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Timor-Leste: Five years on, Indonesia still denies justice to victims of sexual violence

Indonesia has failed to hold accountable a single member of its security forces for acts of sexual violence and other human rights violations which occurred around the time of the ballot for Timor-Leste's independence in 1999.

Five years ago, the population of Timor-Leste (East Timor) voted in a UN-organized ballot for independence from Indonesia. In the run-up to the ballot and immediately afterwards, the Indonesian security forces and Indonesia-backed militia groups opposed to independence embarked on a campaign of murder, destruction and intimidation. Around 1,400 people were killed, an unknown number tortured, and women were raped and subjected to other forms of sexual violence.

The violations were so wide-spread and systematic that they are considered to be crimes against humanity, and over 350 people have so far been indicted in a UN-backed justice process in Timor-Leste. Some 280 of them are believed to be at large in Indonesia. However, Indonesia has investigated just five cases and brought only 18 people to trial, and has failed to hold accountable a single member of the security forces for the human rights violations committed during this period.

Among the hundreds of cases not investigated in Indonesia is the rape of three women in Lolotoe Sub-district. In Timor-Leste, three men have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment in connection with this case. However, two remaining suspects, an Indonesian military officer and a militia member, are believed to be in Indonesia. Indonesia has refused to transfer them and around 280 others to Timor-Leste to stand trial.

Because of Indonesia's failure to ensure that members of its security forces are held accountable, Amnesty International is calling on the UN to establish an International Commission of Experts to ensure justice for the three women in Lolotoe Sub-district, and the hundreds of other victims of human rights violations in Timor-Leste in 1999.

Please send appeals immediately to the governments of the US and the UK, asking them to act in their capacity as permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Dear,

I am writing to express my concern about the failure to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and other serious crimes in Timor-Leste in 1999.

Trials in Indonesia have been so limited and flawed that neither truth nor justice has emerged.

Two suspects indicted for crimes against humanity including imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty and rape in Lolotoe Sub-district, Timor-Leste, are believed to be among around 280 persons indicted for crimes against humanity in Timor-Leste who are at large in Indonesia.

Given the failure of Indonesia to bring the perpetrators to justice and the limitations of the process in Timor-Leste, including Indonesia's failure to cooperate with it, I urge you to support the establishment of an International Commission of Experts to review the processes

so far and to make recommendations for an effective judicial process to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and other serious crimes.

The victims of sexual violence, torture, and murder have been denied justice for five years. Please help them to find it.

Yours sincerely,

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Graffiti on a wall in Manatuto, Timor-Leste

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