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## **East Timor: Act now to save lives**

With the security situation in East Timor at a critical level there must be no delay in deploying a United Nations peacekeeping force following acceptance of such a force by the Indonesian government, Amnesty International said today.

"Every hour that the UN delays in assuming its responsibilities, in particular ensuring the protection of human rights for all East Timorese, will result in more lives lost," Amnesty International said.

However, the human rights organization stresses that the mandate of the new UN force should be broad and should strictly limit the role of the Indonesian army (TNI), if the UN troops are to gain the confidence of the East Timorese people and restore security.

"TNI troops have committed widespread human rights violations with impunity in East Timor for over 20 years. In this context it is impossible for the TNI to play any role in ensuring the protection of human rights for all East Timorese people."

"All evidence points to TNI collusion in the commission of crimes against humanity in East Timor."

"Let there be no doubt in anyone's mind that the world community has a responsibility to ensure accountability," Amnesty International said. "There should be no hiding place for the people who have inflicted this misery and suffering on the East Timorese people."

As an immediate first step, Amnesty International urges that all TNI commanders who had military responsibility in East Timor since 5 May 1999 Agreements on the territory's future were signed, and who are implicated in human rights violations or took no measures in preventing them from occurring, should be suspended from duty.

The TNI and armed pro-Indonesian militias remain in control of the territory, and are continuing to commit serious human rights violations against the civilian population. Tens of thousands of internally displaced people are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance, and refugees in West Timor are at risk of further human rights violations by the TNI and militias based there.

Amnesty International calls for immediate and unconditional access to be granted to the refugees in West Timor and the internally displaced people (IDPs) in East Timor by humanitarian agencies and independent monitors who can gather testimonies about what has happened in the territory.

In addition, the human rights organization demands that the militias are immediately disbanded and disarmed and that those responsible for committing human rights violations to be arrested and brought to justice in civilian courts.

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**For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>**