal semblance of democracy in Papua has been absolutely closed and the state of Indonesia continues to commit atrocities against the Indigenous people. For instance, Alpius Mote, aged 17 years, was shot dead by the Indonesian Special Police Unit BRIMOB on 23 September in Waghete, West Papua, after a number of locals voiced their objections to the arbitrary arrest and targeting of males with long beards and hair.

Then there's the brutal military operations that have been continuing relentlessly for months in Puncak Jaya and also in Paniai to pursue those suspected of being part of the TPN/OPM. These operations have only led to the deaths of innocent civilians, such as 12-year-old Arlince Tabuni, who was shot dead on 1 July in the village of Popumo, Lani Jaya. Lately there has also been an escalation in the level of intimidation and terrorisation of Indigenous people, and even more so of Papuan activists.

The bodies of seven more civilians were recently found — including a four-year-old and 11-year-old child — after their vehicle left Sarmi for the city of Sentani near Jayapura but never arrived. All seven bodies were found in their upturned vehicle. It is believed they had been abducted and it was reported that they were killed by what has become a common term now in Papua, "unknown assailants".

In order to hide the tyranny in Papua, the Republic of Indonesia has denied access to both international journalists

and international human rights workers. Ever since Indonesia annexed Papua on 1 May 1963, it has been isolated and closed to these international groups. Indigenous Papuans, forced to live in this state of terror, are also isolated from the reach of the outside world. The violence and upheaval in their lives makes life in Indonesia for Papuans a living hell.

The Australian Prime Minister has never experienced the brutal oppression that Indigenous Papuans are forced to live under; nor has he seen first hand the real-life conditions that Indigenous Papuans suffer.

There have been constant reports of brutality and severe oppression for 50 years from Papua — would it not be right for Australia, the current Chair of the United Nations Security Council, together with its other members, to organise for a UN Special Representative to carry out an investigation into the alleged human rights violations and the political status of West Papua?

The Prime Minister of Vanuatu formally requested a UN investigation as part of his historic speech at the recent 68th session of the annual debate of the UN General Assembly in New York on 28 September.

The people of Papua can only assume that Tony Abbott's words, “The situation in West Papua is getting better, not worse”, are the result of the influence of propaganda and provocation by the Indonesian government during his visit to Jakarta on 30 September and to Bali for attend the APEC summit in early October.

Of late, Indonesia has lifted its level of propaganda towards the international community and in particular key leaders around the world — of which the Australian Prime Minister is one — in their efforts to undermine any possibility of sympathy towards the problems of Papua. To achieve that end Indonesia has employed no small amount of resources and staff.

Of course Papuans totally appreciate the importance of the relationship between the governments of Australia and Indonesia. Furthermore, Papuans truly understand that Tony Abbott's attitude towards Papua must be one of caution, in order to protect bilateral relations.

However, as a member of the UN, and chair of the Security Council, Australia has both a legal and moral obligation to uphold and respect human rights around the world and particularly in those regions of serious concern, such as Papua. Australia cannot avoid its responsibilities to protect and respect the dignity of humanity where freedoms and the very right to life are threatened. Indigenous Papuans are heading towards the annihilation of their race due to a slow genocide.

The Australian government has been on the frontline recently in regards to the matter of Papua. On 24 September, seven Indigenous Papuans who landed as refugees at Boigu Island in the Torres Strait (including one woman who was pregnant and a 10 year-old-child) were transferred to Horn Island. After being interviewed by authorities they were given no choice of staying in Australia and were forced to choose between being sent back to Indonesia or going to PNG. They very swiftly departed to PNG.

Then, on 5 October, three young Papuan men scaled the wall of the Australian Consulate in Bali and entered the compound so as to seek Australia's help. They then also sought refuge for themselves, despite the risk they would face from Indonesia if they were denied. In the early hours

of that same morning before 7am, the three had already been told to leave the compound with the threat that the police would be called.

In being forced to leave the compound after pleading for help for Papua, of course they were terrified for their safety! Their actions could have led to torture or to a "disappearance" at the hands of the Indonesian armed forces. The Australian Senator Richard Di Natale immediately called on the Australian Government to request they be given protection but received no response. The nation of Papua finds the actions of the Australian Consulate in Bali absolutely unacceptable.

Abbott subsequently stated that the Australian government will suppress any activism in Australia that opposes Indonesia in support of West Papua. He was immediately criticised by Vanuatu's first and former prime minister, Ati George Sokomanu, who demanded he explain his statement to the leaders of the Pacific. Sokomanu stressed that while immigration issues could be dealt with by the courts, Australia must be prepared to discuss questions of human rights.

The Australian and international communities who are concerned about the suffering of Indigenous Papuans are closely following the political direction of Abbott's cabinet. Will Australia continue to permit Indonesia's armed forces to commit heinous acts against the Indigenous people of Papua?

*Selpius Bobii is a West Papuan political prisoner and well-known longterm non-violent activist in the Papuan struggle. In 2006 he was arrested by Indonesian authorities for involvement in organising a demonstration against the massive Freeport McMoRan gold and copper mine. After his release he was again imprisoned in October 2011 for his role in organising the Third Papuan National Congress.*

## West Papuan human rights tragedy mocked by new Australian PM

by Kristian Lasslett AlJazeera 6 October 2013

Tony Abbott's attack is the latest episode in a long tradition of Australian complicity in Indonesian state terror.

Barely two weeks into office and Australia's prime minister, Tony Abbott, has committed his government to upholding an appeasement policy that has seen Australia entangled in some of the worst human rights abuses imaginable in the neighbouring region of West Papua, where a struggle for independence has been waged for over four decades.

The Abbott government's intentions, in this respect, were loudly signalled following the arrival of seven West Papuan refugees in the Torres Strait Islands last week. The asylum seekers told Australian government officials they feared persecution at the hands of the Indonesian authorities after supporting a Freedom Flotilla, which had set sail for their province.

The West Papuan group were allegedly informed that they would be flown to the Australian mainland. Instead, the asylum seekers were shuttled off to Papua New Guinea (PNG) -

which became standard practice under the ousted Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd - and cut adrift in the capital, Port Moresby.

### Precarious fate awaits

Their fate in PNG will be a precarious one. A large community of displaced West Papuans currently reside on abandoned drainage lands in Port Moresby, where floods and water-borne diseases are constant threats. The community was dumped on the land by the PNG government after their homes in the eight-mile district were bulldozed to make way for a new property development.

Yet far from displaying a hint of sympathy for the West Papuan seven and the bleak fate awaiting them, Prime Minister Abbott celebrated his government's actions at a press conference this week in Jakarta: **"We are fair dinkum about doing what we can to help Indonesia in every way and you might be aware of the fact that there were some people who turned up in the Torres Strait last week wanting to grandstand about issues in Papua. Well, very swiftly ... they went back to PNG."**

"Grandstanding", "issues", if ever apologetic words have been uttered in defence of systematic persecution these are it. Indeed, following West Papua's forced annexation to Indonesia in the 1960s, its native Melanesian population has faced a sustained campaign of state violence.

According to criminologist Elizabeth Stanley, **Indonesian "security forces have killed as many as 200,000 Papuans since 1963 .... Terror has been made routine rather than exceptional"**. Stanley explains, "Papuan people have been systematically ill-treated, arbitrarily detained, raped and tortured. These violations, undertaken under the rubric of countering subversive or terrorist forces, have been dovetailed with all kinds of social controls. Indonesian officials have placed restrictions on group gatherings, imposed curfews, forcibly displaced populations, conducted house and mail searches, monitored cultural events, and refused 'outsider' access to the regions".

Condemning or combatting these actions are not on the current Australian government's agenda. Abbott argues, "We want to do everything we reasonably can to demonstrate to the [Indonesian] government and the people of Indonesia that we respect Indonesia's sovereignty". Woe betide the West Papuan people then.

Abbott continues, "We want to work with Indonesia to ensure that Indonesia is strong in the years ahead because Indonesia is a future global leader and we want to be its trusted partner on this journey."

So there you have it, partnership with the Indonesian state trumps the defence of a persecuted ethnic group. Sadly this is something of a bipartisan tradition among Australia's two biggest political politics.

### Labor's complicity in Indonesian state crime

Earlier this year, before the Australian Labor Party (ALP) lost office, the Foreign Minister, Bob Carr, staged an incredible attack on West Papuan supporters during a senate estimates hearing.

"The people who fly Papuan flags and the people who talk the language of secession and independence. They are planting in the minds of people who actually live in the place the notion that this campaign has some kind of international resonance," Carr opined. He added, "that is a cruel deceit by self-indulgent people safe in their own beds, safe in a democracy. It is a cruel deceit about the potential of a demand for secessionism. Australia and the world recognise Indonesian sovereignty over West Papua."

In a salute to Australia's colonial era, Carr evokes the image of a docile native people whipped into a frenzy by mischievous outsiders. Nothing could be further from the truth - West Papuans are more than capable of articulating and driving a struggle for civil and political freedom. Of equal absurdity is the suggestion that those who express solidarity with West Papuans somehow bear responsibility for the province's parlous human rights situation. That 'distinction' lies with the Indonesian security forces, their political masters and foreign benefactors.

Though we shouldn't be surprised by Carr's political position, after all it was the former ALP Prime Minister, Paul Keating, who proudly eulogised Indonesia's former ruler, General Soeharto, a man who helped engineer two epic bloodbaths in 1965 and 1975 respectively. In *The Age* Keating remarked, "Soeharto, by his judgement, goodwill and good sense, had the greatest positive impact on Australia's strategic environment and, hence, on its history." The accolades do not stop there, "Soeharto took a nation of 120 million people, racked by political turmoil and poverty, from near disintegration to the orderly, ordered and prosperous state that it is today."

Ever the moral compass Keating assured us, "The descriptions of Soeharto as a brutal dictator living a corrupt high life at the expense of his people and running an expansionist military regime are untrue. Even Soeharto's annexation of [East] Timor was not expansionist. It had everything to do with national security and nothing to do with territory."

Of course this is what one might expect a government figurehead to say, given Australia's deep military, economic and diplomatic ties with the Soeharto regime. Allan Behm, who once served as head of the Australian Defence Department's International Policy and Strategy Division, observes:

*"By the mid-70s, Australia and Indonesia had established a substantial and diverse defence cooperation program. During the subsequent decade, the defence cooperation program funded the transfer of some 23 ex-RAAF Sabre fighters and seven Attack-class patrol boats to Indonesia, and some tentative links between the Special Forces of the two countries that were largely confined to unit-level visit exchanges, long range patrol training, and some special training in counter-terrorist and counter-hijack skills."*

## 'Silent genocide'

The actions of the Australian government have nothing to do with the interests of the Indonesian people. Indeed, the Australian state readily lent its military support to the Soeharto regime, which persecuted the Indonesian people for decades. The Abbott government's position on West Papua has everything to do with insular conceptions of the Australian national interest held by foreign policy makers in Canberra; conceptions that rarely get discussed or debated outside discrete policy circles, which have something of an echo chamber quality to them.

Compounding matters many Australians know little about the depth or breadth of the atrocities that have occurred, and are occurring, in West Papua, or their government's role in the suffering. **Indeed, the West Papuans call their plight "the silent genocide". But perhaps silence is too kind a word, it is the censored genocide.** Communications and movement in and out of West Papua are under constant surveillance by the Indonesian military. Consequently reporting on the atrocities is a notoriously dangerous task for journalists and activists alike.

So the silence continues, and sadly it is aided by major regional powers like Australia which once again stands complicit in one of the great crimes of our age.

**Kristian Lasslett is currently Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Ulster and a member of the [International State Crime Initiative's](#) Executive Board. He is editor of the [State Crime Testimony Project](#) and joint editor-in-chief of *State Crime*. His first book 'State Crime on the Margins of Empire' (Pluto Press) is forthcoming. Kristian is presently carrying out research on forced eviction, corruption and civil society in Papua New Guinea. The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect AlJazeera's editorial policy.**

## Timor journalists fight repressive new media laws

Lindsay Murdoch

Published: March 6, 2014

Jose Belo was shackled, hung upside down, electrocuted, beaten, burnt and jailed for three years in the mid-1990s because of his resistance to Indonesia's brutal occupation of East Timor.

Now the founder of a newspaper known for its hard-hitting investigative journalism and head of East Timor's journalists' union says he is prepared to go to jail again to fight what he sees as repressive new media laws before his now-independent country's parliament.

"The laws are dangerous. If they are passed I will oppose them and go to the jail. So too will other journalists here," he says.

"The laws give excessive powers to a state-funded media council with the power to impose criminal penalties that will be used to control journalists."

Thirty-eight years after six Australian-based journalists were killed while attempting to reveal Indonesia's secret invasion of East Timor, the proposed laws will bar foreign journalists unless they receive government approval to report in the country.

“Foreign correspondents who have played a key role in our struggle for independence will not be able to operate freely,” Belo says.

Benjamin Ismail, head of the Asia Pacific desk of Reporters Without Borders, says such provisions are unacceptable because they endanger freedom of information and media independence, which are needed for a country to function democratically.

“They constitute a dangerous first step towards censorship and the gagging of news media by leaving the door open to abuse of power by the government and officials,” he says. The laws include a restrictive definition of a journalist that would exclude freelance journalists, independent journalists and student journalists.

Only individuals employed by a recognised media outlet and who must have served at least six months as an intern in a media organisation will be allowed to work as a journalist. Critics of the laws say this will prevent “citizen journalism” in social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

While the proposed laws claim in a draft preamble to ensure freedom of the media, La’o Hamutuk, a prominent non-government organisation in Dili, says they will limit people’s freedom to receive and distribute information.

In a submission to a government committee reviewing the laws, La’o Hamutuk says they do not reflect East Timor’s history of media being used to inform and direct the struggle for liberation.

“Timor-Leste (East Timor) has already gone for more than a decade without a media law and we have not had problems with media and information,” La’o Hamutuk says. “During this time, Timorese people enjoyed their right to information and freedom of expression through various media, after nearly five hundred years of repression and censorship.” The government drafted the laws last year based loosely on media restrictions in Indonesia and Portugal, after state secretary for communications Nelio Isaac Sarmiento was quoted in the East Timor media as saying there should be consequences for those practicing journalism without proper accreditation.

“The media law and code of ethics will be used for sanctioning those who violate the law,” he was quoted as saying.

Toby Mendel, a Canadian running an organisation called the Centre for Law and Democracy who has studied East Timor’s media, says the government is trying to pass restrictive laws, including establishing a press council that is not independent.

“On the other hand, many media outlets are very unprofessional and yet the media is very divided and is unable to establish its own self-regulatory system,” he says. “The result is that the public are subjected to often unprofessional media behaviour and yet do not have any opportunity to make a complaint about this.”

Nobel laureate Jose Ramos-Horta, a former president and prime minister, opposes the laws.

“Let a thousand flowers blossom, let a million criticisms of political elites and businesses fly around [rather] than have a single journalist be harassed or imprisoned because of a tendentious law aiming at curbing freedom of press,” said Dr Ramos-Horta, who is now head of the United Nations mission in Guinea-Bissau.

Belo, 42, has often come under attack for crusading and investigative reporting in his *Tempo Semanal* newspaper but

has never backed away from a fight, including with powerful figures in Dili.

His exposes in 2009 landed former justice minister Lucia Lobato a five-year jail sentence for corruption.

“I will not give up on this. Nor will other journalists. It’s not about us. It’s about the future of our country,” he says.

*Fairfax Media has supported Tempo Semanal and East Timorese journalism through its workplace giving program More than Words.*

*This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/world/timor-journalists-fight-repressive-new-media-laws-20140305-hvga2.html>*

## INDONESIAN ELECTIONS

Results are starting to come in for Indonesia's Parliamentary Elections held on 9<sup>th</sup> April. Joko Widodo from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle is favoured to win the Presidential Elections on July 9<sup>th</sup> with help from smaller parties. (See the Fairfax report below)

However Prabowo Subianto, leader of the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra Party) also has a good chance of taking the Presidency. Prabowo was in charge of the infamous Kopassus special forces, and his gross human rights abuses in Timor Leste, West Papua and in Indonesia itself are legend. A former US Ambassador described Prabowo as “perhaps the greatest violator of human rights in contemporary times among the Indonesian military” (See his profile below)

The US-based **East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN)** have compiled an **Election Backgrounder** for the current elections, which profiles seven high-ranking military men, including Prabowo, and a former diplomat who has strongly defended the human rights abuses of the Military. They are all contesting the elections and one may win the Vice-Presidency. Visit:

<http://www.etan.org/news/2014/3candidates.htm> for the full analysis of Indonesian Democracy.

## Joko Widodo gets a presidential boost from early Indonesian parliamentary poll results

Michael Bachelard Indonesia

correspondent for Fairfax Media 10 April 2014

Indonesia's mind-bogglingly complex parliamentary election on Wednesday is likely to set the scene for the presidential hopes of the popular Jakarta governor, Joko "Jokowi" Widodo.

His clean image is tipped to win his party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, or PDI-P, which is presided over by political scion Megawati Sukarnoputri, up to 30 per cent of both the popular vote and the parliamentary seats. This is significantly more than any of the other 11 parties, and enough under Indonesia law to lay the groundwork for “Jokowi’s” presidential bid in July.

To nominate a president, a party must command 25 per cent of the popular vote (either singly, or in coalition with other parties), or 20 per cent of the parliamentary seats.

“The bull is back; it’s a bull market,” says a former Australian diplomat and long-term Indonesia watcher, referring to PDI-P’s logo of a black bull on a red background. After voting, Mr Joko exhorted his “fellow



countrymen and women” to “light up your spirit again, holding hands, to bring victory to PDI-P”.

“This is only the first stage and we will continue to the next one.”

PDI-P is one of a number secular-nationalist-protectionist parties in a country divided between them and Islamic statism. No other party is likely to reach the threshold alone. Golkar, the political vehicle of former autocrat Suharto, has a formidable machine at the village level and may get over the line, but it is weighed down by the unpopularity of its leader and presidential candidate, businessman Aburizal Bakrie, who is widely blamed for failing to compensate the victims of a mud volcano in eastern Indonesia caused by his company’s drilling program.

Mr Bakrie said after voting that Golkar was aiming for 22 to 23 per cent support.

Gerindra, the party formed to support the presidential ambitions of former military strongman Prabowo Subianto, hopes for 20 per cent but is likely to need to form a coalition with others. Mr Prabowo has proven himself an adept pragmatist, forging an alliance with his former bloody enemies in the Aceh independence parties, and he may well look to the fragmented and shrinking Islamic parties to boost Gerindra over the threshold.

The Democrat Party, formed to support the candidacy in 2004 of outgoing president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, is tipped to crash from 21 per cent of the vote at the 2009 election to anywhere between 5 and 10 per cent. It has been beset by corruption scandals in its inner sanctum, though Dr Yudhoyono ran hard as the anti-corruption president.

The other big losers will be the Islamic parties, whose high-water mark of 38 per cent of the vote in the 2004 election has been falling since, with the six Muslim parties expected to poll just 20 per cent of the vote between them in 2014. Wednesday’s election — the fourth genuinely democratic parliamentary election since Suharto was ousted in 1998 — does not just determine the make up of the two houses of the national parliament, it also picks the members of local and regional parliaments.

Indonesia’s 187 million potential voters chose on Wednesday between 235,637 candidates for 19,699 positions at 545,000 polling stations across three time zones.

Amalia Agus, who is in her 60s, said outside her South Jakarta booth that her primary concern was to elect “an honest parliament, unlike the current one”. Indonesia’s national parliament is one of the most corrupt institutions the country.

At the other end of the age range, Sulistiani, 18, is one of 14 million voting in her first election, but was equally concerned about corruption, which she says means “the people who are poor will become poorer”.

Sulistiani, the daughter of a rice-seller, and currently out of work herself, said her number one hope was that the new government deliver “better conditions for people, because Indonesia still has many poor people”.

## PRABOWO SUBIANTO - PROFILE



Prabowo spent much of his military career in Indonesia’s notorious [Kopassus special forces](#), becoming its commander from 1995-1998. He now leads the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya, Gerindra Party), which is largely funded by his millionaire brother. Prabowo had close ties to Suharto during the New Order (he married and has a son with Suharto’s daughter Titiek). He received military training in the U.S. The Washington Post reported in 1998 that his “ties to the U.S. military are the closest of any among the U.S.-trained officer corps.” Former U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Robert Gelbard described Prabowo as “somebody who is perhaps the greatest violator of human rights in contemporary times among the Indonesian military. His deeds in the late 1990s before democracy took hold, were shocking, even by TNI standards.”

Prabowo served several tours in Timor-Leste, where he “developed his reputation as the military’s most ruthless field commander” (Joseph Nevins, *A Not-So Distant Horror, Mass Violence in East Timor*, Cornell University Press, 2005: 61). Among other actions he was involved in the 1978 capture of Fretilin leader Nicolau Lobato, who was shot and killed while in custody. In the 1990s, he organized gangs of hooded killers known as “ninjas” and the Tim Alfa militia in Los Palos to terrorize and cow the population. Prabowo is also accused of being involved in the September 1983 Kraras massacre, where more than 300 people were killed by Indonesian soldiers, and several East Timorese have accused Prabowo of torturing them. Prabowo denies involvement. Release of Prabowo’s complete military records, including his and his troops locations on particular dates, would clarify his role.

In 1996, Prabowo led a team to secure the release of environmental researchers taken hostage by West Papuan guerrillas. He aborted a planned Red Cross supervised release of the hostages to prevent his sister-in-law from getting credit. According to Ed McWilliams, a former U.S. diplomat, “The aborted hostage transfer led to a brutal campaign of reprisal attacks by the Indonesian military (largely Kopassus) against highland villages.” This campaign began with an assault from “an Indonesian military helicopter disguised to look like the helicopter that ICRC mediators had been using” in violation of well-established international humanitarian law.

As the tumult associated with the East Asian economic crisis in 1997-98 threatened the political legitimacy of the

Suharto regime, Prabowo spearheaded campaigns to kidnap, arrest, intimidate and torture student activists. Protesting students at Trisakti University were killed and wounded by military snipers. Prabowo has acknowledged his role in the kidnappings, but has said his "conscience is clear." Convicted by a court of honor for "exceeding orders," Prabowo was forced to retire.

He is also accused of having a central role in sparking the May 14, 1998 anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta and other major urban areas. At the time, Prabowo was head of the Kostrad (the Army Strategic Reserve) based in the capital. In 2003, the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) accused Prabowo of responsibility "for gross human rights violations that occurred during the extensive rioting in Jakarta in 1998." The Komnas HAM report said that "security authorities at that time failed to curb the widespread riots that took place simultaneously." The spread of the riots was a result of a specific policy based on the "similar pattern at almost all places where the riots took place, which began with provocation, followed by an attack on civilians."

Shortly before Suharto resigned, Prabowo, backed by armed men, confronted the Army Chief of Staff Gen. Subagio at his home. The next morning Prabowo was removed as Kostrad commander. Later that day, B.J. Habibie succeeded Suharto as president, and Prabowo demanded command of the military. On May 22, he deployed troops around the presidential palace. Prabowo reportedly, "took his demotion badly – at one point strapping on a sidearm, summoning several truckloads of troops and confronting guards at the presidential palace as he tried to win an audience" with Habibie. Soon after he was forced to resign from the military. In a speech in late 2012 he said, "I am a retired lieutenant general who once attempted to overthrow a president. But I failed to do it, and I regret that I failed." Recently, while campaigning in Aceh, Prabowo offered a vague apology for unnamed actions his troops took there.

Prabowo was the first person denied entry into the United States in 2000 under the UN Convention against Torture. After leaving the military Prabowo went into business and has tried to remake himself as a populist, becoming president of the Indonesian Farmers' Association (HKTI) in 2004, while often arguing that Indonesia needed a strong, guiding hand - his. The same year, he tried unsuccessfully to become the Golkar (Suharto's New Order party) nominee for President. In 2009 he was Megawati Sukarnoputri's vice-presidential candidate (a PDI-P/Gerindra split ticket). Until recently, Prabowo led most opinion polls of declared candidates for President. Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo (Jokowi), who officially entered the race in mid-March as the PDI-P candidate, is the current favorite.

See also

- Masters of Terror: [Prabowo](#)
- Tapol: [The Rise and Fall of Military Candidates in the Indonesian Elections](#) (Sept. 2008)

## Beatriz's War wins top prize in India

From the ADELAIDE FILM FESTIVAL enews:



Shout outs to the Beatriz's War team for taking out top prize at the 44th International Film Festival of India!

AFF Australian premiere Beatriz's War, the first feature film to come out of East Timor, won the prestigious Golden Peacock award for Best Film in Goa last week. It beat out fourteen other international titles for the prize.

The award was presented to the film's directors, Bety Reis & Luigi Acquisto, and producers, Stella Zammataro & Lurdes Pires, after two sold-out screenings.

On accepting the award co-director Bety Reis observed that India has the biggest film industry in the world and that "East Timor has the smallest and newest. It is a great honour to receive this award from a country with such a long and rich history of making films, and from a country that loves cinema more than any other. It gives us faith in what we have started".

From THE TIMES OF INDIA 1 December 2013

### 'Beatriz's War' wins Golden Peacock at 44th International film festival of India

PANAJI: The 44th International film festival of India (Ifffi) closed on an emotional note as 'Beatriz's War', East Timor's first feature film in its post-colonization period and its co-director Bety Reis's debut, won the Golden Peacock award for the 2013 best film, and the prize money of 40 lakh. Director of Bengali film 'Apar Panchali' Kaushik Ganguly was awarded the silver peacock and cash award of 15 lakh for his dedication to iconic filmmaker Satyajit Ray.

A tearful Reis of Beatriz's War drew tears from the audience and jury member and filmmaker Claire Denis with her acceptance speech.

She said that one of the world's oldest and biggest industry (India) had reposed faith in the world's newest and smallest film industry in East Timor with the Golden Peacock.

The film explores the intimate relationship between men and women in the backdrop of continued violence in the country.

"It is not just the first feature film of East Timor, but my first film and first award. So it is very special. Since its independence in 1999, we have not just been fighting for

the rights of women, the rights of children and the right to rule ourselves, but also our right to tell our stories," she said breaking down, as her co-director Luigi Aquisto translated her speech for the audience, which included chief guest Hollywood action star Michelle Yeoh.

[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-12-01/india/44618596\\_1\\_golden-peacock-silver-peacock-bengali-film](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-12-01/india/44618596_1_golden-peacock-silver-peacock-bengali-film)

## What's On

### DOCUMENTARY

#### **Trail of murder: Indonesia's bloody retreat** A FILM BY DAVID NIBLOCK

*How the murder of a journalist in East Timor in 1999 impacted the life and work of Al Jazeera's Step Vaessen.*

Al Jazeera Correspondent 15 Dec 2013

Step Vaessen investigates the murder of her friend and colleague Sander Thoebes by an Indonesian military battalion in East Timor in September 1999.

The *Financial Times* journalist was just 30 years old and full of promise when he was shot and mutilated while covering the violence during the nation's independence struggle. He was the last of at least 12 people executed by the battalion.

His killing has had a deep impact on Step's professional life; affecting the way she sees her chosen profession. But it has caused even more devastation in her personal life. Her husband, and sometimes cameraman, went into a depression and committed suicide.

As well as exploring how that single event has had such a profound impact on her life, Step goes in search of the members of the military battalion that killed Thoebes. None have ever been brought to justice. In fact, two of the commanders who ordered the killings are now running for the Indonesian presidency. One of them is the leading candidate.

Step also finds the family members of other victims of the battalion, examining how they have had to cope with trying to forgive these crimes and exploring the consequences of the impunity that has permeated Indonesian society.

### Conference and Expo:

#### **"Working Together with Timor-Leste: The Next 10 Years"**

Victorian Local Governance Association

**Friday, 25 July 2014 at 9:00 AM -**

**Saturday, 26 July 2014 at 5:00 PM (AEST)**

The Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre  
387 Bell Street Preston, VIC 3072

The **Working Together with Timor-Leste: The Next 10 Years** Conference and Expo comes after over 13 years of activity by Australian Governments, Local Government Friendship groups, aid organisations, businesses and

community groups, working with their Timorese counterparts to support the task of establishing the new nation.

It also marks 11 years since the first successful international conference, **Working Together with East Timor** was held in Melbourne in 2003.

The Conference will provide an opportunity for individuals and organisations working in, and for, Timor-Leste to share their knowledge and experience and discuss ways of working together to meet the challenges of the next phase of nation-building.

**FEATURING keynote speaker** Sr Agio Pereira, Minister of State and President of the Council of Ministers. Other speakers include representatives of Timor-Leste and Australian government and civil society organisations and friendship groups.

The Conference and Expo is open to all people interested in Timor-Leste's future development and will give delegated the opportunity to:

- **FOCUS** on the future of local development in Timor-Leste
- **MEET** people who are actively involved in Timor-Leste
- **LEARN** who is doing what in Timor-Leste and Australia
- **DISCUSS** key issues in local development, including friendship relationships, rural livelihoods, service delivery, education and human resource development, strengthening local communities, engaging young people, empowering women, village technology and the establishment of local government
- **PLAN** ways of improving communication and cooperation to support local development in Timor-Leste

Sponsored by: Australia Timor Leste Friendship Network; Oxfam Australia; Victorian Local Governance Association; Australian Volunteers International; Victoria University Melbourne

For further Info and to register contact:

<http://www.vlga.org.au>

#### ***Alias Ruby Blade* Film Fundraiser** **Saturday, 24 May 5pm**

For more details contact: [manythreadsproject@gmail.com](mailto:manythreadsproject@gmail.com)  
or ph. 0432 862304

#### **High Tea for Timor Leste** **Sunday, 6 July 2pm**

For more details contact: [manythreadsproject@gmail.com](mailto:manythreadsproject@gmail.com)  
or ph. 0432 862304