

Submission on the Agreement between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Framework for Security Cooperation.

Introduction

The Australia-East Timor Friendship Association (SA) Inc. is the current name of an organization formed after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1995 and then called the **Campaign for an Independent East Timor**. It works in collaboration with similar organizations throughout Australia and overseas, including the **ETAN** network.

For the 24 years of the Indonesian occupation we bore witness to the suffering of the East Timor people and the crimes being committed against them, calling for the end of Australia's support and de jure recognition of the illegal Indonesian occupiers. During those years we were much maligned by the pro-Indonesian lobby both inside and outside succeeding governments but events proved our analysis of the situation to be correct. Given the opportunity, the East Timorese people voted overwhelmingly for independence.

We objected strongly to Australia's role in training Indonesian military personnel, particularly Kopassus because it was responsible for much of the violence and terrorism. Our objections were met with the argument that Australia was teaching the Indonesian soldiers to observe human rights. Events following the vote for independence in 1999 proved decisively how ineffective that was.

We are disturbed that only one of the perpetrators has been brought to justice, and he received a very light sentence. Many of them, including officers, have gone on to higher appointments and some are still operating in West Papua where they are continuing to kill, rape and torture with immunity. Some are still operating in East Timor, along with members of the militias which they trained, and contributing to the violence and instability there. The killers of the "Balibo Five" journalists are still free and some occupying high positions.

Since there is no evidence that the Indonesian military, particularly Kopassus, has changed its behaviour and the Indonesian government appears unable or unwilling to control them, we submit that this Treaty should not go ahead. If it does Australia will be a party to the continuing reign of terror in West Papua and the ongoing unrest in East Timor. Australia's desire not to offend Indonesia has had a negative effect on our role in East Timor, particularly the training of East Timorese troops. (The Bulletin, 6/6/2006)

We are deeply concerned by provisions of the proposed Treaty which, if they had been operative during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, would have limited or denied us and many other Australians the right to speak out against the crimes being committed there, and which will, if it is signed, prevent people from supporting the inalienable right of the people of West Papua to freedom and independence. It may even oblige the

Australian government to return refugees fleeing that country to return them to the Indonesians. In which case we will be party to whatever fate befalls them

Conclusion

Until the Indonesian military is brought under the complete control of civilian government and there is evidence that it is no longer a terrorist organization and those among its ranks who have committed crimes against humanity have been brought to justice, we believe that Australia should not enter into any treaty with Indonesia which includes cooperation with the TNI. We believe there are plenty of other avenues for cooperation in civil matters between our two countries.

Nor should we agree to any provisions which limit or deny the right of the citizens of this country to freedom of speech, nor those which would entail our government abandoning our obligation under International law to care for refugees fleeing from oppression.

We thank the Committee for this opportunity to address it and would be grateful for any opportunity to expand on this submission.

Miriam Tonkin, Chairperson
Robert Hanney, Secretary,
on behalf of the Australia-East Timor Friendship Association.