

Women and the Conflict

National Public Hearing, 28-29 April 2003



BOOKS FROM THE CAVR

Public Hearings books:

POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT
WOMEN AND THE CONFLICT
FAMINE AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT
MASSACRES
INTERNAL POLITICAL CONFLICT 1974-1976
SELF-DETERMINATION & THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
CHILDREN AND THE CONFLICT

Other books:

RONA AMI NIA LIAN (Hear Our Voices)
COMARCA
FINAL REPORT OF THE CAVR
FINAL REPORT OF THE CAVR, Executive Summary

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book was produced by the CAVR Production Team and Translation Unit with help from members of the CAVR Archives, Editorial and Legal teams. In alphabetical order: Afonso Aleixo, Aventino de Jesus Baptista Ximenes, Bernadete Jong dos Santos, Celina Martins Fernandes, Darmawan Zaini, Dwi Anggorowati Indrasari, Eleanor Taylor-Nicholson, Emily Chew, Eurico Celestina dos Reis Araujo, Firman Maulana, Fulgêncio Aquino Vieira, Germano Boavida da Costa, Gunardi Handoko, Ian White, Istutiah Gunawan-Mitchell, Julião da Costa Cristavão Caetano, Julien Poulson, Kieran Dwyer, Kurnia Joedawinata, Lakota Moira, Leyla Safira Assegaf, Luciana Ferrero, Megan Hirst, Melanie Lotfali, Meta Mendonça, Miki Salman, Nugroho Katjasungkana, Phyllis Ferguson, Riamirta Dwiandini, Steve Malloch, Suryono, Titi Irawati, Toby Gibson, Valentina Vincentia, Yulita Dyah Utari.

CAVR would like to thank the photographers and contributors of photos to this book: IOM/Nelson Goncalves photo archive (Guido Sam Martins, Joerg Meier), Poriaman Sitanggang. Photos from the Hearing: Antonio Goncalves, Galuh Wandita, and Steve Malloch.

Many thanks also to the CAVR's financial donors: the Governments of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America; and the European Commission, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United States Institute for Peace (USIP), Trust Fund for East Timor (TFET, Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project, administered by the World Bank) and Catholic Relief Services (Kupang). CAVR received in kind support from: ICTJ, UNDP Timor-Leste, UNHCR, USAID, UNMISSET Human Rights Unit, Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development and Australian Volunteers International.

© CAVR, 2005. All rights reserved.

www.cavr-timorleste.org

Women and the Conflict

Table of Contents

Foreword Public Hearings of the CAVR	4
Preface The Hearing on Women and the Conflict	5
Human Rights and International Law	6
Opening Speech, Aniceto Guterres Lopes, Chairperson of the CAVR	8
Survivor Testimonies	13
Victoria Henrique	14
Rita da Silva	16
Maria Antonia Santos Sousa	18
Maria Cardoso	20
Olga da Silva Amaral	21
Beatriz Miranda Guterres	24
Fernanda Soares	27
Leonia Amaral Soares	30
Natalia dos Santos	32
Olga Corte Real	33
Feliciana Cardoso	35
Ines da Conceicao Lemos	37
Fernanda dos Reis Araújo	39
Domingas Ulan	40
Message to The Nation	44
Expert Testimonies	45
Mário Viegas Carrascalão	46
Mr John Fernandes	49
Submissions	51
Submission from a Group of Timorese Women Activists	52
Submission from Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (<i>Komnas Perempuan</i>)	55
Submission from West Timor Humanitarian Team(<i>Tim Kemanusiaan Timor Barat</i>)	57
In Closing	59
Closing Reflection Maria Olandina Isabel Caeiro Alves,CAVR National Commissioner	60
Closing Address Maria Domingas Alves,Adviser on Equality to the Prime Minister	61
Glossary	63

Foreword Public Hearings of the CAVR

Public Hearings were a key part of the CAVR programme designed to fulfil our mandate pursuant to Regulation 10/2001. Establishing the truth about past human rights violations, assisting with the reintegration of those who have harmed their communities through community reconciliation hearings, and helping victims of violations to restore their dignity were all objectives of these various hearings.

When the CAVR was formed, the seven National Commissioners developed a clear principle that the CAVR would attempt to be as open and participatory as possible. As a result, the CAVR designed a programme that involved teams working at the village level across the country, always seeking to engage the community in culturally appropriate ways. Providing for communities to come together and discuss the past in a peaceful and reconciliatory way was a key part of this work. At the national level, public hearings broadcast by television and radio across the country promoted a wide sense of participation in a national dialogue about past violations and building a future based on respect for human rights.

This series of seven booklets covers the national thematic public hearings of the CAVR. These hearings were all held at the former Balide Prison, rehabilitated to become the headquarters of the CAVR, and were on the themes of Political Imprisonment (February 2003), Women and the Conflict (April 2003), Famine and Forced Displacement (July 2003), Massacres (November 2003), Internal Political Conflict of 1974-1976 (December 2003), Self-Determination and the International Community (March 2004), and Children and the Conflict (March 2004).

Prior to these hearings, the CAVR held a national Victims' Hearing in November 2002, at the former CNRT and UNAMET compound in Balide.

CAVR district teams also organised and facilitated a wide range of public hearings. District teams divided their work into three-month time periods for each sub-district. At the end of this period of taking statements about past violations, organising community reconciliation processes and conducting community workshops about past violence, the team conducted a sub-district Victims' Hearing. Community members who had given statements to the CAVR told their story to the CAVR and the gathered community. Sixty-five sub-district Victims' Hearings were conducted by the CAVR.

Community reconciliation hearings were a major part of the CAVR programme. Pursuant to the CAVR mandate, the objective of these hearings was to assist in the reintegration of former offenders into their communities. Typically, but not always, these related to the 1999 militia violence. Hearings were held in villages in all districts in Timor-Leste. Facilitated by the CAVR, this process combined traditional dispute resolution methods with the formal legal process in an innovative way. The CAVR conducted hearings for 1,404 former perpetrators, in a total of 217 hearings, and we estimate that over 40,000 community members participated in these hearings.

The response to the public hearings of the CAVR was overwhelming. We hope that through this series of booklets more people can share the experience of these national thematic hearings.

Preface The Hearing on Women and the Conflict

The national public hearing on Women and the Conflict was an important step in the work of the CAVR to better understand the experience of women during the 24-year mandate period. It was part of a longer process of detailed community-based research and statement-taking, interviews with policy-makers and advocates, and analysis of documentary evidence. This involved working with organisations in Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

The CAVR acknowledges that women suffered specific human rights violations and were particularly vulnerable throughout the conflict. The CAVR wants to highlight that the experience, knowledge and understanding of women in conflict and in peace-building is often ignored or not given the importance it deserves. The CAVR has prioritised research on the experiences of women during the conflict.

The CAVR research team for the theme of Women and the Conflict was jointly made up of CAVR and Fokupers staff. Team members were Felismina de Conceicao, Elsa do Rosario Viegas da Costa, Alexandrina dos Santos, Joanna Villanova, Noemia Gomes Ferreira and Karen Campbell-Nelson. The CAVR would like to publicly acknowledge the tremendous role that the Timorese NGO Fokupers has played in the defence of women's human rights since its formation in 1997, and for the valuable role it has played in this research and in other joint efforts with the CAVR.

The research team took a qualitative approach to research, through direct interviews and analysis of documentary sources. They travelled to all districts of Timor-Leste and met with women in groups and individually. Their work was especially sensitive, as many women talked for the first time about extremely painful experiences.

The 13 women selected to give testimony at this hearing told of violations in 11 districts. They were selected to represent a range of historical and geographic spread, a range of types of perpetrator, and an illustration of a range of the types of violations suffered by women in the 25-year period. A key criteria was that the women selected wanted to give their testimony publicly, and felt that the experience could be beneficial to them.

In addition to hearing directly from victims of human rights violations, the CAVR heard expert testimony from former Governor of Timor-Leste Mr Mário Carrascalao, the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*), the West Timor NGO Humanitarian Team, a Timorese group of women NGO workers, and a former Indonesian civil servant involved in administering the Indonesian Family Planning programme in Timor-Leste.

The hearing itself was an extraordinary event, full of tears and at times laughter, embracing and solidarity. Telling their stories was a painful and difficult experience for most of those who testified, but all expressed the feeling that it was time that these stories were heard and acknowledged. The CAVR thanks and applauds these brave women.

It is the hope of the CAVR that this process has contributed at least in some small way to the journey of healing for each of these women, and that it reached out to women and girls across the country who have also suffered violence. It is our hope that this hearing, and this book documenting it, will contribute to a deeper and wider understanding of the experiences of Timorese women during the 25 years of conflict, and so play a part in ensuring that women's rights are upheld and protected in Timor-Leste in the future.

Human Rights and International Law



Human rights are rights that everyone has, regardless of race, age, religion or sex, from the moment of birth until death. These rights cannot be given away, sold or taken away by force. Everybody has the same human rights, just because they are human.

The idea that every person has some kind of basic rights is very old and can be found in societies all around the world. However, the human rights doctrine as it is known today was only developed after the Second World War. Remembering the terrible atrocities that were committed during that war, the governments of the world through the United Nations decided that no person should suffer that way again. On 10 December 1948, they agreed to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which sets out all of the basic rights of human beings. Since this time, these rights have been expanded upon and refined in thousands of international documents and there are now strict legal rules setting out how governments are to treat people.

Sadly, the history of Timor-Leste between 1974 and 1999 is filled with violations of human rights by all sides to the conflicts. Men, women and children suffered immensely. We heard in this hearing about the pain, suffering and loss that the women suffered during this period, revealing an enormous number and types of human rights violations committed against them. Certain violations have particularly devastating personal impact upon women. And where a violation is committed against a woman, it often also affects her children and others close to her.

Some of the rights to think about when reading the accounts of these women are:

Right to life

This is the most important of all of the human rights. Every person has a right not to have their life taken away from them, unless it is clearly within the law. Therefore governments must make and respect laws that prevent and punish unlawful killings, as well as train their military and security forces to respect the lives of civilians and others who are not taking fighting roles in a war.

Right to freedom from torture

Torture is a very serious crime that causes severe pain or suffering, either mental or physical, which is done for a particular reason such as to obtain information or a confession, or as punishment, or to force someone to do something. Rape and other severe acts of sexual violence that meet these standards may amount to torture.

Right to freedom from enslavement

No person can 'own' another person. Slavery occurs where one person treats another person as if they 'own' that person, for example by buying or selling the person, totally controlling a person including their freedom of movement, or forcing a person to work in terrible conditions for little or no wage. Slavery can also be in the form of sexual slavery. That is, where a person exercises powers amounting to ownership over someone through rape or other sexual acts. We have heard many stories of women forced to become the 'wives' of individual members of the military or militia, or forced to provide sexual services to the military in general. This is a form of sexual slavery.

Right to security of the person

This right entitles every person to live without fear for their personal safety or security. Therefore, people have a right not to be arrested or detained unless in accordance with the law, not to be beaten, mistreated or otherwise harmed including through rape or other forms of sexual abuse. When in detention, women must be kept separately from men to protect them from sexual abuse.

Civil and political rights

Women have the right to civil and political rights on an equal footing with men, and this means they have the right to be involved in decision-making in their country, to express themselves freely, and to choose their religion and their politics.

Economic and social rights

Everybody has the right to an adequate standard of living, to housing, to enough food, to medical care and an education. These rights are particularly important for women, who so often bear the responsibility of supporting a family and disproportionately suffer the effects of poverty and lack of education.

Reproductive rights

Women have the right to control their own bodies and to decide whether or not to have children. This is part of their right to have security of their own person. Women must not be forced to have children without their consent, but neither can they be forcibly stopped from having children if they wish, through sterilisation, contraception or abortion.

Right to enjoy a family life

International law recognises the importance of the family and requires governments to provide all possible protection and assistance to the family unit. We heard in this hearing about families torn apart by war, children separated from their parents, and how this prevented people from enjoying family life.

Rights during conflict

As long as women are not taking part in the conflict, they have all the same rights as above but must also be granted special care and protection from mistreatment, rape or other cruel treatment. Even when they are participants in conflict and are captured, there are rules that govern how women must be treated. Their special needs as women must be protected.

Opening Speech, 28 April 2003

Aniceto Guterres Lopes, Chairperson of the CAVR

This is a special hearing for the CAVR, as we aim to create a space for women to share their experiences and knowledge, and to understand better the terrible suffering of women in Timor-Leste between 25 April 1974 and 25 October 1999.

In preparation for this hearing, the CAVR has worked in partnership with the Timorese women's human rights NGO, Fokupers. We are grateful to Fokupers and proud to work with them. I would especially like to thank the members of this joint team: Felismina de Conceicao, Elsa do Rosario Viegas da Costa, Alexandrina dos Santos, Joanna Villanova, Noemia Gomes Ferreira and Karen Campbell-Nelson. This team has been working together since January this year, and will continue to work together after this hearing. They have travelled to districts across Timor-Leste to listen to women tell their stories of violence over 25 years. This is difficult work, and takes sensitivity, patience, courage and love. The women of this team have approached their work tirelessly and we would like to thank them publicly.

It is important that the CAVR hold a special hearing about Women and the Conflict in Timor-Leste. As you know, women and girls make up more than half the population of Timor-Leste. They are, and always have been, the backbone of our society. The CAVR aims to take every measure possible to ensure that women feel able to participate in all activities of the CAVR.

If you study conflict situations around the world, throughout history, you will see that in situations of war and conflict women have always been vulnerable to specific kinds of violations, due to their role and status within society. In highly militarised societies there is always a higher proportion of violence against women. This is the context that Timorese women had to contend with for nearly 25 years. In this hearing we will hear expert testimony from organisations who will help us to better understand the context, policies and organisations responsible for violence against women. The individual stories you hear from women over these two days will illustrate the real suffering they have experienced. Many Timorese women have not survived to tell their story. In recognising the women who give testimony to the CAVR, we also recognise women all around Timor-Leste who have suffered. We recognise and remember our sisters, our mothers, our wives and our daughters who are no longer with us.

Women are so often peace builders around the world. This is also the case in Timor-Leste. Through the CAVR's research, and through listening to women around the country, we also aim to recognise the ways in which women have actively sought to build peace in our country. As men so often became involved in conflict, women time and again were the ones keeping families together. In this way, women often suffered a violation of their economic and social rights—the right to live in peace, with basic food, housing and a decent livelihood. So many women were widowed and left to support families on their own. We know this is the current reality for many Timorese families today. We honour the women who hold their families and our nation together in this way.

I would like to extend a special warm welcome to all the women who are with us today to give their testimony to the CAVR. Your courage to come forward and tell your stories to the CAVR, and to the nation, will show us both the pain and the great heart of Timorese women.

And to the other witnesses who will also give testimony, I say thank you. To our friends from the Indonesian National Commission for Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), who have travelled from Jakarta to give testimony to the CAVR, a special welcome. And to the women from the West Timor Humanitarian Group (TKTB), and the specially formed group of East Timorese NGO women, welcome also.

Most of all, I would like to thank the women who will tell the CAVR, and the nation, of your experience of human rights violations during this hearing. I have met some of you during the preparations for this hearing. I want to tell you that it is an honour for the CAVR to hear your words, and to be with you over these days of preparations and hearings. Your courage and determination are an inspiration. I know that a hearing like this cannot take away all the pain of your suffering. But I hope that you can feel our support and our love, and that at least in a small way this might help to heal your pain. In telling your stories, sharing them with all the people in our nation, you are helping to create a culture of peace in our new land so that this violence will never be repeated.

This is the aim of the CAVR—to help all Timorese people walk together on the road to permanent peace. As we hear the stories of our sisters at this hearing, we will sometimes wonder if it is not just too hard to think about the pain of the past. I know that sometimes this feels like opening up old wounds. We believe this is necessary for permanent peace in our land. We want to help our sisters, and others who have suffered human rights violations in our land, to clean these wounds of the past. We want to help all Timorese people face the pain of the past, to support those who need support, and in this way no longer be trapped by this pain. Together, as a nation, we will face it and we will build a new foundation on a national commitment to peace and human rights for all people.

With these words, I open the National Public Hearing on Women and the Conflict.

This is an edited version of the speech given to open the hearing.





1999 archive photo.



*In highly militarised societies there is always a higher proportion of violence against women. This is the context that Timorese women had to contend with for nearly 25 years.
1999 archive photo.*

Introduction

These testimonies are presented in the order in which the witnesses testified. During the two days of hearing, these testimonies were interspersed with expert witness testimonies, which are presented separately in this book.

Most witnesses gave their testimony in Tetum, one of Timor-Leste's official languages. The English and Indonesian versions of this book aim to represent their testimonies as accurately as possible. The paragraphs in italics introducing each testimony provide a brief overview to contextualise the testimony. The text which follows is an edited version of the testimony, based on the original statements of the women and their words at the hearing—it is not a summary as such, but rather a selection from the words of each witnesses' testimony, making allowances for translation of course.

Note on the suppression of names of perpetrators

At the time of preparation for publication of this book, National Commissioners were still debating the CAVR policy of naming names of alleged perpetrators in the CAVR Final Report. At the hearing itself, witnesses were advised that it was their right to name names if they wished, but that they should be aware that this could have legal consequences. In general, witnesses did not name alleged perpetrators in the CAVR national hearings.

The method for reproducing this book has been to remove the name of an alleged perpetrator and to substitute 'A'. If more than one alleged perpetrator is named in a testimony, they are listed in alphabetical order, hence 'B', 'C' and so on.



From left: CAVR Commissioner Isabel Guterres, Rita da Silva, Maria Cardoso.

Survivor Testimonies

Victoria Henrique

Liquiça District, 1975

Sra Victoria Henrique was a teacher in Liquiça District in August 1975 when the UDT party briefly took power. She explained how in 1974, "in order to be able to save each other, my husband and I joined different parties. He was a member of Apodeti and I became a member of Fretilin." She told of the abuse she suffered at the hands of UDT party members and how her husband was taken to Aileu as a prisoner and killed, although she did not know by whom.



*They lifted me
up and threw me
into the car like a
tied-up pig.*

On the 20 August in the afternoon, I was sitting under a tree talking to some friends when we looked down the road and saw some UDT members coming. They were clapping and waving the UDT flag and shouting, "From East to West everyone must be UDT." I was shocked. They came right up to us and then, because I was a teacher, they took me along with them. They took me to their headquarters. While we were driving they swore at me and hit me, and spat in my face saying, "Fretilin doesn't know anything. They can't even make a match, but they want independence."

They tied my hands behind my back, gagged my mouth, covered my eyes with cloth, and tied my feet. Then they lifted me up and threw me into the car like a tied-up pig. They kept on beating and kicking me, they burned my knees with cigarette butts, and cut my thighs with a razor. When we were near a river, one of them said to the others, "Let's rape her before we take her to our leader." Then they laid me down by the river. One person was holding me down to keep me on my back, and then I felt someone raping me. When they were finished, I felt faint and just lay there quietly so they slapped me across the face. They must have thought that I'd fainted and couldn't feel anything, but I was still conscious then. They lifted me back in the car, and then took me into the town of Maubara.

When we finally arrived and they took me to their leader, I was untied and told to sit. They started interrogating me. I couldn't answer their questions because I was still too faint. The leader asked me why I wouldn't answer his questions. I just stayed silent. They got really angry with me and started hitting me again, and they threw hot water on my buttocks and hands. They forced me to eat bread soaked in kerosene, which I did but still they burned my legs and thighs with cigarette butts. I just held on.

After four days of being held there I heard that Fretilin was planning to attack them. They went to Liquiça and brought my little sister back to Maubara with them. She was only 3 years old. They gave her food but they made fun of her and threatened to kill her if she cried or called out my name. That afternoon a UDT spy, an old man, came with the news that Fretilin was going to attack that night. He said to us all, "You must run away now, because if you don't every one of you will be dead." The UDT men gave him my little sister and he brought her to me in my cell. Then he said, "Little sister, we should run."

In my cell there were pieces of wood and some coconut husks. I took the coconut husks and put them in bed like a head, I used two pieces of wood for hands, and two more for legs. I made it look a sleeping person. Then I ran away. They didn't see me because they were too busy after hearing of the attack. I ran away because, if it was true that Fretilin was going to attack, I knew that UDT would kill me.

I hid in a stone cave with my little sister and the old man. We began to feel hungry, but we had no water, no food, and no clothes because our clothes were all torn. We just looked at each other and cried. My knees were swollen from the cigarette burns and I couldn't walk.

My little sister said, "Sister, if you don't make yourself stand up and walk we will both die of hunger...you must stand up and be strong. We can walk slowly through the mountains to Dili and join our family." I managed to stand up and we left our hiding place and started to walk to Dili. Soon other Fretilin members joined us. The walk took three days and three nights. We drank only muddy water and ate the leaves that animals eat. Soon after, Fretilin attacked Maubara, burning houses and killing UDT members.

*They kept on
beating and kicking
me, they burned my
knees with cigarette
butts, and cut my
thighs with
a razor.*

Rita da Silva

Maubisse and Mount Kablaki, Ainaro District, September 1975–January 1976

Rita da Silva was 11 years old in 1975 living with her family in the mountains of Maubisse, in central Timor-Leste. Her father was a member of UDT. She told of the violence between the Fretilin and UDT parties, aimed at ordinary party members and their families. Her mother, sister-in-law and two brothers were murdered in front of her. She told of how Fretilin attacked her house as revenge for the death of one of their members. Her family couldn't escape because her mother and sister-in-law were heavily pregnant.



*We don't want
your wealth,
what we want
is your lives.*

When they reached our house, they surrounded it. They had sharp weapons with them like *keris* and machetes, as well as guns. They called out to my father, “Victor, you come out now.” My father came out and said to them, “Please don’t kill us because my wife and my daughter-in-law are pregnant. They only have a few more days before they give birth. I will give you everything I have, just don’t kill us.”

But they answered, “We don’t want your wealth, what we want is your lives.” And then they shot my father in the shoulder, he fell and broke his wrist but he was able to roll away and hide in the coffee plantations near our house.

Then they shot my elder brother Mário da Silva. He knew he was going to die and so before they arrived he told my younger sister and me, “We are going to die now. Rita, please take care of Elsa and Marcos. Call Marcos in from the fields and try not to get separated.” I answered, “Alright. What you have told me, I will never forget.” Then he handed me his daughter Elsa, just before he was shot.

Then my mother, Ermelinda da Silva Paicheco, walked towards him. She knelt down, holding her pregnant belly and begged, “Please don’t kill me and my daughter-in-law because we only have a few more days before we give birth.” But they ignored her plea and slashed her across the back four times. My mother collapsed unconscious, but she didn’t die right away so they beheaded her clean. The baby inside her was still moving and, seeing that, my sister-in-law, Mário’s wife, wanted to run to save herself, but she had barely moved when they shot her from behind and the bullet came out through her front. She just collapsed and the baby in her womb died.

I saw all of this with my own eyes. We were still kids. I was 11 years old, my sister Selvina six, and Elsa two. We could only cry, we couldn’t do anything to help them.

The Falintil members took the three of us to the Falintil post near our house and we slept there overnight. In the morning we were taken to Ailulimau, where we stayed with Aunt Floriana for three days. When we were there my older brother José da Silva came to see us. But that night two Fretilin members came around and pretended to call my brother to ask for tobacco. They had already planned to kill him, and when my brother came out of the house with the tobacco, they swung their machete through his shoulder and he died right away. After that the two ran off.

Only my aunt and I were there to bury José's body, and the hole we dug wasn't very deep. After we had buried him, we moved again, this time to a place called Hahi-Meta. In Hahi-Meta we had to get water from a well and one day when we were getting water, I heard someone calling me, "Rita, Rita! I am here!" We thought it was my father's ghost so we ran away. But this happened three times until finally, my father came out. He hugged us and said, "Don't be afraid. I'm not dead." We stayed together in Hahi-Meta for another three months and then my uncle picked us up and took us to Aitutua Rina. In January 1976 we fled to the forest, to Kablaki Mountain, but life in the forest was very hard. There was no food, and no medicine to treat my father's wounds from when Fretilin shot him. So in the end we surrendered to ABRI. The Indonesian military took us back to Maubisse and released us to go home.

For several years we lived together with our father, although we were without our beloved mother and our two brothers. But this happiness didn't last too long, because on 31 March 1990 my dear father passed away because his gunshot wounds by Fretilin were badly infected.

*They swung their
machete through his
shoulder and he died
right away.*

Maria Antonia Santos Sousa

Lacló, Manatuto District, 1977-1978

Maria Antonia Santos Sousa gave a harrowing testimony of abuses by Fretilin following the Indonesian invasion in 1975. She told of how her father had been a member of UDT and was taken captive by Fretilin and held in Aileu in 1975. At the time of the Indonesian invasion he escaped and surrendered to Indonesia. "Because of that," Sra Maria said, "all of my family were considered traitors."

Sra Maria told of how her family was taken captive by Fretilin in the mountains of Lacló, Manatutu in 1977. For two years they suffered systematic torture and abuse. She told of how many died in detention. She was able to surrender to the attacking Indonesian forces in 1979.



*Every day
I saw mice eating the
faces and bodies of
those who had died.*

Fretilin began interrogating me about a letter that said my cousin MF and I had been in contact with my father, although they had written the letter themselves. They beat me with a branch of tamarind tree and then finally hit me across the head with a piece of wood, knocking me unconscious. I still suffer effects from that blow today. After several days of this, I admitted to contacting my father, just so they wouldn't kill me.

After that, they interrogated my uncles while hitting them and burning them with hot iron rods. When my uncles screamed, their mouths were stuffed with coconut fibres. That night my uncles and all of the male prisoners had their hands and feet tied to trees, two or three to a tree. I couldn't sleep that night because they cried out in hunger and in pain. Whenever anyone cried out, male or female, they would be beaten again.

After two weeks in Welihumeta, Lacló, we were transferred to another prison in Roluli. On the way, my cousin P asked me to treat his wounds from the beatings. When I rubbed them with tobacco leaves he screamed in pain. His wounds were infested with maggots, the kind of maggots found in buffaloes and goats. It hurt me to see the condition he was in. He had been beaten until his eyeballs had come out of their sockets and as we walked he had to be guided. When an eyeball fell out it would have to be pushed back in.

On the way to Roluli they tied us by our waists to a horse. They sat on the horse, and we had to pull the horse along. When we arrived, the six women were put in a small shack. I was interrogated by A (name suppressed) about the fake letter, which said that my cousin and I had been in contact with my father. I admitted to everything because I had seen the way they treated my cousins, MF and P, who had given answers which did not please Fretilin.

While in Roluli, I was shocked to see members of Fretilin, including B (name suppressed) and his followers and a female teacher, brought there too. They tied them up and threw them in a hole with us and shot them right in front of us, just two metres away. Then we were told to get out of the hole and they buried the bodies.

After Roluli, the six women were separated from the men and taken to a new boarding house in Aileu. At first we were put in a hole filled with fleas, mice and snakes. The hole was covered in wooden panels and the men were tied up above us. We suffered from the fleabites and from being urinated on by the men above us. After three days we were put in a 'rehabilitation hut', where we weren't beaten anymore.

Almost everyone detained with us died, including all of my aunts and my grandmother. They died because they were hungry. Every day I saw mice eating the faces and bodies of those who had died. Later I helped to look after more than 100 children which were kept in a crèche, but all of them died from malnutrition, bad hygiene and the lack of love and care from their parents.

On 19 January 1979, all of us including Commander Montalvao, surrendered in Metinaro. We were taken by the military to Dili where our families picked us up.

After a week, my father came and took me home to Lacló.

*Almost everyone
detained with us died,
including all of my aunts
and my grandmother.
They died because they
were hungry.*



In a spontaneous moment during the hearing, Victoria interrupted Maria's testimony to embrace her, shouting: "Before, my colleagues were Fretilin, and they caused you to suffer... but we have both suffered, we both gave ourselves for the sake of independence... so now we ask the parties to reconcile, just as we embrace here."

Maria Cardoso

Mauulo, Ainaro District, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1982, 1999

Maria Cardoso gave testimony of abuses throughout the 25-year period of the CAVR mandate, beginning with the Timorese internal conflict, up until the TNI and militia violence of 1999. A slim woman now in her 50s, she spoke of years of trying to keep her family together while her husband was in and out of Indonesian military custody, until he finally disappeared in 1982 in the Kablaki central mountain region. Sra Maria had three homes burned over the 25 years of the CAVR's mandate: in 1975 Timorese UDT members took all her possessions and burnt her home; later in the 1970s the Indonesian military burnt her home. In 1999 the Mahidi militia burnt her home.

Sra Maria recounted a chilling episode when, after the disappearance of her husband in 1982, the Indonesian Military took her into custody. Re-enacting how ten soldiers marched her down to the river to be executed, she repeated the words of the "foreign soldiers" barking orders for her to get on the ground and prepare for death.



Ten guns forced me to the ground, ten guns circled me, ten guns pointed at me...but I was able to say "don't kill me just yet. Give me time to pray". Then I took a bit of earth and wiped it on my forehead. I made the sign of cross and prayed "God, my husband fought for this land. If you take me now, please, but if You are truly Most Powerful, make these weapons not fire." After I prayed they pulled the triggers three times but the weapons didn't give off any sound. Then they took me back home.

In 1999 the Mahidi militia began to take action and attacked my house. They burnt it and took all my things so that there was nothing left. At that time, the children and I ran to the forest. We only returned after the militia had fled to Atambua.

All of our experiences have brought suffering. Now, it is hard to meet the every-day cost of living. I make what I can through selling small things. But from that little income I have been able to fund my children's schooling through to university so that they may become smart and useful in building our country, the free nation of Timor-Leste.

*After I prayed they
pulled the triggers three
times but the weapons didn't
give off any sound.*

Olga da Silva Amaral

Mauxiga, Dare, Ainaro District, 1976-1979, 1982

The story of Olga da Silva Amaral brought the hearing to tears with her as she recounted terrible abuse in her village. These experiences, she said, were shared by many women in her area. Arrested by the Indonesian military after four years sheltering in the forest in the central mountains area, Olga began to attend the Catholic school in Ainaro. When she married in 1982, Olga moved to the home of her husband in Mauxiga. She told of the nightmare that unfolded for her and other women during the crackdown after a failed uprising against the Indonesian military.

In 1976, when I was 16 years old, my family ran to the forest on Mount Kablaki. In 1979 ABRI and Hansip began conducting operations on Mount Kablaki. On the eve of Easter, they caught 70 people, including us. My parents were taken to Dare, in Ainaro, while my brother and I were taken to Maubisse. We were brought to SDR who was on duty there and he actually saved us from other ABRI who wanted to torture us. He said to them, "You can't do that. They are still children who know nothing. Let them go back home to their families in Maubisse," and they let us go.

I started attending the Catholic Junior High School in Ainaro, but I only went there for a short time. My parents were constantly terrorised by ABRI who were looking for me, so it was decided that it would be best for me to leave school and get married so that I wouldn't be harassed by them. After I got married, we moved to my husband's home in Mauxiga.

In 1981, I joined other young people in getting food for Falintil. In 1981-1982 ABRI found out that we were helping Falintil in our area and things became much more dangerous. But we continued doing this, and were able to get away with it because our community was very solid. We worked mostly at night because that was when ABRI didn't operate.

But on 11 July 1982 ABRI and Hansip began arresting people who had attended a Falintil meeting several days before. My husband was one of the people they caught. He was kicked and hit with a rifle, and then taken to the ABRI post in Aitutu and then to Hatu-builico for a week. Finally, he was exiled to Atauro. He suffered greatly there for two years.

On 20 August 1982, following the attack by Falintil on the Dare Koramil Post, ABRI launched a major military operation in Dare and Mauxiga regions. They burned down people's houses including mine and attacked a primary school. They captured more men who they sent to Atauro. I helped a Falintil member who had been in the attack and so they started suspecting me. That very evening I was arrested in my home and taken to Dare.

At the time only women were held in the Dare Koramil Post. ABRI and Hansip tortured us one by one. Before I was raped, they hit me in the head with a wooden chair until I bled. I was hit in the ribs with a rifle and kicked in the back with their army boots until I couldn't walk. But they still kept on going. I was given electric shocks to my ears, hands, and feet. I was jumped all over until I felt my blood



*I was given
electric shocks to
my ears, hands,
and feet...*

*I was jumped
all over until I felt
my blood no longer
flowed and I had
no more strength
left in me...*

*Then they started
raping me.*

*They hit me in the
head with a wooden
chair until I bled,

I was hit in the ribs
with a rifle and kicked
in the back with their
army boots until I
couldn't walk.

But they still kept
on going.*

no longer flowed and I had no more strength left in me. Then they started raping me. When they were finished they burned me with a cigarette butt on my face and hands. They tortured me like this for a month. They also used me as their slave. Every day I had to wash their clothes and cook for them as well as other things.

At that time ABRI was using the school behind their office as a sort of a dormitory to hold people they had taken from Mauxiga. But it was actually just a place where they held women to live with them. That's where I stayed. Every day they interrogated me about information about me that had been made up by an East Timorese Hansip. If I said things that didn't fit this Hansip's story, I would be tortured or raped. I wasn't the only one they raped. Even pregnant women and nursing mothers were raped. Their children would be crying, but ABRI just ignored them, all they wanted was to satisfy their lust.

I also witnessed very sadistic treatment of two male friends. The husband of one of the detained women was arrested. His hands were tied behind him then he was tied behind a Hino truck and pulled behind it all over Dare. ABRI and Hansip personnel lining the road hit him with clubs as he was pulled along. His body was totally shattered and all that remained were his bones which appeared white. Only his face appeared to be still whole. Another young man was put inside the plastic lining of a sack used to hold sugar. The plastic was tied and doused in kerosene and then the young man was burned alive. Strangely, although his body was charred, he appeared to be kneeling with his right hand raised above him.

I could no longer stand it, so I made up an excuse to go to the sisters' dormitory in Ainaro. I ran away and went back to school again to keep myself away from threats. But it didn't last long. They made a false statement saying I had contact with Falintil and sent it to the school headmaster, Father Yohanes. In September 1982 I was arrested again at the school and taken to the *Kodim* in Ainaro.

I had to wait until around two in the afternoon, when the Head of Intelligence arrived. He asked his men right away, "So this is Olga? Now you wait, I go wash first." Then I was called not to the interrogation room but to his bedroom to be raped. After that the other intelligence officers interrogated me with various allegations: "Have you ever helped to provide food for Falintil? Is your house a Falintil meeting place?" But I kept on denying, and they started to torture me.

First they teased me, touching me from head to toe. Then they hit me in the head with a wooden chair. Blood ran down my face and my shirt until I was soaked in blood. They also inserted cables in my ears and electrocuted me, and also gave electric shocks to my hands and feet. Each time they threw a question at me, I was burned with cigarette butts or given electric shocks. When I fell down, they raped me. Finally, they took me to a toilet where they held me for three months. When they used the toilet, I went outside. They never flushed. That is where I slept and ate. I was given food once a day in a small condensed milk can. I didn't bathe or change my clothes once in those three months.

*There was
never a day
without rape.*

Once again I was let down by a Timorese Hansip, who tried but failed to rape me when all the ABRI personnel went to Dili for some event. Disappointed, he reported me to them when they returned, “Olga just told me that she misses her Falintil husband in the forest” although I never said that. That night, ABRI took seven men and two women (including me) to dispose of us in Builico [a very deep ravine also known as *Jakarta 2*]. There the men were ordered to stand along the rim and then pushed into the ravine, immediately killing them. When it was time for the women to be pushed, I and the other woman held the legs of the soldier so that if we fell, we would fall together with him. Then the Commander said, “So now what? Do we kill them or do we just take them back?” The other ABRI replied: “Let’s just take them back, the others have died anyway.” When we returned, we were tortured and raped again. There was never a day without rape.

One day a woman detainee was ordered to come to the Kasi Intel Office. She was also treated the same as I was, but she was held at the *Kodim*. When she came by the office, she saw me in the toilet then whispered through a small hole on the wall: “It’s better if you just admit whatever they ask you...tell them that I am your leader.” So I told them exactly that. After getting the confirmation from that woman, they moved me to a regular cell. Three months later, in April 1983, I was released.

Not long after I got back to Dare, my husband was released from Ataúro. Our two families gathered to discuss all the problems I had faced while I was in the hands of the Indonesian military. My husband and I received counselling from a priest. I decided to just tell everything to my husband because what I had experienced had been forced on me against my will. The priest asked my husband if he wanted to take me back as his wife and he said yes. From then on we both returned to Mauxiga to form a happy family.

Before all of this we had not had any children, so we were very eager to have children. I tried for ten years, before I went to a doctor to be examined. He said that I might not be able to get pregnant because all the torture and rape might have damaged my reproductive organs. Then I went to a traditional healer to be massaged, and she gave me traditional medicine. Finally I got pregnant. When I delivered my baby, the process was excruciating. I have given birth to four children in all, but when I had my last one I almost died.

Beatriz Miranda Guterres

Lalerek Mutin, Viqueque District, 1983-1985, 1988, 1991, 1993

Beatriz Miranda Guterres is a survivor of the Kraras Massacre of 1983, in Viqueque. She was two months pregnant when she surrendered to the Indonesian military while attempting to flee with her husband to the forest. Her husband Andre Alves managed to escape. However, days after giving birth, she surrendered and they managed to stay together for one month. When he was called back by the military to be employed he mysteriously disappeared. Her baby later died at only 14 months due to lack of medicine. After these painful events she was forced into three “marriages” with Indonesian soldiers. Her story highlights the terrible situation Timorese women were often put in, including the social pressure to sacrifice themselves to protect family and community members from the Indonesian military, and the struggle to gain respect in her society.



*Because if you
resist, we all will die.
It is better to sell your
soul to save our
heads.*

We were forced by ABRI to join the advance troops at Lalerek Mutin. Every night other women friends and I had to patrol the area to prevent it from being attacked by Fretilin. The women were mostly widows whose husbands had died during the Kraras massacre. Every night when we did our rounds, we were threatened and harassed, but I never fell into their hands. If we didn't obey the patrol duties, we would be beaten, tortured, even submerged in a pool of water.

One night ABRI held a dance party at Lalerek Mutin. I had heard that they held these parties to lure the Falintil out of the forests by dancing with the widows in the village. I did not want to attend the party because I was still mourning the death of my baby son. So when I was called for by A (name suppressed), a Kopassus soldier, to attend the dance, I made every excuse I could think of not to come. But the men he sent to pick me up warned me not to disobey his wishes, or I'd be tortured. So, afraid that they would hurt me, I decided to go. I didn't dress up for the occasion, I just wrapped myself in a sarong. As I approached the place I saw A (name suppressed) from a distance with his gun waiting for me in front of the village office. He walked up to me and asked me what I had been doing at home, and then taunted me by saying, “Maybe there's GPK in your house?” which I denied.

When he asked me to dance I agreed although I felt so sad, remembering my son. I was really scared, but I just kept silent. We danced all night. In the morning he told me to go home and he said that he would follow. Since it was already early morning when I got home, I immediately packed some food and went to the paddy fields with my cousin. We ate a little, then I fell asleep while my cousin watched over the rice paddy.

Not long after, A (name suppressed) came looking for me. He was with a Hansip and a couple of Timorese men. The men suddenly started running. A (name suppressed) woke me up and asked me if I had seen some men running. I denied that I had seen anyone, and this must have made him angry because he slapped me and knocked me down. When I tried to get back up he stepped on my chest so that I was stretched out flat on my back. He proceeded to hit me with a branch of cassava bush until it broke into pieces. I ran back home but they were following me. Before I got to the house, my sister-in-law had reported the incident to our Village Head (RK), the Neighbourhood Head (RT), and a neighbour. They came over to see me, but they just stood there in silence. A (name suppressed) arrived at the house not long after.

He asked my mother, in Tetum, for a pan to boil water. Apparently he wanted to make some compresses for my swollen body. When they saw this, my mother-in-law, the RK and RT said to me, "It's alright. You take him. No one will ridicule you if you marry him. This is not your desire, but we all know it happened because you were forced into it. Because if you resist, we all will die. It is better to sell your soul to save our heads." I replied, "You all talk like this, but what if the situation returns to normal? My parents will come and what will you tell them about me?" They answered, "If they ask in the future, we will have the words to explain it to them, because in a situation like this, there is nothing we can do."

When the water was hot they all started applying compresses to me. Some put compresses on my face, others put them on my hands and legs until I began to feel better and the swelling went down. Then everyone went home, except for A (name suppressed). He stayed and from that moment on we lived as husband and wife for one year. He then returned to Indonesia. I was pregnant with his child, but after three months I had a miscarriage.

In 1991 a new Kopassus soldier arrived in Lalerek Mutin. His name was B (name suppressed). One day, as three friends and I went to the fields, he began following us. He began shooting in our direction when we got there, so we ran back to our house in fear. My friends then started pressuring me into becoming B's wife in order to save myself. I was so ashamed, I stood up and said, "Alright! I will tear myself in two. The lower half I will give to him, but the upper half is for my land, the land of Timor."

They said to me, "Don't be afraid, don't run. Maybe you have to suffer like this because your husband was killed, whereas you are still alive. It doesn't matter. Our lives are all the same." Then B walked with me and the whole time we walked I only answered each of his questions with simply "Yes". When we reached my house I wasn't angry anymore like I had been earlier. I was just resigned to my fate. We lived as husband and wife and I had a child by him, ZBJ.

In 1993, Battalion 408 arrived. When we were cutting rice in the fields one day, a soldier named C (name suppressed) and his commander came. They began to fight over me. They even shot at each other but no one was hurt. The RT and RK took them to the Village Office, and they fought there too, right in the office of the village chief.

*I stood up and
said, 'Alright! I will tear
myself in two. The lower
half I will give to him,
but the upper half is for
my land, the land of
Timor.'*

Beatriz Miranda Guterres

*When I tried to
get back up he stepped
on my chest so that I
was stretched out
flat on my back.*

*He proceeded
to hit me with a branch
of cassava bush until it
broke into pieces.*

The village chief, D (name suppressed), became angry, “Now they are killing each other because of you. And here life is still hard for us. If you want, one is enough, don’t take both.” I replied, “Sir, I didn’t go there to play around. You all know how I live. I was just in the fields cutting rice. These men suddenly appeared and began fighting.” The RT, RK, and the Village Chief just continued to swear at me. I was silent and took it all in. After that, the commander didn’t come back, but C (name suppressed) came and stayed at my house. From that relationship I had a girl, ZBSA. When she was only a few months old, C (name suppressed) left. I have lived with my two children ever since.

People suspected me as a *bihu* (spy) because I was an “army wife”. People would talk about me and say that I was no good because I had lived with three men. Sometimes I got angry. If I heard them talking about me, I would tell them, “If you say I am *bihu*, that’s not because my husband was killed for stealing or taking other men’s wives. Yes it’s true I am an ‘army wife’, but none of you know what I think.” After that, they didn’t talk about me again.

*Audience members weep openly
during Olga da Silva Amaral’s testimony:
the whole audience was moved to
tears several times during the two day
hearing, as the survivors recounted
their most traumatic experiences.*



Fernanda Soares

Liquiça and Dili Districts, 1976-1999

Fernanda Soares told of her work with the women's group Organização Popular da Mulher Timor, in the years 1976-1978, including organising women in the forest in their work supporting Fretilin. They also gathered information about women who had been caught, tortured and raped in parts of Liquiça and Bobonaro Districts. She told of her active participation in the clandestine movement from 1980, including carrying food and medicines to Falintil in the mountains. She also spoke of the terror of Dili in 1999 before UNAMET arrived, of her son's capture and torture by the Besi Merah Putih Militia, and her own detention and interrogation by TNI. When UNAMET arrived she sought protection from them, but was handed to the Indonesian police for protection, where she was again beaten and interrogated.

Her house was burnt down after the Popular Consultation.

In 1981 I married Jorge Da Costa in a church and from our marriage we were blessed with two children. But our life together was hard because my husband, a former political prisoner, was kept under close watch by ABRI.

Then in June 1982, after another Falintil attack on ABRI in Dili, they arrested my husband again. He was taken for interrogation to West Dili Koramil and was kept there with four others for two months. Since their release, all five have died from injuries they received while in detention.

My husband had been kicked and beaten until his ribs were broken. He complained of chest pains right up to the time he died in 1992.

As to my own role, I was active in the clandestine movement from 1980. I also helped in planning trade of basic things like food and medicines with Falintil. In 1989 I was involved in the attack on the 744 ABRI barracks in Taibessi in which one of the ABRI commanders was caught and killed by Falintil, and his body was burned right there and then in the ABRI complex.

In 1989, I also got involved in making banners and an RDT-L flag to celebrate the visit of Pope John Paul II to Timor-Leste on 12 October 1989 in Tasi Tolu (Dili). I arranged getting the supplies needed, like fabric and thread and then, with a friend, we sewed the flag and banner.

Maybe someone in the neighbourhood leaked information about the work I was doing, because a week after the flag and banner were finished I was arrested by ABRI agents and taken to the Dili police station. They interrogated me about what I had been doing at my house and who the people were that often visited me. I told them that the man was my husband's relative from Ainaro, but he was really one of our links to Falintil in the forest. I told them that the woman was my friend and that we were planning to open a kiosk together, but really she was coming to make plans to meet some of the Falintil commanders. I was freed after two weeks because they didn't get the information they were looking for.



*I watched with my
own eyes how
[BMP militia] beat my
son together with other
youths...until they were
bleeding and their faces
were a bloody mess.
Some of them were
stabbed.*

*TNI came
again to my house
and I ran away to the
CNRT office...
CNRT called
UNAMET who picked
me up and took me
to their office in
Balide.*

In 1996 I was entrusted by Commander Tuloda to join the OPMT network in Dili to organise all clandestine activities in the Vera Cruz Zone. Then in 1998, together with the Student Solidarity Council, we held demonstrations in front of the DPRD and Governor's office. I helped to cook food for the students who participated in the demonstrations.

The army intelligence began to suspect that there was a CNRT office in my house, and so one morning after the demonstrations, they surrounded my house and took my son C. ABRI held him and beat him for two or three days, released him and then caught him again. They started bringing him in and beating him almost every week until I couldn't bear it and I ran away with my children to stay with a friend in the clandestine movement.

In April 1999, the Aitarak and Besi Merah Putih (BMP) militias set up a post in Caicoli. On 6 April 1999 there was a militia attack on the pro-independence community in Liquiça and TNI instructed the intelligence to raid my house (in Caicoli) because they knew that I was involved in the clandestine movement and that I was pro-independence. They caught my son C and detained him for two days and two nights in the Dili Police Headquarters. I reported them to the Red Cross. Together with Bishop Belo's help, they were able to get my son out of jail.

For almost a month my children and I stayed with different people in the church and the clandestine movement, moving on when we heard we would be attacked. Finally, when our neighbours told us it was safe, we returned home to Caicoli, but Intel and militia still checked on us.

After the BMP militia attacked Manuel Carrascalão's house on 25 April 1999, they came to my house and accused my son, C, of keeping weapons. They came and arrested him later on that night. He and I were both taken to the Caicoli Village Office. I watched with my own eyes how they beat my son together with other youths caught from RT I Caicoli until they were bleeding and their faces were a bloody mess. Some of them were stabbed. Some were in so much pain that they cried out that they would rather die than be tortured like this. I was so upset, I was screaming at them to just kill them rather than to continue torturing them. My son and I were released that afternoon but there were others that were kept inside.

Around May 1999 I was caught again when the TNI found an *apelo* (a donation card issued to people who had contributed to help Falintil in the forest) in the house of my friend A (name suppressed). They asked A who had given the card and she told them I had given it to her. So the TNI came and arrested me and took me to the Babinsa in Caicoli village. The agents were mocking me and saying there is no use for a woman to be in politics, it is impossible for a person like me to be a leader in this country, and that I could only ever be a servant for Falintil in the forest. In other words, that I was only good enough to be a Falintil concubine. I just kept my mouth shut. Finally they let me go.

After UNAMET arrived in Dili in June 1999, TNI came again to my house and I ran away to the CNRT office in Audian. Some of the CNRT representatives called UNAMET who came and picked me up and took me to their office in Balide. But when we got there, they handed me straight back to the police because they said they didn't have a mandate to protect pro-independence or pro-autonomy people, they had to be independent and impartial. They left me at the police station, and straight away a TNI officer there grabbed my hair, smashed my head against the wall, and yelled at me. They put me in a cell and held me for interrogation for 24 hours.

They asked me whether I knew the whereabouts of GPK or Falintil and I answered, "I know where Falintil is, they are at the office of the TNI Commander." They got really angry then and wanted to electrocute me, but thankfully there was a police officer from Flores or Atambua who stood up for me and said to the TNI, "Don't do that. Have some mercy, she's a woman and you have interrogated her for a long time and it's boring. It's natural that she's so upset." They kept me until 11 o'clock at night, and then took me to the house of one of the policemen. They told him to take care of me and if anything happened to me that he would be held responsible. I stayed with the policeman and his family for three months.

After hearing the results of the popular consultation I immediately fled to the forest. TNI and the BMP militia couldn't find me, but they burned down my house anyway.

*But [UNAMET]
handed me straight
back to the police...
they said they didn't
have a mandate to
protect people...*

*They left me at the
police station, and
straight away a TNI
officer there grabbed
my hair and smashed
my head against
the wall.*



From left: Olga Corte Real,
CAVR Victim Support Staff
Member Celina Martins
Fernandes, Fernanda Soares.

Leonia Amaral Soares

Manatuto and Viqueque Districts, 1979, 1983, 1996-1997

Sra Leonia Amaral Soares spent four years between 1975 and 1979 in the forests of Manatuto and Viqueque with Falintil. She told of worsening conditions, of the danger and of lack of food and medicine. She saw dying people having to be left on the side of the road as people fled attacks by the Indonesian military. In 1979 she surrendered to the Indonesian forces in Rai Hun, Viqueque. Her story is one of repeated illegal detention by the Indonesian military, of torture and of sexual abuse. She spoke of living in constant fear right up until 1999. She also spoke of the difficult social and cultural position of women who had been held by the military, and of the stigmatisation by her family and community which compounded the suffering she had already experienced.



I want to give witness in this public hearing because I am a woman who experienced violence and my name has been tainted everywhere because I was caught by ABRI so many times.

We surrendered to Battalion 721 in Rai Hun, Viqueque, in March 1979. We returned to Buikaren. Every night Commander L forced us to sing and dance on the back of the truck between Buikaren and Viqueque. After a week I was released but a few days later Commander L's people caught me again. They held me in a chicken coop until July 1979. When I menstruated my family would bring me clothes.

I was released after six months, but it was not long before they caught me again, this time with two friends, A and TP. Every day we were called to give the Kasi I a massage in his room. We were holding hands because we were scared we would be raped, and when we walked in we saw him lying on the bed completely naked. We did not want to come closer so he came up to us, poking and rubbing his penis on our bodies. We cried every night remembering how we had been treated like animals.

In 1980 Father D arrived in Viqueque. He was known as a priest who had contact with Fretilin in the forest. Father D asked his former students, including myself, to teach at the Luca Wetudo primary school. In 1983 we moved to the Viqueque Catholic primary school. It was in August that year that the Kraras massacre happened, which took so many men, women and children's lives. Because we were church members we were closely watched. One evening, in November 1983, I was taken by a member of Nanggala, Sub-district Administrator B (name suppressed), my first husband, and five Hansips to the Nanggala's house in Boramata, Viqueque.

That night I was hit, kicked, shoved with a rifle and stomped on with army boots. My hands were put on a table and then I was beaten with a rod. I found out that I had been captured because someone had seen me walk with Father D and Bishop Belo, who were contacting the resistance fighters in the forest.

When there was a bit more laxity in the prison, I took the chance to see my friends in other cells. When my family brought rice or soup I would share it with the other prisoners. My friends were beaten so badly. Some had their legs broken, others their hands, backs, or thighs. Some of them died. Some have disappeared until this day. At that time the Sub-district Administrator B (name suppressed) had a lot of influence in the military command centre in Viqueque. He stomped on me with military boots and punched my cheeks. He also slapped me and told ABRI to shove me with rifles from midnight until morning.

I had problems with my ex-husband. After we divorced, he wanted to take our daughter. When I refused to give her to him he reported me to ABRI and told them that I was involved in clandestine activities. But as he saw my daughter grow up, he and his family asked my daughter and I to return to him. I answered "You used to make me carry my child, walk here and there to be tried everywhere." The police, the sub-district office, no one defended me. Everyone took sides with my ex-husband because I was a woman involved in politics.

From 1983 until 1987, my life was never peaceful. I was always suspected of engaging in clandestine work, which I did. In 1996-1997 I moved from Dilor to the transmigration area SP-2 in Sungai Welolo, Luca, Viqueque. Even there, my life was not safe. Every night I was spied on by ABRI. They were sleeping all around my house, and I knew they were there because I could see their cigarettes being lit. Sometimes I did not sleep at home, but in the forest or in the tall grass. Sometimes I was held up by military on the way and they would threaten to kill me. I am grateful that I am still alive today.

In 1998 and 1999 it was not safe to go anywhere. Many died and their bodies were secretly disposed of. In 1999 my family was ready to kill me because of all the problems with my ex-husband. We all know that in 1999 we were all separated because of the Indonesian militia. I want to give witness in this public hearing because I am a woman who experienced violence and my name has been tainted everywhere because I was caught by ABRI so many times. Even though I have never been raped, I will always be known as "smelling bad" because of the arrests.

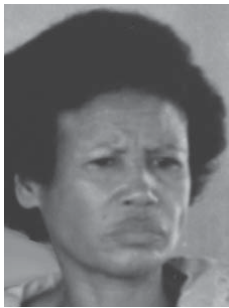
*Every night I was
spied on by ABRI.
They were sleeping all
around my house, and
I knew they were there
because I could see their
cigarettes being lit.*

*Sometimes I didn't
sleep at home, but in
the forest or in the
tall grass.*

Natalia dos Santos

Baucau, Lautem and Liquiça Districts, 1979, 1982, 1987

Sra Natalia dos Santos gave testimony of her experience being forced to participate in the Indonesian state family planning (KB) programme. As wife of a Timorese soldier in the Indonesian armed forces she was required to take part in the programme even though she wanted to have children. From her marriage in 1979 to September 1999 she was pressured to use various forms of contraception under threat that her husband would be punished if she didn't cooperate. In this time she suffered the loss of two unborn babies.



Each time I was told to switch from one method of KB to another by the doctor, I felt depressed, because I was being treated like a guinea pig to make KB a success. But I couldn't do anything about it because of my husband's status, so I had to allow the ABRI doctors to do whatever they wanted with me. I am very sad because I have never had any children. The effects of all of the kinds of birth control that I have used include itchiness in my vagina that can't be treated, and I continue to lose weight.

*I had to allow the ABRI doctors
to do whatever they wanted
with me. I am very sad because
I have never had any children.*



From left: Commissioners Olandina Caeiro, Aniceto Guterres Lopes, Isabel Guterres; and witnesses Olga Corte Real, Fernanda Soares, and Olga da Silva Amaral

Olga Corte Real

Datina, Same, Manufahi District; 1975-1978, 1980, 1992-1994

Sra Olga Corte Real told of how in the 1970s her father was a Falintil commander in the Mount Kablaki Region, and that after the Indonesian military attack of 1977 her family fled and dispersed. Her father, mother and a younger sibling were killed by the Indonesian military, and her six-month-old sibling disappeared. In 1980, she said, her younger brother died from being beaten in prison. This left just four girls in the family. She spoke of her work in the clandestine movement from 1982, of how in the 1990s she brought medicine to Falintil soldiers in the mountains, and how she was repeatedly captured, interrogated and tortured by Indonesian soldiers because of this work.

When in 1990 I became a nurse at a community health clinic in the village of Datina, Manufahi, I was able to take home medicine needed by Falintil in the forest. In October 1991 my cousin and I and her husband, the head of the village of Datina, met the Falintil commander of Region IV, Konis Santana, and his group in the forest. We talked about their lack of medicine and food and I gave him the medicines that I had brought. In July 1992, I met Xanana in Datina after he had been working together with Konis Santana for one month. I also gave medicine to Xanana, Ma'huno, and Riak Leman along with others accompanying them.

Maybe there was a military spy who reported my activities because in early November 1992 a Timorese policeman and members of the Indonesian military from the *Koramil* in Manufahi arrested me and three others. The district military commander took us to the base camp in Same. He asked me if I had taken medicines to Xanana. I told him that I had not given the medicines directly to Xanana, but had sent them through an *estafeta*. Then he threatened me so that I would give him the names of the other women who worked with me. I told him that the only ones involved in the clandestine activities were my cousin and younger sister and I, even though there were other women who also worked with us. He told me that if he heard that there were other women who had been working with me, he would cut my head off himself.

Suddenly, a member of *Nanggala* appeared and took me to another house where I was interrogated by an intelligence police officer. There was another policeman there who said that I had been sleeping with Xanana. Then two people, including my cousin's husband, were told to take turns sitting on a chair to crush my toes until my toenails were black.

On 19 November 1992, the TNI district commander and a car full of his men came to my in-laws' house in Datina, where I was living. He forced me to tell him about some documents and a Fretilin flag which he said my brother-in-law had hidden. I told them I knew nothing about any documents or Fretilin flag. They forced me to take apart the prayer cabinet to find the document and the flag, all the while shoving me with rifles. If they found the flag and the documents, they said, they would kill me right away. I really did not know anything, and my heart trembled hoping that those items would not be hidden under the prayer cabinet. They searched all day, but found nothing, so they went back to their base camp late in the afternoon.



*From July 1997
until today I have
not met again with
Konis Santana.*

*There are some who
say that he has already
died, but I have never
heard for sure.*

The next day, two Indonesian doctors saved me. Knowing that I could be tortured or even killed, they took me to work at the Same Public Hospital.

The next day, two Indonesian doctors saved me. Knowing that I could be tortured or even killed, they took me to Same to work at the Same Public Hospital on the reception counter. However, at my new work there were some co-workers who did not like me because they knew I had worked with Falintil in the forest. They would often laugh at me, asking me why I did it. I would tell them that providing assistance was the job of someone who works in the reception booth. I did not pay much attention to them, because if I contradicted them I could have been moved to another department. I had to be strong, because I could use that job on reception to get medicine for Falintil.

Several times between December 1992 and January 1993, ABRI interrogated me. In March 1993, Commander Konis Santana sent me a letter by way of an *estafeta*, who then gave the letter to a *Nanggala*. After reading it, they commanded the *estafeta* to take the letter back to the village head of Datina, my cousin-in-law. A week later the *Nanggala* took the letter back from the village head and came looking for me. The *Nanggala* read Konis Santana's letter to me, which requested that I buy a camera... they forced me to write a letter in response to Konis Santana, but I didn't want to. They were not satisfied, so they took my cousin-in-law and me to the *Nanggala* post in Same, where again they tried to force me to respond to Konis Santana's letter. But I kept refusing. My cousin-in-law told me to write the reply so that I would not be tortured. Finally I agreed. Twice I wrote a letter but they did not like what I had written, so in the end they wrote the letter themselves in Indonesian and forced me to translate it into Tetum. In the letter, I was appealing to Konis Santana to surrender. The *Nanggala* slipped Rp10,000 into the letter and gave it to an *estafeta* to take to the forest.

From 1 January 1993 until April 1994 I was obliged to participate in the morning assembly at the military command centre in Same. Even though I was obliged to participate in their assembly, my clandestine work and work with Falintil in the forests continued until 1995. There were people, even some people in my family, who distanced themselves from me because I was helping with clandestine work. However I remained strong and continued my father's fight to achieve victory for this nation, already so full of blood and tears. From July 1997 until today I have not met again with Konis Santana. There are some who say that he has already died, but I have never heard for sure.

*They said
they would kill
me right away.*

Feliciano Cardoso

Suai, Covalima District, September 6 and 14, 1999

Sra Feliciano Cardoso told of the massacre at the Suai Church in September 1999 by the Laksaur/Mahidi Militia and TNI. She told of how she witnessed the killing of Fr Francisco and her husband. She told of the detention of the women at the police station, and of how her niece was taken away and raped. Taken by militia to Betun in West Timor, she spoke of how the women were terrorised by militia every day until they escaped and returned to Timor-Leste in November 1999.

After my family participated in the referendum on 30 August 1999, we immediately sought refuge in the church because the city of Suai was controlled by a joint group of the Laksaur and Mahidi militia, TNI, and the Lorosae Police Contingent. It was very dangerous, and we thought the only way to be safe was to stay in the church.

On 6 September in the afternoon, at exactly three o'clock, the joint militia started reacting to the results of the referendum by shooting. They shot at all of the people who were hiding inside the high school building, and then the Laksaur militia came to the church. First they smashed all of the windows and then they broke down the doors and stormed inside. They ordered everyone who was hiding inside to come out and surrender. Some of us did not leave, including my three children and myself. Others chose to go out and surrender, including my husband. The militia then began to shoot the people who were outside. Somehow my husband managed to escape and run back into Fr Hilario's room but all of the others were killed.

My husband and I, with our children and a few others, were hiding in Fr Hilario's room when they set fire to the church. The fire forced us to run from the room outside to the residence next to the church. I could not see my husband anymore. Outside the residence I saw Fr Francisco holding up his hands and telling the Laksaur/Mahidi, "Enough. Stop shooting. We are all Timorese. Stop this." He screamed seeing so many fallen victims, but the Laksaur/Mahidi ignored him. Then a militia member (name suppressed) from Raimean Village approached Fr Francisco. He pretended to hug Fr Francisco, then escorted him from the residence down to the Virgin Mary's Grotto and back up to the residence. He shot Fr Francisco there but he didn't die straight away, so he took a sword and stabbed him once in the chest. Fr Francisco was dead after that.

When he heard the militia member (name suppressed) shooting Fr Francisco my husband ran outside. He was distraught when he saw that Fr Francisco had been shot. There was a group of Laksaur/Mahidi members outside of the church named (three names suppressed). They were in street clothes, but they carried AR 16, SKS weapons and a sword. They began shooting at my husband but their weapons didn't fire. One of the militia asked my husband, "Why don't you run?" My husband replied, "I am a man. I'd rather be shot and die on my own land! Viva Xanana Gusmao! Viva Timor Loro Sae!" Then the militia named A (name suppressed) took a sword and stabbed my husband in his right hip and it came out on the other side. He slashed him again and again and at four o'clock in the afternoon my husband drew his last breath.



*The militia...
took a sword and
stabbed my husband
in his right hip and
it came out on the
other side.*

*He slashed him
again and again and
at four o'clock in
the afternoon my
husband drew his
last breath.*

*Those of us still alive
then were called outside.*

*We were dragged and
pulled, kicked with army
boots, stomped on, and
beaten.*

Those of us still alive then were called outside. We were dragged and pulled, kicked with army boots, stomped on, and beaten. They held guns and machetes on us from the church all the way to the Suai *Kodim* Post. We saw many people at the *Kodim*, including Domingas, the wife of the Head of Zumalai zone, with her daughters. We were detained at the *Kodim* for several days where we were repeatedly yelled and sworn at. They gave us leftovers to eat but we did not eat because we were scared they had poisoned the food. On 13 September 1999, the Kasdim ordered us to be evacuated to Betun. We left in four trucks, but at Camenasa they left us on the side of the road.

The next night a member of the Laksaur militia (name suppressed) took my niece Agustinha, who was with me at the time, away in a car. The same night, two people in our group, Lourdes Noronha and Domingas, went to ask for help from a Mahidi militia member whose face they recognised. He took our group to Betun on foot, escorted by two policemen on motorcycles. Walking from the border at Camenasa to Betun took 8 hours.

We arrived in Betun on 15 September 1999 and at ten o'clock that morning, my niece Agustinha was brought back by Laksaur (name suppressed) on a motorcycle. When she got off the motorcycle she couldn't walk and we could see she had been raped. She was covered in bruises and she had blood around her vagina. I had to treat her myself with betel nut leaves soaked in hot water.

In Betun we lived at the police station for two months, but we never felt safe because the militia terrorised us every day and night. We could not bear it any longer and when we heard that some refugees had returned to Suai we ran off in secret.

We got back to Suai on 11 November 1999.



Ines da Conceicao Lemos

Ermera District, 1999

Sra Ines da Conceicao Lemos is the mother of the murdered UNAMET staff member Ana Lemos, of Ermera. She gave anguished testimony of the last days of her daughter's life. Ana was raped and tortured in her neighbours garden by the local militia Darah Merah and TNI before she was taken away and murdered.

My daughter Ana married her husband (name suppressed) in 1988. He was a member of the Indonesian Police (*Polri*). They had two children together, FDELX born in 1989 and RGLX, in 1993. They divorced in 1994, because of irreconcilable political differences. Ana, a civil servant, was a staunch pro-independence supporter, which contradicted her husband's pro-autonomy stance. Custody of both children was given to Ana.

In 1999, Ana worked at UNAMET helping to organise the popular consultation in Ermera. At the same time, she would often visit and bring food to the pro-independence prisoners from various districts who were detained at the Gleno prison. SGI (Coordinated Intelligence Unit) and the *Darah Merah* (Red Blood) Militia watched over everything she did.

On 28 August 1999, Ana gave her children to me to look after because she was busy working at UNAMET. But also, she told me then that she felt something was going to happen to her. After the referendum, on 30 August in the afternoon, TNI raided Ana's house. They caught her and tortured her, as well as two other women, UNTIM students who lived with her. Luckily, she was rescued by a Brimob Captain from Irian Jaya, who brought them to a UNAMET political affairs officer for protection. That night, Ana and her friends slept at the UNAMET headquarters in Ermera.

On 31 August 1999 after the popular consultation, the polling station where Ana was on duty was surrounded by the militia, police and TNI. When they were finally allowed to go, as they drove out of the station, Ana pretended to be the "girlfriend" of an international observer. She wore a hat and sunglasses and in the car she leaned on the shoulder of her western "boyfriend". The militia was checking all outgoing cars for pro-independence Timorese to be detained. When the militia approached her car, the policeman from Irian Jaya quickly approached and pretended to inspect the passengers inside. When the militia moved on to another car, the policeman exclaimed, "Thank God", and they safely drove to Dili.

Plans to take Ana to Australia failed, as she was constantly watched by military intelligence. She met her former husband who was at the police headquarters at the time and he exclaimed—"How can you run to Australia leaving our children here?" So she ended up returning to Gleno on 4 September. But on her way back she was picked up by a police vehicle and escorted to the *Kodim* in Gleno. According to witnesses, she was tortured and possibly raped there.



*We could see
her and we could
hear her screams, but
we couldn't do
anything to help her.*

*One of my children...
brought Ana's clothes.*

*These clothes were
found in a grave without
a name in the middle of
the forest in Ermera.*

On 11 September 1999, at around five-thirty in the afternoon, Ana found me and her two children. A (name suppressed) and his men were with her. Because our house in Ermera had been burned down, we stayed in the home of our neighbours, AC and his wife, AG. Ana stayed there, while A (name suppressed) and his men returned to *Kodim* by car. Around eight o'clock that night they came back. He sat in the living room and called for Ana to join him. In front of all of us he pulled Ana to him, and started hugging and kissing her. A (name suppressed) said to me, "She has already become my second wife. You old women and young girls, prepare yourself, soon each of you can will be confessing your sins to me," meaning he wanted to rape all the women there. My heart ached to see my child being treated like that and I had to leave the room. Then AG put Ana's daughters inside so that they wouldn't have to see what was being done to their mother.

Then A (name suppressed) dragged Ana outside to the front of the house next to the stairs on the verandah and proceeded to rape her. We could see her and we could hear her screams, but we could not do anything to help her. Before leaving, he knocked on the door, "You, open the door and call your daughter back in." Ana came in crying, "I am so ashamed they treated me like an animal. Did you hear me being raped next to the stairs?" She would not eat, asked only for a glass of water. She asked me and AC to come inside, where she took off her clothes and showed us, crying, "See my body, it is destroyed. Everyone raped me." I saw for myself that her whole body from her breasts to her genitals was all black and her skin was rubbed raw.

The next morning at around seven o'clock they came back again to take her. Ana simply followed them, but before she went she gave us Rp200,000 and told us, "Request a mass for me now." They took her away, and we did what she wanted. We asked Fr Ignacio to lead a mass to ask for protection over Ana. Upon returning from mass, Ana and A (name suppressed) came back, but we were forced to get in the car and were taken to the house of a leader of Darah Merah militia in Gleno. A (name suppressed) then drove Ana around on his motorbike as if to parade her in front of everyone in Gleno.

On 13 September Commander B (name suppressed) of the Darah Merah militia arrived to pick up Ana. I knew they were going to take Ana and I tried to go with her, but they wouldn't let me. Before she went, Ana whispered to me, "Mama, B (name suppressed) has come to get me. I will die now for sure." I waited for her all day, but she never came back. Around five o'clock C (name suppressed), a militia member, showed up and said, "Mama, don't wait too long because she is dead already." I did not want to believe him and said, "Show me her body." He just answered, "This is the first time I've seen Ermera people kill a woman."

There were witnesses who told me that she was raped before being murdered. Someone else, who was with the people who took Ana that day, told me B (name suppressed) and his younger brother D (name suppressed) killed her.

We all had to go to Atambua then, but a few days after we came back, on 5 November, one of my children named I, a Falintil commander, came and brought Ana's clothes. These clothes were found in a grave without a name in the middle of the forest in Ermera.

Fernanda dos Reis Araújo

Vila Verde, Dili District, 1999

Fernanda dos Reis spoke of her experience in September 1999, after Interfet had arrived. Labelled as a family member of pro-autonomy supporters, she told of how she was threatened by pro-independence youths who demanded that she give her house to their families. Despite reporting this to Interfet, she told how her possessions were destroyed and stolen.

When Interfet arrived on 20 September 1999 and the pro-independence supporters returned from the mountains, they started pelting my house with stones every night until morning, so I could not sleep. My child and the rest of my family had already sought refuge in Atambua so I was living at the house alone to try to keep it safe and look after it. The pro-independence youths were throwing the rocks to try and force me out so that they could move into it.

From 25-27 September 1999, I was harassed by these pro-independence youth. First, a man called A (name suppressed), who was the head of the Vila Verde Family Neighbourhood Unit (*Rukun Keluarga*), said to me, “Autonomy has lost, so you have to leave now, go follow your friends home to Kupang. You have to give up your house and the land to us to live in, because our houses have been burned down by your friends.” I answered, “This land and this house don’t make politics, people make politics. If you want to find a house, find an empty government building, but I won’t give up my own private house.” Then I was sworn at with the word: *Caralho!* (male genitalia).

The next day I was standing out the front of the house. A (name suppressed) came up again and demanded that I give him the house, claiming that it was built from extortion money. I told him that my grandfather had built it and I said I would report him to Interfet. He said that if I reported him, he would kill me. I went to Interfet anyway but I didn’t have a chance to report him so I went home again. On the way back, A (name suppressed) and his friend rode past me on a motorcycle and yelled, “Hey if you have reported this to Interfet foreigners, it wouldn’t be hard for us to kill you right now.”

The next day I was attacked by A’s (name suppressed) son B (name suppressed) and his friends who entered my home without my knowing. They tried to get me out: “You get out of here. Don’t say a word. If you don’t get out we’ll strip you naked and throw you in the fire.” Because the situation had become so serious, I reported this incident to Interfet. I told them that there were people who had come threatening to kill me and destroy my house. Then an Interfet captain, with four fully armed troops, came over and stood in front of my house.

Before the Interfet soldiers went home, they said, “If they attack again madam, report it to my base immediately.” But after they had left, my house was taken apart, all my plates and glasses were smashed, and my furniture like cupboards and wardrobes were taken away, I do not know who for. I just let it happen, because these are the consequences of a struggle.



*My house
was taken apart,
all my plates and
glasses were smashed,
and my furniture like
cupboards and
wardrobes were
taken away.*

Domingas Ulan

Lela Ufe, Nitibe, Oecusse District, 21 September 1999

Sra Domingas Ulan told about militia and TNI violence in Oecussi after the 30 August 1999 ballot, and how she was raped by a militia member from her community. She told of her pain in knowing that this person lives freely in Dili today as if nothing ever happened. Asked by Commissioners what she needed in order to live in peace, Sra Domingas said that she needed justice according to the traditions of her village and justice according to the law.



*I wanted to
speak out but it was
as if my lips were
stitched together.*

*I asked myself,
why must I carry
this burden in
my life?*

My husband, JN, together with our neighbour, PT, were members of CNRT. Because we were known to have engaged in clandestine activities in the past the militia kept an eye on us. As rumours of Timor-Leste's independence were increasingly heard, and the militia and TNI began reacting to it, my husband and his friend would flee to the forest during the day to avoid being attacked. At night they would return home.

The twenty-first of September 1999 was the most vicious of times because the power was in the hands of the Sakunar Militia. A (name suppressed) was a Sakunar militia commander in Lela-Ufe, and his younger brother B (name suppressed) was a member of the militia and lived in the same village as we did. These two people gave false information to my husband and his friend PT so they would quickly sign up to be moved to Oelbinose, a village on the border between North Central Timor (West Timor) and Ambeno. They threatened, "We will destroy the homes of anyone who doesn't follow (to Oelbinose)."

After my husband and PT left, these two men came to my house. A (name suppressed) knocked on the door and said, "Sister, please open the door". Because I was scared, I opened the door and let him in. After he was inside, he accused me of being the person who cooked for JP, a clandestine member, now the *Nurep* in Nitibi-Lela Ufe. Without saying anything else he dragged me outside. B (name suppressed) remained inside the house with my five children, aged between four and 17 years. The children were crying hysterically, but A (name suppressed) continued to drag me to the traditional house in Lela Ufe.

I was afraid and cried because there was no one in the traditional house, except the two of us, so I begged him, "Please, don't do this to me because I am married." But A (name suppressed) pulled out a knife and held it to my chest. I was so afraid I wet myself in my sarong. Trembling I begged him again, "If you want something, please take the goats in the pen." But he ignored me and said "I want to have sex with you." Hearing this, my heart just broke. A (name suppressed) held me so tight, I couldn't move at all. He pushed me until I was cornered against the wall, then he pulled up my sarong and lifted up his own sarong. Then he raped me.

Before leaving the traditional house, A (name suppressed) warned me not to tell anyone about this incident. He then left, calling to B (name suppressed). The two of them went to the house of my neighbour to do the same to her, but she didn't open the door. A (name suppressed) then went to her traditional house, but found nothing. Finally both of them went home.

Three days later our family, my husband, children and I sought refuge in Oelbinose. A (name suppressed) completely ignored me there, as if nothing had ever happened between us. I told my husband to pursue the matter in the refugee camp but we were afraid because A (name suppressed) acted like a "king" there. He could murder just about anyone. I wanted to speak out but it was as if my lips were stitched together. I asked myself, why must I carry this burden in my life? My family never stole anything from him or asked for charity. I do not know how he had the heart to do what he did to me.

Now that Timor-Leste has become a new country, I would like to express my conscience about this so that A (name suppressed), who now lives in Dili, will come and testify about what he did to me. I feel sick and my heart is broken. I do not want him to tell stories, tomorrow or the day after, about what he did to me. Although my husband still accepts me as his wife, as a man he must be disappointed and angry. A (name suppressed) must return to Oecussi and take responsibility for his actions so that we can live in peace.

*He must return
to Oecussi and take
responsibility for his
actions so that we can
live in peace.*



1999 archive photos.



*March 2004, CAVR healing workshop
for women survivors of violence.*

Message to The Nation

At the end of each woman's testimony, National Commissioners asked them if they would like to give a message to national leaders, government members, or the nation as a whole. Something remarkable occurred each time one of the women paused to gather her thoughts for this message. After recounting deeply traumatic personal experiences, the women composed themselves and asked national leaders to think about women all over the country who had suffered like them. The words of Sra Vitoria Henrique of Liquiça represent the spirit of most of the women's messages:

*"Don't just drive around in your big new cars, or fly around the world.
In villages in all 13 districts, there are so many widows and orphans.
I ask you to do something to help them in their daily lives."*

Broadcast across the country, these messages were a direct and personal message to the nation by women who so often struggle to be heard even in village meetings. In a very basic way, the hearing fostered this democratic spirit.



Expert Testimonies

In addition to the direct testimonies of women survivors, the CAVR heard expert testimonies and submissions from two individuals, two organisations and one group of Timorese women activists over the two-day national public hearing on Women and Conflict. Mr Mário Viegas Carrascalão, a former Governor during the Indonesian regime, gave a wide-ranging testimony. Mr John Fernandes testified about the application of Indonesia's National Family Planning Programme at the district level. Delegations from the Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan), the West Timor Humanitarian Team (Tim kemanusiaan Timor Barat), and a group of Timorese women activists also made submissions.

Mário Viegas Carrascalão

Former Governor Mr Mário Carrascalão gave testimony for over two hours, the first occasion in which the CAVR heard from a senior member of the Indonesian regime in Timor-Leste. Mr Carrascalão read from a statement written in Portuguese, making explanations as he went in Tetum. He was very animated, and spoke directly of his experiences as a Timorese person working within the Indonesian system. The following is a summary of Mr Carrascalão's testimony.



A land cut off from the world, under military command

Mr Carrascalão gave a wide-ranging testimony, highlighting many cases of abuse of women throughout the years of Indonesian occupation and his knowledge of the Family Planning Programme. He said that until 1989, Timor-Leste was a military administration. Mr Carrascalão pointed out that prior to 1989, Timor-Leste's civilian administration had very limited power and could not call the military or its related apparatus to account for abuses. He also spoke about how the country was completely cut off from the international community.

"Timor-Leste was a closed land...it was a place of lies and falsities...the people that came here could do anything. It was secret."

Sexual abuse

Mr Carrascalão said that the abuse of women by the Indonesian military was both organised and systematic. He gave many examples of practices of the military in various districts. He spoke of how lower-ranking military personnel looked to further their careers by providing young Timorese women to higher-ranking soldiers.

"Senior functionaries were given women as if they were facilities."

He told of the common practice of the Indonesian military holding dance parties, where young Timorese women were forced to attend and entertain soldiers. These women were then vulnerable to sexual abuse. He said that particular kinds of women were targeted for abuse: the wives and children of resistance fighters or political prisoners, women who were political prisoners or living in constructed model villages. Children from mixed Portuguese and Timorese families were also targeted. In some cases, Timorese girls were given to the military by their own families in exchange for some benefit.

Mr Carrascalão also gave examples of how district administrators and other members of the civil administration were involved in the sexual abuse of women. He told of one administrator who fathered children to numerous young girls often only 14 or 15 years old. In this case photos of the girls with their babies had been sent to the Indonesian Minister of Home Affairs in Jakarta, but no action was taken to remedy the situation or hold the perpetrator accountable. He stated that teachers brought from Indonesia were involved in sexual abuse of Timorese students. He cited an example in Baucau of a teacher who was found guilty of sexually violating 22 of his female pupils, for which he received just two-and-a-half years imprisonment; he returned home before completing his sentence.

Kraras massacre: the village of widows

Mr Carrascalão also spoke of the 1983 massacre in Kraras, a village in the District of Viqueque, east of Dili. Hundreds of men are said to have been killed in this village, leaving only their wives and children. “Now we call this the village of widows,” he said. Mr Carrascalão described the power struggles in the senior ranks of the Indonesian military leading up to the massacre, and named Prabowo, the son-in-law of then President Soeharto, as a key figure behind the massacre.

Indonesian Family Planning Programme

When he spoke of the Indonesian Government Family Planning Programme (KB), he pointed out that this was not just a programme for Timor-Leste, but an Indonesian national programme. In principle, he said, it had the same aims in Timor-Leste as in the provinces of Indonesia. However, he said, proper implementation was impossible in Timor-Leste because there was a war situation and it was highly militarised. He also said that there was great resistance from the community because people looked to the Catholic Church for guidance, and birth control was against Church teaching. In addition, thousands of children had been lost in the war and Timorese people questioned why they were stopped from having children when non-Timorese were brought to Timor as part of Indonesia’s Transmigration Programme.

As a result of this resistance, he said the National Family Planning body adopted more subtle means of persuasion, like offering rewards and involving the military in promoting the KB. He also told of how female school children were given injections without their parents’ consent which he suspected contained a sterilisation agent. This was never proven, but he managed to stop the programme. He also said that one of the problems of the Family Planning Programme in Timor-Leste was the secrecy surrounding the programme. He said that people did not understand or give genuine consent to participating in the programme. This made it different from other parts of Indonesia.

How many dead?

In the course of his submission, Mr Carrascalão gave some disturbing figures. He said that as Governor in 1985, he conducted a survey across Timor-Leste and determined that at that time there were 40,000 orphans. He said that he was only able to gather support from the central government for 5,000 of these orphans. He also gave population figures from the early years of the war, comparing them to a 1974 Church census. He said that in 1974 the Catholic Church in Timor-Leste estimated a population of 640,000; but that in 1980 the estimated population was 500,000.

*Timor-Leste was a
closed land...it was a
place of lies and falsities.*

*The people that came
here could do anything.
It was secret.*



*Mário Viegas Carrascalão
as Governor*

Mário Viegas Carrascalão



Mário Carrascalão gives testimony at the CAVR National Public Hearing, April 2003. National Commissioner Isabel Guterres is on the left.

Questions and Summing Up

In summing up, the Chair of the CAVR asked Mr Carrascalão if he felt regretful about being the Governor of Timor-Leste.

“In my time as Government of Timor-Leste I never broke the Indonesian law. I tried to use the law to improve life for the people.”

He said to loud applause from the large audience:

“I cried for the first time when the massacre of 12 November (1991) happened... I resigned from being Governor in 1992...”

Asked by the Chair of the CAVR what he thought the objective of violence against women was, he said, “The aim of this violence against women was to reduce the power of the resistance.”

Recommendations

Mr Carrascalão completed his testimony with five recommendations:

- 1. Increased attention to the educational needs of orphans, which he suggested now number more than the 40,000 estimated in 1985, in order that they may start life with the same opportunities as their peers.*
- 2. The establishment of a Ministry for Women, to handle all issues related to women in Timor-Leste, including those related to healing the wounds of past suffering, and to building a happier life now.*
- 3. In the short term, do everything possible to assist women who suffered human rights violations during the war to build a new life and to regain their dignity.*
- 4. To provide a minimum wage to poor families so that their female children will have the means to resist a repetition of what happened to women in the past.*
- 5. The inclusion in the school curriculum of a sex education component, in which natural methods of contraception can also be taught.*

Mr John Fernandes

Mr Carrascalão's testimony was followed by testimony from Mr John Fernandes, an Indonesian civil servant who promoted the National Family Planning Programme (KB) in the District of Manufahi on the southern coast of Timor-Leste from 1983 to 1999. He testified that KB was implemented at the village level by military and civil servants working together, how one particular programme was "developed directly by military commanders," and carried out "continually from year to year." He testified as to what he saw as the aims of the KB Programme.

Indonesia's Family Planning Programme in the Districts

"In my opinion, the KB Programme was a political strategy indirectly used by the Indonesian Government to bring in more Indonesians. This programme was also indirectly aimed at murdering the indigenous people of Timor-Leste. I say this because to treat the side effects of the Family Planning methods (such as the contraceptive pill, injections, IUD), the central Government provided a particular kind of medicine, but nurses or hospital workers discriminated in the way they prescribed this treatment. It was given only to the wives of Indonesians whereas Timorese women were just left to suffer.

"In the community, particularly the wives of civil servants and people living in transmigration areas were required to take part in the programme because it was ordered from above. Whether you wanted to or not, you had to take part. The government and ABRI also forced people living in isolated places to take part in this programme on the basis that it would improve the quality of education and reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. But the reality was that more mothers and babies died after the community began the programme than before."

Mr Fernandes told of how women who became pregnant after being part of the KB Programme often suffered unusual complications during the pregnancy, and birth defects in their children. He also spoke of the "Sustained Family Planning" programme in which women remained in the programme for five, ten or even 15 years, without a break from using the various methods of birth control.

Mr Fernandes said that it was clear that the Indonesian military was involved in the promotion of the KB Programme and that during their visits to villages, they dressed in full military uniform. Village level military (Babinsa) and police officers (Binpolda) also assisted the programme.

"The Family Planning Programme can be described as 'forced' because it was regulated by the Government."



*This programme
was also indirectly
aimed at murdering the
indigenous people of
Timor-Leste.*

(blank page)

Submissions

Submission from a Group of Timorese Women Activists



Ms Betty Oliveira swears in before giving a submission on behalf of the group of Timorese Women Activists.

Overview

On the first day of the hearings, the CAVR heard a submission from a group of Timorese women human rights activists. This group was not a working NGO, but rather a gathering of Timorese women who had been active on the issue of women's human rights for many years and who were willing to share their experiences and thoughts with the CAVR at this hearing. Ms Ivete de Oliveira delivered the submission on behalf of the group.

In their submission the group gave a wide-ranging account of violence against Timorese women from all sides of the conflicts during the 25-year CAVR mandate. The submission spoke of physical, psychological and institutional violence against women, of torture, sexual violation, killing, arbitrary detention and imprisonment. They gave many specific examples of women who had suffered these violations.

The submission examined the experiences of women through the conflict between Timorese political parties in 1975, the invasion by Indonesian military of 1975, the time of resistance in the mountains and the Indonesian occupation to the period of the 1999 UN-organised Popular Consultation.

The group emphasised that the unequal power relations between men and women that existed in Timor-Leste before the conflict continued throughout the conflict. The cultural values that insisted that women be submissive and dependent on men—that they be seen as the property of their husbands and families—made Timorese women more vulnerable to violence during the years of conflict.

In their submission, the group described how the use of women in sexual slavery had been practised during both the Portuguese colonial and Japanese occupation eras. Women were forced into prostitution and there were compounds of sex workers near all major military bases. These women had very little control over their capacity to reproduce, and it was common for women to have children by Portuguese soldiers, then to be abandoned when the soldiers returned to Portugal on regular troop rotation. The difficulties for these women were exacerbated by the attitudes of their communities which often isolated them and their children. This demonstrated, they noted, that violence has interpersonal, social, political and economic aspects.

Physical violence

In respect of direct physical violence against women, the group submitted that sexual violence, especially against very young women, was a major tactic of the Indonesian military to break the spirit of the nation's resistance. Wives and women family members of Timorese political leaders in the mountains were often targets of political violence.

The rape of a wife or female relative would be seen as not an attack on the woman, but on her husband. Women in the independence movement were also systematically targeted by the Indonesian military, they said. Women were especially vulnerable to this kind of violence because men often went to the mountains to take up the physical fight, or went to other lands. It was usually women who stayed behind to take care of children and the home. Because of this they were an easy target for the Indonesian military.

The group pointed out that violence against women was not the sole province of the Indonesian military particularly during the internal conflict of 1974-75. They said that during the time that Fretilin governed in the forests, women were imprisoned and tortured. In the massacres by Fretilin of UDT members in Aileu and Same after the Indonesian invasion, women were also victims, and were often subjected to especially sadistic forms of abuse in custody, including sexual violence.

The group pointed out that violence against women was not the sole province of the Indonesian military particularly during the internal conflict of 1974-75.

Lack of recognition

Within Falintil itself, they said, women not only paid the usual cost of war but they received no acknowledgment for their contribution to the independence struggle. Men dominated all senior positions in Falintil and in politics.

Church and cultural values

The group also emphasised the psychological trauma inflicted not only by the enemy but also by their own communities. Many women forced into sexual slavery by the Indonesian military, often in order to protect their families, were later isolated by their families and communities. Widows and single mothers were also stigmatised by society. They said that the values of the Catholic Church and traditional religious beliefs supported this view. The Church would often prevent women from receiving communion if they had been sexually violated, adding to their psychological trauma and isolation. They noted that the traditional values of Timorese sacred *lulik* also combined to compound this experience of isolation and suffering by women who had been violated.

Indonesian Family Planning Programme

The group spoke of the Indonesian Government Family Planning Programme implemented in Timor-Leste, which they said caused women to suffer illness and in some cases death. Women had no choice over whether to participate in this programme and thus lost the right to govern their own bodies. They concluded that women were used by the Government for the purpose of limiting the Timorese population.

Submission from a Group of Timorese Women Activists

The Church would often prevent women from being allowed to receive communion if they had been sexually violated, adding to their psychological trauma and isolation.

Social elements

The group commented on a number of social elements that accompanied and exacerbated the effect of these human rights violations. One response to the widespread sexual violence perpetrated by the Indonesian military was that Timorese women began to get married at a very young age during the 1980s, in the hope that this might afford them some measure of protection. Also, for the many young women left orphaned or abandoned by the war, marriage offered a chance to improve their economic circumstances. As women returned to the towns many found that they were discarded by the “husbands” they had “married” in the mountains, causing much hardship. Finally, the group also talked of the difficulties shouldered by many Timorese women who fled Timor-Leste to Australia, Portugal or Indonesia. As refugees, women often had to support their whole families. Many suffered discrimination on the basis of race, gender, class, education, and the fact that they were Timorese, compounding the often traumatic circumstances of their flight.

Recommendations

The submission concluded with six recommendations:

1. *Recognition of all the human rights violations that occurred against women and the patterns of violence which dehumanised women. The establishment of a museum to raise community awareness about peace and unity as one way of providing this recognition.*
2. *Development of an integrated, structural approach to addressing the damage done to women by violence during war in Timor-Leste. As so many women bore permanent physical and psychological damage, including women victims from the Japanese occupation of World War II, there should be a unified approach by veterans’ organisations and the Secretary of State for Labour and Solidarity.*
3. *More human rights education, with a focus on gender balance, stereotypes, curriculum development based on anti-discrimination, and legal reform.*
4. *All legislation should be oriented to ensure equality and gender balance.*
5. *More civic education to develop a deeper appreciation of the past violence against women, and especially so that it is understood that this violence was a consequence of the struggle. It was not something that women wanted or accepted. This is a part of the process of rehabilitating the victims of violence.*
6. *Legal action through the courts against those who committed violence against women.*

Submission from Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*)

Background

To conclude the first day of hearings, the CAVR heard a submission from the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*). *Komnas Perempuan* formed in 1998 following the shocking violence against Chinese women during the period when President Soeharto fell from power, with the aim of working to eliminate violence against women and to promote women's rights. The delegation from *Komnas Perempuan* included members from Aceh and West Papua, who, in particular, were warmly welcomed by the audience.

Solidarity between Women Activists

Ms Ita Fatia Nadia spoke of the struggle of Indonesian human rights activists, working together with Timorese to defend human rights. In 1990, they formed the Joint Committee for the Defence of East Timorese. Ms Ade Rostina Sitompul was a key figure in this movement. In 1993, Indonesian women human rights activists focused on the suffering of Timorese women, documenting the cases of women raped in a number of districts in Timor-Leste. In 1995 this list was taken to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, where the women also mounted a display of photos to show violence against Timorese women.

The Joint Committee worked with *Yayasan HAK* (HAK Association) when it formed, as they did with *Fokupers* (Communication Forum for Timorese Women) when it formed in 1998. While working for political change in Indonesia, the Joint Committee continued to support the struggle for human rights and change in Timor-Leste. This included organising petitions, holding demonstrations and taking cases of violence against women in Timor-Leste to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Dr Radhika Coomaraswamy from Sri Lanka, in 1998, which led her to visit Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

Common Patterns of Violence

In their submission, members of the delegation spoke of how patterns of violence similar to those used against women in Timor-Leste are still occurring against women in Aceh and West Papua. Their testimony brought home the contemporary urgency of this hearing for women still suffering abuse in parts of Indonesia.

Komnas Perempuan Commissioner Ms Samsidar, herself from Aceh, spoke of the Indonesian military operations in Aceh from 1994-98 where women suffered terribly.

"I am reminded of a house in Aceh which is a house of rape. In that house, women are raped daily, their bodies violated. They are forced to cook and clean for soldiers, while in rooms throughout the house at all times of the day rape goes on... We have a situation where rape is accepted by armed forces who are supposed to be responsible for protecting the population...



Ms Ita Fatia Nadia speaks on behalf of the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan).

Submission from Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan)

*Your tears are my tears
Your cries are my cries
Your suffering is
my suffering
And your struggle is
my struggle
We are together as one
Because we are Women*

*Poem by Ita Fatia Nadia,
with which she opened her submission.*

“When the New Order was undertaking these programmes, including military operations, women were used like land. Why do I say this? Because they were like a field where violations could take place. In this situation women don’t feel themselves to be part of humanity anymore. What has been violated is their sense of who they are and their possibility of living without fear. These violations are carried out especially in areas of special military operations such as Aceh, Papua and Timor-Leste...”

“Whenever there is conflict, in Timor-Leste, Aceh, Papua, in all these places—women are exploited.”

Ms Samsidar also talked of the wider social and cultural implications of violations against women:

“According to our cultures, women are responsible for the life of the family. When women are violated, this is a violation against the family. Women are a symbol of the morality of the community, and when they are raped and violated, so too is the moral basis of the community.”

Justice and Institutional Responsibilities

Mr Aniceto Guterres Lopes, CAVR Chairperson, asked the delegation how the CAVR might go about establishing institutional responsibility for these violations.

Ms Kamala Chandrakirana responded:

“Efforts to establish institutional responsibility are a new development. In Indonesia there is practical immunity, not only because there is a lack of political will but also because the legal system is very underdeveloped. For example, it is almost impossible to gather evidence in rape cases.

“We also work with village officials and leaders from all religions to open a dialogue about how to deal with violence against women.

“In Indonesia we are still living in the cycle of impunity. We are working on cases in Aceh and Papua to deal with them legally, but realising the limitations of the legal system we also work on cultural and political levels.”

Ms Ita Fatia Nadia spoke of the need to work with local and national institutions to ensure that women victims of violence are included in society:

“Justice comes from the voices of victims. In a new country we can only develop as a community if we include the victims as a part of the foundations of this new society.”

She also highlighted the need for a common basis in all national institutions, law and public policy to prevent violence against women, and of how Komnas Perempuan’s “hands and hearts are open in solidarity with the women victims of Timor-Leste to work for peace and justice.”

Submission from West Timor Humanitarian Team (*Tim Kemanusiaan Timor Barat*)

Overview

The final testimony of the two-day hearing was the submission by the West Timor Humanitarian Team (*Tim Kemanusiaan Timor Barat*), formed in 2000 to assess the situation in refugee camps across West Timor. The group was represented at the CAVR by Madre Eustokia, Madre Sisilia SSpS, Maria Feliana Tahu and Herry Maboui.

TKTB was comprised of 45 people who carried out research in 74 refugee camps in West Timor, over three months. The group has published a book based on this research: *Perempuan dibawa/h Laki-laki yang Kalah: Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Timor Timur dalam Kamp Pengungsian di Timor Barat (Women Taken by and Subjugated to The Men Who Lost: Violence against East Timorese Women inside Refugee Camps in West Timor)*.

The Camps

The group spoke of the tense conditions in the camps, and the challenges they faced in gathering and then bringing out the data for their research. They spoke of how the situation in the camps for women was an extension of the violence many had suffered in Timor-Leste.

The team told of how the camps are socially organised in a structure of concentric circles. On the outside, in overall control, is the Indonesian military. The next ring is the militia, followed by civil servants and in the inner circle, the ordinary people. Camp leaders, they said, were controlled by the militia, with the TNI behind them. The greatest challenge, they said, was to gain access to the inner circle to meet with the refugees.



Members of the West Timor Humanitarian Team. From left: Madre Sisilia SSpS, Herry Maboui, Maria Feliana Tahu, Madre Eustokia.

People living in the camps had been living in a cycle of violence from the time they entered the camps.

Cycle of Violence

The team said that people living in the camps had been living in a cycle of violence from the time they entered the camps. There were frequent incidents of domestic violence, as well as gambling, alcoholism and stress from the overcrowding in the camps. Several families shared each tent and there was no separation between adults and children. There were numerous cases of rape and molestation. They also said that there was a high degree of aggressive behaviour from individuals recruited into militia groups in the camps. It seemed that many men were taking out their political frustrations through violence against women and children. The *TKTB* said that it was clear that militia members mimicked many forms of violence used by the Indonesian military.

The submission told of how the *TKTB* had tried to speak openly of the TNI's sexual violence against women, and for this they were taken to court.

The ongoing vulnerability of women in West Timor

The *TKTB* submission spoke of how they worked with many traumatised women, who if they were able to choose themselves would have returned to Timor-Leste. Because of intimidation they remained in West Timor. Women continued to be held against their will. The position of women in the camps was weak, they said, culturally, economically, legally and physically. This made them and their children especially vulnerable to ongoing violence.



In Closing

Closing Reflection

Maria Olandina Isabel Caeiro Alves, CAVR National Commissioner

The following extracts are taken from a final reflection by National Commissioner Olandina Isabel Caeiro Alves.



Commissioner Olandina Caeiro draws proceedings to a close. To her right is Commissioner Reverend Agostinho Vasconcelhos.

It has been an honour for me as a Timorese person and as a woman to be present here, witnessing this extraordinary event over the past two days. By opening their hearts to us, our sisters have taken us on a journey through darkness we can only imagine, but they have also shown us light through their strength, character, and solidarity in their suffering, and in their survival.

Each of the women who has come forward with great courage to speak to us speaks not only for herself, but stands before us as a representative of hundreds, in fact thousands of women who have experienced terror and violation, both those who now live with the weight of those memories, and those who did not make it through. Timor-Leste, Indonesia and the world should know what has happened in Timor-Leste so that it may never happen again, here or in other places.

A question which often arises in Timor-Leste today is who deserves the benefits of independence? We fought and suffered for our freedom, but in this discussion women are never given the place they deserve. Who owns our independence? The answer to this includes a major place for women, and we must not forget this.

The past two days have been a painful experience for many. Yet we must go through this pain so that we can learn to overcome our past and to build our future. Those who have spoken here have been clear in one thing—they have asked our community, political, and religious leaders to unite with the people of Timor-Leste to deal with the violence towards women, to learn from those experiences so that our future will be one of peace, without fear so that we can live a better life free from conflict. In order to achieve this we need to change the values which allow violence against women to be tolerated. Those involved in violence against women, whether physical or mental, must be prosecuted. Victims must be given the highest place of honour and must never, never be blamed in any way for the terrible acts of such perpetrators. Our past has indeed been heavy. Let us now grow flowers from the mud of our painful past.

Closing Address

Maria Domingas Alves, Adviser on Equality to the Prime Minister

The following are extracts from the official closing address of the public hearing on Women and the Conflict by Sra Maria Domingas Alves.

Excellencies, I am here because I received an invitation from the CAVR, and also because the Prime Minister delegated me to give the closing address to this public hearing on Women in Conflict. I would prefer it if the Prime Minister could be here. However as the Government is conducting an open governance programme in Manufahi district today, I am here to represent it.

I will be brief. I would like to commend the witnesses on their courage, and acknowledge and honour the women who gave their testimony over these two days. I feel humbled by your testimony. We need to help each other in order to reconstruct and restore the lives of all of Timorese women. We have heard the courage of our sisters who have spoken out with determination and of their responsibilities as mothers, as breadwinners, as wives and as children. Through their long-suffering, they have helped us see our own lives and the fate of the many years we came through with determination. I believe you have shown in these two days your nationalist principles. Some people have said that women do not have these principles, that women do not dare to speak up. But you showed here over these two days, in this public hearing, when you spoke up saying “I suffered because of this flag, because of independence.” By speaking up like this we restore ourselves, because we know the meaning of our suffering. We do not need other people to tell us the meaning of our suffering.

I want to speak briefly about what the Government can do to help our sisters who have felt that they have been abandoned, that no-one is assisting them. We have emerged from a great process where we were all involved in the struggle, the process meant although we took on different roles in this struggle. In this process we also became aware of our responsibilities, and of the need to respond to various situations in which we found ourselves. When we speak of victims, we can say we are all victims. But the struggle for independence is not finished just because we have a government or a national anthem. It is finished when we can all live in prosperity, where we all take responsibility as East Timorese people, women and men assisting each other so that we can all contribute to a new perspective.

But with economic dependence we do not yet have our own funds. We still rely on donor countries. That is why there is no money to provide for victims. I do not think we will achieve a minimum income for all people for quite a long time to come. This issue of a minimum income is everyone’s responsibility, but it is up to the Government to prepare the conditions.



Maria Domingas Alves, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Equality delivers the address that closes the hearing.



I would like to share with you a little information before we close this hearing. The Government has recently developed a new programme called RESPECT. It is a priority aimed at helping to build stability. The Government has a long term development programme for 20 years, and a medium term plan for the next five years. However, to help us respond to the immediate problems the Japanese Government has helped us through JICA with US\$3.9 million to help build social stability. This includes helping foster small-scale business and self-employment.

As you know my job in the Government is as Adviser to the Prime Minister for the Promotion of Gender Equality. The policy of the Government is to integrate policies promoting men and women in all Ministries. This is to ensure that there are opportunities for women and men in all Ministries. This policy was developed by the Transitional Administration which recognised the struggle of all East Timorese women, as expressed in their Congress, with an affirmative action policy reserving 30 percent of government positions for women. This Government strongly upholds this policy. The budget for the RESPECT programme has been allocated to the districts. We must work with the means we have, and women's organisations should work hard together to identify widows' groups and inform village chiefs to forward this information to sub-district administrators so that women will benefit from the money allocated.

I would also like to inform you that the money we received from the Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project (CEP) for vulnerable groups, especially for widows, was US\$950,000. We have only spent US\$600,000 so far, which shows that our capacity to complete work is not strong enough yet, and that we need to develop the capacity of women's groups to be able to work in the villages.

As the process of the last two days' public hearing ends, I want to thank our friends from *Komnas Perempuan* Jakarta, from Aceh, Papua and West Timor who came here to share their experience with us. You have shown us that not only Timorese women suffer, and that women suffer especially due to their sex, and that they are more vulnerable to some kinds of suffering than men. The Government may prepare the conditions, reform policy and legislation and other things to improve the situation, but goodwill must come from us all if we are to change our mentality. From the last two days' public hearing we can see that we must change our mentality. This mentality is very strong, and it takes time to change. We must begin to take action to demonstrate to the world that in the past we suffered so many human rights violations but that we do not want to suffer the same violations in our new nation.

With these words, I officially close this public hearing.

Thank you.

Glossary

ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia	Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia (called TNI after restructure 1 April 1999)
Aitarak		Thorn (militia based in Dili)
Apodeti	Asociação Popular Democratica Timorese	Timor Popular Democratic Association
Babinsa	Bintara Pembina Desa	Non-commissioned Village Guidance Officer
Binpolda	Polisi Desa	Non-commissioned Village Police Officer
BMP	Besi Merah Putih	Red and White Iron (militia based in Liquiça)
Brimob	Brigade Mobil	Mobile Police Brigade
CNRT	Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorese	National Council of Timorese Resistance
Darah Merah		Red Blood (militia based in Ermera)
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah	Indonesian Regional People's Representative Council
Estafeta		Clandestine courier for the Resistance
Falintil	Forças Armada de Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste	Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor
FOKUPERS	Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Lorosae	Communication Forum for Lorosa'e Women
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independente	Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor
GPK	Gerakan Pengacau Keamanan	Security Disturber Movement (Indonesian term for Fretilin/Falintil)
Hansip	Pertahanan Sipil	Civil Defence (Force)
Interfet	International Force for East Timor	The force arrived 20 September 1999
IUD	Intrauterine Device	Internal contraceptive mechanism
JICA		Japan International Co-operation Agency
Kasi I	Kepala Seksi Inteligen	Head of Intelligence Section
KB	Keluarga Berencana	Family Planning
Keris		A long knife
Kodim	Komando Distrik Militer	District Military Command
Kopassus	Komando Pasukan Khusus	Special Forces Command (1986-present)
Koramil	Komando Rayon Militer	Sub-district Military Command
Laksaaur		Militia based in Suai
Lulik		Sacred (according to traditional culture)
Mahidi	Mati Hidup Demi Integrasi	Live or Die for Integration (militia based in Ainaro)
Nanggala		Codename for Kopassandha/Kopassus
New Order (regime)		The name adopted by the Suharto regime after he seized power in Indonesia in 1966
Nurep	Nucleo da Resistencia Popular	Clandestine structure at village level
OPMT	Organização Popular de Mulher Timor	Popular Women's Organisation of Timor
Polri	Polisi Republik Indonesia	Police of the Republic of Indonesia
RDT-L	Republica Democratica Timor-Leste	The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
RESPECT	Recovery Employment & Stability Programme for Ex- Combatants & Communities in Timor-Leste	A Program of the United Nations Development Programme May 2003-May 2005

RK	<i>Rukun Keluarga</i>	<i>Neighbourhood Association (lower level)</i>
RT	<i>Rukun Tetangga</i>	<i>Neighbourhood Association (higher level)</i>
Sakunar		<i>Scorpion (militia based in Oecusse)</i>
SGI	<i>Satuan Gabungan Intelijen</i>	<i>Joint Intelligence Force (to 1993)</i>
SKS	<i>Siminov</i>	<i>Russian semi-automatic military rifle (used by Indonesian police)</i>
SP-2		<i>Transmigration area</i>
TKTB	<i>Tim Kemawsiaan Timor Barat</i>	<i>West Timor Humanitarian Team</i>
TNI	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i>	<i>Indonesian National Army</i>
UDT	<i>União Democrática Timorese</i>	<i>Timorese Democratic Union</i>
UNAMET	<i>United Nations Mission in East Timor</i>	<i>The goal was to implement the Referendum of 30 August 1999.</i>
UNTIM	<i>Universitas Timor Timur</i>	<i>Pre-2000 name for Dili's oldest University</i>
Yayasan HAK	<i>Yayasan Hukum Hak Asasi dan Keadilan</i>	<i>Foundation of Law, Human Rights and Justice (In November 2002 name changed to HAK Association)</i>

