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Indonesia and Timor-Leste: An historic opportunity missed to provide justice

The governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste have missed an historic opportunity to provide justice for more than 1,000 people killed during Timor-Leste's vote for independence in 1999, Amnesty International said today.

The Indonesian and Timorese governments have accepted a report released today by the Commission for Truth and Friendship (CTF) in Bali, which accuses the Indonesian security forces of gross human rights violations during the 1999 Timor-Leste independence ballot. The report lays the majority of the blame for the violence and deaths on the Indonesian security forces.

However, the Indonesian government refused to issue an apology, to commit to bringing those individuals responsible for the violence to justice, to investigate and reform institutions which were involved in the violence, or to provide reparations for victims.

"There must be no impunity for those responsible for the violations, including unlawful killings, rape, torture and arbitrary detention," said Donna Guest, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Deputy Director.

Very few people were prosecuted in Indonesia for alleged violations and all have been cleared of wrongdoing and released. Many of those suspected of human rights violations in Timor Leste still hold senior positions within the government and armed forces of Indonesia.

"There can be no justice for the victims of the violence nor assurance that such atrocities will not be repeated, without those responsible being held accountable," said Donna Guest.