

PUBLIC

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Arbitrary detention/fear for safety

31 August 1999

EAST TIMOR

**Andrade + child**

**Independence supporters, election monitors and UNAMET staff in Ermera**

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A father and his child are reported to have been abducted on 31 August 1999 by members of the Dili-based militia group, Aitarak. Andrade, reportedly a captain in the Indonesian army, and his child were leaving Dili by car on their way to Liquica, are said to have been stopped at a militia roadblock. Their whereabouts are now unknown, and there is concern that they may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Aitarak members are reportedly guarding exits from Dili, including the air and seaports. According to reports they are preventing East Timorese from leaving the province.

Operations by pro-integration militia groups in Ermera district are also causing serious concern for the safety of independence supporters, UNAMET (United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor) staff and election monitors. One and most likely three UNAMET local staff were killed on 30 August when eight or nine militia members attacked them as they prepared to transport ballot boxes from the village of Babo Leten to Atsabe. UNAMET worker João Lopes Gomes was stabbed in the back during the attack. He suffered a punctured lung, and died later that evening. The militiamen were said to be carrying automatic weapons and, according to some unconfirmed reports, their vehicle was driven by a member of the Indonesian military.

Two other UNAMET local staff are thought to have been killed in the attack. However, the militia groups have not allowed the police or UNAMET in to the area, making it impossible to investigate the deaths.

The militias are continuing operations in Ermera district today. They have burned at least five houses in the town of Gleno. Police reportedly stood by when UNAMET staff, who had come to Gleno to transport ballot boxes back to Dili, came under fire. The militias eventually allowed UNAMET local and international staff to leave with the ballot boxes. However, there are serious concerns for the safety of independence supporters and members of national and international organizations monitoring the elections who remain in the area. There are reports that a militia group attacked the offices of one local monitoring group, KIPER, at around midnight on 30 August. Volunteers working for the organization escaped without injury.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The killing of the UNAMET staff members took place on 30 August, the day the people of East Timor voted whether to accept or reject special autonomy inside Indonesia. Serious human rights violations, including unlawful killings, "disappearances", arbitrary arrests, threats and intimidation had continued throughout the three month popular consultation process which ended with the ballot. The overwhelming majority of the victims have been supporters of independence for East Timor. UNAMET staff have also been repeatedly threatened and intimidated, and there have been sporadic attacks on UNAMET local and international staff.

Although the armed opposition group, Falintil, have committed some abuses, the majority of the violations have been carried out by members of pro-integration militia groups. There is clear evidence that the Indonesian military are supporting the militias, including eyewitness accounts of direct military involvement in many of the attacks which have taken place. The Indonesian police have also given support to the militias by failing to act to prevent attacks or to investigate reports of human rights violations. They are also known to be directly involved in some incidents such as the attack on the village of Memo on 27 August 1999 in which three people died. At least one of them is thought to have been shot dead by the police.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Bahasa Indonesian, English or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to take action to guarantee the safety of Andrade and his child who are believed to have been abducted by members of the militia group Aitarak at a roadblock in Dili on 31 August 1999;
- expressing serious concern for the safety of independence supporters, election monitors and UNAMET staff in Ermera district;

- requesting that the Indonesia authorities take immediate action to restrain the militias in Dili and in the district of Ermera and that the police immediately investigate human rights violations that have taken place there including the killing of João Lopes Gomes and two other UNAMET staff;
- to urge the authorities to immediately and disband all pro-integration militia groups in East Timor.

**APPEALS TO:**

**COMMANDER RESORT MILITARY COMMAND (KOREM) 164/WIRADHARMA (covers East Timor)**

Colonel Muhamad Noer Muis  
Markas KOREM 164/Wiradharma  
Dili  
East Timor  
Indonesia  
**Fax/Tel: + 62 390 321 624**

**Salutation: Dear Colonel**

**CHIEF OF POLICE FOR EAST TIMOR**

Col. GM Timbul Silaen  
Kapolda Timor Timur  
Dili  
East Timor  
Indonesia  
**Fax/Tel: + 62 390 321 544**

**Salutation: Dear Colonel**

**COPIES TO:**

**COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES (TNI)**

General Wiranto  
Panglima TNI  
Markas Besar TNI  
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and to diplomatic representatives of Indonesia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 October 1999.