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EAST TIMOR: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
DECISION

As a fellow Nobel laureate, Amnesty International today warmly welcomed the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to East Timorese leaders Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos Horta.

“The Nobel Committee’s decision will really bring East Timor back into the international spotlight,” the organization said. “It is an important signal of international concern about human rights in East Timor that should be heeded by the Indonesian Government and governments worldwide.”

“Bishop Belo and Jose Ramos Horta have won this prize for their efforts to find a peaceful, political settlement to the East Timor issue. We shouldn’t forget that countless numbers of their fellow East Timorese have been killed, tortured or gaoled for the same thing.”

“The human rights situation in East Timor remains extremely grave. Arbitrary detention and torture are a fact of daily life. ‘Disappearances’ and political killings remain uninvestigated and unresolved,” Amnesty International said. “A long term solution to the East Timor issue cannot be found without tackling these human rights violations at their root cause - repression by the Indonesian Government and military.”

“The East Timorese people will want to celebrate this positive development. It would be a tragedy if any peaceful expression of their emotion and feeling were met with repression. The international community must watch developments closely over coming days to ensure there is no new crackdown,” Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 for its worldwide work for human rights.

For more information, including on the human rights situation in Indonesia and East Timor, please contact

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