

## **5. The Politics of Aid to East Timor**

Any discussion on humanitarian aid for East Timor should be framed according to period or phase, and also responsive to key events of the unfolding humanitarian tragedy. It should be emphasized that all dollar figures relating to aid, whether official or NGO, requires contextualization, or at least examination as to relevance to intended beneficiaries. Figures may disguise large overheads, including consultants fees and salaries, or in the case of larger organizations, costs of procurement of equipment, etc. In other words, figures can only be regarded as indicative. Development aid and humanitarian aid may or may not be linked with national and international politics including the political priorities of the donor country.

As discussed in the opening section of this chapter, the politics of aid as applied to Timor falls into the pattern of many other developing nations, although significantly different due to the high degree of militarization and closure imposed upon society by the occupier. The delivery and reception of aid was also variant according to the particular stage of the self-determination struggle. Also, unlike just about every member state or territory of the UN system, virtually no UN agency, humanitarian or otherwise, opened shop inside East Timor at least until the events of 1999, as taken up in a following chapter.

### ***Phase I: Before the Invasion***

Outside of government very little developmental aid entered the Portuguese colony before the Indonesian invasion. Under the paternalistic colonial state, only a small number of Catholic Church organizations, namely Misereor of Germany, were sanctioned to operate. Catholic church-linked agencies also provided some limited assistance, such as in funneling aid to local churches for welfare and some longer-term education and health projects (Pederson & Arneberg 1999, 135). The Indonesian invasion and the severing of governmental links between Portugal and Indonesia blocked any governmental NGO assistance from that quarter.

Two Australian aid agencies were involved in East Timor prior to the Indonesian invasion, the Australian Society for Inter-country Aid Timor (ASIAT), and Community Aid Abroad (CAA). ASIAT, founded by Sydney pediatrician, John Whitehead, and a well known supporter of right-wing causes, Michael Darby, set up shop in Dili in August 1975 and, by the following month, supported five doctors in the field as replacements for Portuguese doctors who left the country after the UDT coup. With the help of Timorese medical assistants, ASIAT reorganized Dili's medical service. A short time later, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), whose doctors took over the main medical work leaving ASIAT nurses to cope with maternal and infant cases (Gunn with Lee 1994, 208), joined ASIAT in the field.

The following month, Mark Roper of the Jesuit's Asian Bureau Australia, Neil O'Sullivan of CAA, John Maver of World Christian Action, and James Dunn, arriving in Dili as part of an advance team for the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), then set about ascertaining needs and drew up a "shopping list." They also successfully raised A\$40,000 for Fretilin by marketing some 90 of the 3,500 tons of the recent coffee harvest stacked on the wharves (although this money was later frozen in a Darwin bank account). Although more than one relief shipment destined for

Fretilin-controlled Timor was thwarted by the Australian authorities in Darwin, ACFOA successfully managed to send one relief barge to Dili following a Timor relief appeal fund which raised A\$160,000. Despite their different political orientations ASIAT and ACFOA worked together. Both worked with Fretilin and both lobbied the Whitlam government to support and recognize Fretilin in order to discourage the Indonesian invasion. Academic Helen Hill has explained that, owing to failure of Indonesia and the pro-Indonesia parties to accept ICRC's neutrality, all the aid groups were obliged to evacuate in early December in the face of the Indonesia onslaught. Journalist Michael Richardson, who was evacuated to Atauro with the medical team along with David Scott of ACFOA, asserts they were warned by the Australian government that all witnesses to the invasion would be killed [in fact Australian journalist Roger East met this fate] (Gunn with Lee 1994, 208).

## ***Phase II: Closed Country (1975-89)***

The full-scale Indonesian invasion of East Timor commencing in December 1975, not only effectively blocked access to international relief organizations, but coincided with the peak period of demographic loss owing, variously, to killings, hunger and displacement. While there was certain pressure on the part of foreign governments and organizations seeking to develop aid programs, the Indonesian government “closing” of East Timor, actually invigilated by naval cordon, obviously imposed severe barriers to the entry of outsiders. Whether by default or military-administrative fiat, there is no evidence of Indonesian humanitarian or aid agencies operating inside East Timor during this period. In any case, the development ethos such as it applied in East Timor was statist and top-down and neglected East Timorese living in zones under Fretilin/Falintil control.

While the Australian NGOs were destined never to be permitted to return to East Timor, with the sole exception of a representative of the Jakarta-office of CAA just prior to the Dili massacre, the ICRC was conditionally permitted to return only three years after it was forced to abandon a range of works already established inside East Timor. This was in late 1979 after the completion of major military operations (1976-78) to gain administrative control over the population. It is also notable that there was no ICRC presence in East Timor during the next major military operation, the so-called “fence of legs” campaign of late 1981.

Despite representations to the Indonesian government by a “queue” of aid organizations, besides the ICRC, only two major international aid organizations were allowed to operate in East Timor in the 1980s. These were the US-based Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Church World Service, both funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in the areas of food relief and a maternal and child health project. USAID also funded a CRS agricultural project in the early 1980s, as well as a malaria control program in east and west Timor from 1982-1997. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), working through its Jakarta embassy office-based Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), also channeled some funds to small-scale community projects beginning in 1979 (Pederson & Arneberg 1999, 136).

### ***Case Study: Famine of 1978/1979/1980***

In September 1978, U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Edward Masters visited East Timor and learnt first-hand the famine situation. He was accompanied by Australian journalist David Jenkins on a visit to Remexio and described the inhabitants in *Far Eastern Economic Review* as “emaciated... undernourished and desperately in need of medical attention.” Such sentiments were echoed in the

Melbourne Herald which also reported that the diplomats and newsmen who visited Remexio were convinced of the need for a “major international relief effort,” Yet, as Budiarjo and Liem (1994, 77) document, it was another 13 months before the military authorities allowed a relief program to begin, and this was after the “encirclement and annihilation campaign” of 1977-78 had accomplished its goals. Masters' testimony to Congress was exposed by Cornell Indonesia expert Ben Anderson who asserted that Masters deliberately refrained from calling on humanitarian assistance even within the State Department, ignoring the counter-insurgency campaign, and blaming the Timorese for their backwardness (Gunn with Lee 1994, 216).

When relief operations eventually commenced in October 1979, it essentially came under the cover of “independent” humanitarian organization, CSR. According to the ACFOA critique, CSR worked in East Timor, as it had done earlier with the South Vietnamese government, as subcontractor of the U.S. government. As such, CSR served as an extension of American foreign policy, the purpose of which was to secure and complete the process of the Indonesian takeover of an unwilling East Timor. Of the US\$7.2 million spent by CSR in Timor up to December 1979, US\$6,969,662 was from direct U.S. funds. While the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) report praised the CSR operation as “vigorously and effectively conducted,” and for saving many lives, like the ICRC, its *modus operandi* in East Timor was seriously compromised, being obliged to work entirely with the Indonesian government, and not through the local church or any other agencies. But, more damaging, the CRS program of focusing upon military-created “resettlement areas” (*daerah pemukiman*), revealed the full ambiguity of the U.S.-CRS exercise (Gunn with Lee 1994, 216). [see International Media]

It became apparent in 1979, as reports of famine inside East Timor reached the international press – including the dramatic photos of starvation victims taken by Peter Rodgers and published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 1 November - that the only permissible conduit for overseas aid, the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), was not coping. Over the objection of the international authorities that the situation was “normal,” the Australian government and World Vision together managed to send two barge loads of relief materials from Darwin to Dili in late 1978, early 1979. The price for this operation was recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. Only in late 1979, however, did the Indonesian government readmit the ICRC whose officials confronted a situation “as bad as Biafra and potentially as bad as Kampuchea.” The ICRC swung into action with a A\$57 million program spanning a six month period, funded mainly by Western governments, including A\$5 million from the Australian government and Red Cross societies. Yet a month after this program was launched, it was described as a mere holding operation keeping large numbers of people “just above starvation” (Gunn with Lee 1994, 225). Even so, in the absence of neutral monitors, there were no guarantees that this aid was delivered to the most needy and many questions remain unanswered.

According to the official ICRC report, following elaborate negotiations with Indonesia, two ICRC representatives and a doctor were able to make a preliminary visit to East Timor from 16-26 April 1979. During this visit they surveyed several interior locations to arrive at estimations of medical and food needs. Based upon this visit, the ICRC then proposed an “urgent assistance program” for the territory. This was permitted to proceed but in cooperation with the national Indonesian counterpart. Between 21 and 28 July, Red Cross representatives conducted a more detailed survey of needs based upon a 13 village study. An international appeal for funds raised some 3,540,000 Swiss francs. On 20 October a specially chartered Hercules arrived in Dili with enriched food aid,

followed by a shipment of 640 tons of food aid along with vehicles used for distribution. Food distribution was made in the villages of Hatiola and Laclubar. On 31 December three ships departed Jakarta for Dili carrying 2,680 tons of relief goods, with another ship sent from Australia with 1,315 tons of goods. This was followed by four Hercules with 49 tons of relief. All in all, 4,000 tons of relief goods were delivered by December, with one third dispersed by that month. Logistical difficulties obliged the ICRC to rent the use of a helicopter and fixed wing aircraft to access more remote villages (*CICR Rapport d'Activite* 1979/1980). Through to the following year, six of the villages continued to receive food assistance, although food security had improved in Hatiola and Laclubar. But beside malnutrition, the ICRC drew up a picture of a bleak medical situation, malaria, TB, etc. Even so, in the absence of neutral monitors, and given the restrictions enforced by Indonesian military authorities, aid agencies in Australia, especially, registered grave concerns as to whether this aid reached needy people outside of zones of Indonesian control. Through 1981, the ICRC and its Indonesian counterpart provided food and sanitation support to 80,000 persons in 15 villages. Additionally, the program managed to build up buffer stocks in a number of target villages of corn, salt, sugar, milk powder, etc. (*CICR Rapport d'Activite* 1979/1980).

### ***The Atauro Famine of 1982***

The year 1982 was a time of poor harvests owing to the drought of the preceding year. ICRC recommended to the Indonesian authorities the need for 1,000 tons of corn aid. All up, 25,000 people in 27 villages were beneficiaries of corn distribution programs. A special food distribution was established in the village of Iliomar, one of the worst affected villages. In January 1982, the ICRC gained permission from the Indonesian authorities to visit detention sites in East Timor,

including Atauro Island. The following month a team of four made the trip to Atauro where they visited 3,332 displaced persons. A return visit was arranged in November-December, which included a first visit to a detention camp at Lospalos. In particular they reported that malnutrition among detainees on Atauro, especially among children, merited special concern. The ICRC report continued that, following the ICRC visit to Atauro in February, an emergency food and assistance program was mounted for the island. Beginning in April, the program continued for six months. Regular distributions of corn were targeted at 3,000 beneficiaries. Working out of a central base/kitchen, a high protein diet was launched for the benefit of especially pregnant women and small children, while a special “operation milk” was launched for the benefit of school children. Mission evaluation accomplished in November granted a mission extension of a further six months. Likewise a medical campaign was launched to control malaria and skin diseases (CICR Rapport d'Activité 1982).

While in 1982 the ICRC was only sanctioned to visit displaced persons on Atauro and Lospalos only, following negotiations with Jakarta, permission was granted from June 1983 to extend such visits to other sites. However, according to the ICRC report of 1983, while activities were allowed to continue on Atauro, further restrictions imposed in July obliged the ICRC to suspend its “protection” program on the mainland. Even so, in March, an ICRC delegate accomplished a wide-ranging assessment of needs in a dozen locations in the eastern part of the island (CICR *Rapport d'Activité* 1983).

Only after intensive negotiations with Jakarta including military authorities was the ICRC sanctioned to commence prison visitations commencing in 1984. However, the first stage of the new program was only realized in March of that year. Progressively through the year, detainees



were visited at Baucau, Lospalos, Viqueque and Comarca. The embargo against extending the ICRC humanitarian program to the mainland continued through the year, despite intensive representations to the Jakarta government. On Atauro, the ICRC delivered 485.5 tons of food relief, undoubtedly crucial to the support of the island's then estimated population of 3,700 (CICR *Rapport d'Activité* 1984).

In 1985, the ICRC was able to accomplish an evaluation mission to the interior of the mainland of East Timor visiting 25 villages or 44,000 people across nine sub-districts. The assessment allowed that, while emergency measures were not necessary, a special watch was in order on five villages where the situation was deemed “precarious.” A follow-up visit to the high risk zones recorded an improvement. On Atauro, 270 tons of relief goods were distributed. As with previous distributions, the ICRC was obliged by the Indonesian authorities to work hand in hand with the Indonesian Red Cross (CICR *Rapport d'Activité* 1985).

Continuing through 1986 the ICRC assisted in the return of displaced people on Atauro back to the main island, although not to their natal villages. In November and December the ICRC accompanied some 900 people. By this year, the number of displaced people remaining on Atauro fell to 500. The special feeding center on Atauro for women and children was closed down in October in response to an improved nutritional situation. For the third time since June 1985, the ICRC conducted a survey of nutritional needs, this time assessing 20 villages and 40,000 inhabitants over eight districts. According to the 1985 assessment, no emergency assistance was needed (CICR *Rapport d'Activite* 1986).

Under the terms of an agreement reached with Indonesia in March 1985, the ICRC confined its activities in East Timor in 1987 to visiting prisoners deemed GPK or “peace-disturbing elements” in March-April, August and November (Cipinang and Tangerang in Jakarta and Becora; Comarca in East Timor), facilitating letters and messages from detainees and their families. In 1987, for example, it also facilitated the return to Portugal of 22 former officials and families under a program set up in 1996 at the request of Indonesian and Portuguese authorities and financed by UNHCR. This program continued through 1998-1999. Working with the Indonesian Red Cross, the ICRC also facilitated the return to the mainland of 578 people from Atauro, victims of security sweeps by TNI between 1975-83. With the return in early 1997 of the last displaced persons from Atauro, the ICRC ended its medical and food assistance program on the island (ICRC *Annual Report* 1987/1988).

Commencing in 1985, the ICRC, usually a delegate and visiting ICRC nurse, also carried out annual nutritional surveys and monitored the medical situation in a cluster of villages. The Indonesian authorities were notified of critical needs (ICRC *Annual Report* 1987/1988/1989).

### ***Phase III: “Open Province” 1989***

The declared “open” status of the territory in 1989 heralded the arrival of an increasing number of aid organizations, even though the legal status of the territory continued to hamper full access on the part of certain governments (Portugal), and those international agencies who morally could not accept conditionality imposed upon their operations.

Various NGOs also sought to take advantage of the opening, certain government-backed and others self-funded. For example, Christian Children's Fund (CCF) commenced thirteen Child and Development projects in 1990, mainly by affiliating with various mostly church-linked local *yayasan* or foundations. Also, in 1995, World Vision Canada established its CIDA-funded Aileu Area Development Project focusing on children's health. Also in 1995 CARE Canada established its Capacity Building Community Self-Management Project, building upon the Indonesian government's poverty alleviation mapping exercise. Caritas East Timor also attracted financial support from a range of global Catholic organizations and charities (Pederson & Arneberg 1999, 137). [See Church]

While, as mentioned, certain groups such as CAA sought to take advantage of the “opening” and actually made a survey of needs prior to the Dili massacre, the ensuing repression put an end to even this limited opportunity. Otherwise the World Bank had been involved in funding *transmigrasi* projects and, at a later stage, the Australian government working through AIDAB (the precursor of AusAID), sought to channel aid directly to East Timor in such areas as agricultural extension and in the provision of water to Dili. Indonesian charities, including the Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI), also set up shop in East Timor (Gunn with Lee 1974, 215).

In 1989, an ICRC engineer, working with the Indonesian Department of Health, established a water and sanitation project in the worst effected area. The first stage of this program was completed at the end of 1991 with the canalization of water supply to twenty villages (ICRC *Annual Report* 1989/1991).

## **1991 Dili Massacre**

The Dili massacre of 12 November 1991 also provoked a strong ICRC intervention. On 13 November the ICRC issued a press release expressing its dismay at the killings and immediately requested from the authorities access to the injured in the military hospital as well as to persons arrested. It also handed two *notes verbales* to the government addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Permanent Mission of Indonesia in Geneva. The ICRC only received authorization on 22 November to visit 88 patients in the hospital and interview them without witnesses. The Delegate also registered 43 detainees in a Dili police station. Thirty civilians also sought refuge in the ICRC delegation in Dili, although returned home several days later. Reports on the findings of these visits were presented to the Indonesian authorities. On 6 February the ICRC president met with Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, stressing the importance of access to detainees, including those not held on Timor. But despite repeated representations, the ICRC delegate was unable to visit East Timorese detained in Jakarta in connection with the massacre. Nor was it possible to gain access to those transferred from the Dili military hospital to one in Jakarta. On 7 December 1992, two ICRC delegates were allowed to visit Xanana Gusmão in Jakarta (captured on 20 November) (ICRC Annual Report 1991/1992).

Notably, in 1993, Brig-Gen. Sjafei, the Indonesian military authority overseeing occupation activities in East Timor, sought – unsuccessfully – to have the token ICRC presence in Dili removed to Bali. As observed in 1993, the ICRC was not even successful in carrying out its mandated role in undertaking prison visitations in East Timor (Gunn with Lee 1994, 209).

In the wake of the Dili massacre, and just prior to a visit to Jakarta by Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating in April 1992, the Australian government unveiled a plan to supply A\$30 million aid

to East Timor over a period of five years. This included A\$11.5 for the financing of a water supply project for Dili. The announcement brought forth immediate protests from such East Timorese groups as Timor Independence Committee (ETIC), along with ACFOA. The spokesperson for ETIC welcomed Australian aid but warned that unless it was administered by a non-governmental body then it would serve to entrench Jakarta's control over the territory (Gunn with Lee 1994, 219).

As AusAID representative in Dili between 1996-99, Lansell Taudevin was well positioned to analyze the impact of Australian aid projects upon the country and its people. He explains that the agenda of needs as outlined by Bishop Belo and other Timorese at the project planning stage, namely addressing literacy, education, and reconciliation, were entirely overridden. Eventually, four projects were chosen, the East Timor Water Supply and Sanitation Project; the Bobonaro Area Development Project; the Regional Agricultural Planning; and the Eastern Islands Veterinarian Project. With implementation, Australia would emerge as the largest donor to East Timor also contributing to ICHR humanitarian programs (Taudevin 2000, 223). From observation, the water and sanitation project was effective, touching some 150 villages across the territory offering water to 66 percent of the population and sanitation to 55 percent respectively. Outside of these areas, Australian assistance to East Timor, in such areas as health and education was a sub-set of overall assistance to eastern Indonesia (cf. Australia Senate 2000, 17).

As a loyal servant to his employer, little would it be known that the veteran aid worker, would come to take the ETIC/ACFOA warnings seriously, especially as Australia continued its training of the Indonesian military. Not only appalled at the rising levels of militarization of the territory, which he duly reported to Canberra, Taudevin was obliged to divert AusAID funds to meet a growing humanitarian crisis in the face of militia attacks. Responding to the militia attack on the

Suai church in January 1999, he was able to deliver humanitarian assistance several days before the arrival of ICRC (Taudevin 1999, 223).

Although UNICEF along with the World Food Program and UNHCR had been mandated by the UN General Assembly (resolutions 34/40 and 25/27) to render all possible assistance to the East Timor people, it is a pointed commentary upon the attitude of the world body, as much the world community, that in almost two decades of the illegal occupation of East Timor, of all the UN agencies, only UNICEF had some minimal degree of engagement inside East Timor and even then this body fell in line with the Indonesian diktat that it work through the PMI. Ramos-Horta writes that its programs amounted to little more than offering bahasa Indonesia lessons to erstwhile relief workers, contributing little more than assisting Jakarta's Indonesianization of East Timor (Gunn with Lee, 1994, 219).

### ***International Response to 1998 Drought Emergency***

The drought of 1998 extending through eastern Indonesia to Papua New Guinea also made its impact felt in East Timor. Notably, the impact of the drought was exacerbated by increased population pressure as a result of Indonesia government resettlement programs to the lowlands and ongoing disruption of traditional farming systems. Drought relief was largely delivered by such international NGOs as CARE, Caritas, CCF and ICRC. Certain were government funded while others self-funded. USAID working with CARE provided emergency food relief (rice) in 1998 and again in 1999 to cover the continuing disaster (Pederson & Arneberg 1999, 138).

### ***Phase IV: Run-up to Ballot***

The rise of militia organizations in late 1998 not only put an end to the various humanitarian and development aid projects in place in East Timor but sowed the seeds of a humanitarian disaster. As a result of spiraling militia attacks and actions by paramilitary forces, by mid-1999 virtually all aid programs were disrupted and, in many cases, suspended. Foreign advisors were either withdrawn or confined to Dili while the number of IDPs generated by the violence came to overwhelm community support structures. The period also coincided with a paralysis in the Indonesian civil administration, virtually choking East Timor of funds. But while projects wound down or were closed, the run-up to then ballot offered a rare access for project advisors to make hurried needs assessments.

Indonesian documents examined by Moore (2001) offer a different spin on the role of humanitarian aid at this juncture. In early July 1999, TNI began a two-pronged strategy, attacking the NGOs and promising to distribute its own aid. For example, Besi Merah Putih militia assaulted a convoy of NGO aid workers returning from Liquisa on 4 July with their vehicles vandalized. Soon after the attack, Governor Abilio Soares announced a new initiative to deliver food aid to refugees. Kodam chief of staff Brig. Gen. Mahidi Simbolan wrote to General Wiranto on 6 July requesting navy boats so the military could deliver rice. "Regarding the implementation of the ballot, there are already 35 NGOs, Indonesian and foreign, that are delivering rice to the people. This situation will have an effect on the results of the voting. Because of this, the provincial government of East Timor immediately needs to distribute rice to the people." According to Moore (2001, 39-40), despite its intention to win sympathy, the military did nothing to distribute

humanitarian relief in July and August. Nevertheless journalists did witness rice payoffs to militia in Dili during the voting campaign.

According to Pederson & Arneberg (1999, 138-39), a range of international organizations began planning projects, albeit not all with a sense of the dimensions of the unfolding tragedy. These included AusAID, CIDA, the British government's Department for International Development (DFID) and USAID. The Portuguese government also earmarked funds for East Timor as part of its contingency planning, including a grant of US\$250,000 to the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Additionally, a range of NGOs began contingency planning in the form of providing volunteer professionals. These included Australian Volunteers International, CAA, the Voluntary Services Overseas (UK), and OIKOS (Portugal). ACFOA also facilitated coordination between Australian NGOs through the ACFOA East Timor Working Group. Oxfam (GB), also mounted a survey of local human resources with a view to coordination among agencies. To degrees, all these governmental agencies and NGOs would enter the field in the early post-conflict period.

### ***Aid by Sector***

A full accounting of development assistance to East Timor would necessarily examine a range of sectors such as Education and Training; Health; Water Supply and Sanitation; Agriculture and Rural Development; Governance and Law; Capacity Building and Humanitarian Relief.

Taking education and training as an example, the opening also facilitated the provision of scholarships to individual East Timorese students. For example, from 1991 NZODA funded 34 tertiary-level students to attend universities in New Zealand, while AusAID provided a limited number of scholarships for graduate education in Australia (a good investment in human resources,



as many of these graduates usefully entered employment in the ETTA and later Timor-Leste government or in other technical and professional positions). AusAID also provided funding worth A\$2.2 million to the Salesians of Dom Bosco Congregation Center of Technology with a focus on vocational training, coming on stream in 1998. Norad funds provided to Caritas East Timor further provided scholarships for students in local institutions. USAID also funded a Georgetown University project to assist the University of Timor (UNTIM). The Mary MacKillup Institute of East Timorese Studies also attracted funding from Caritas Australia for Tetum curriculum development (Pederson & Arneberg 1999, 138-39). [See Church]

USAID was the largest provider in the area of governance and law and, in 1997, provided funding to the Asia Foundation to assist in the establishment of East Timor's first legal aid organization, Yayasan Hak. As a human rights organization, Yayasan Hak focused upon human rights monitoring and investigation, education and legal assistance. Support amounted to \$70,000 annually. Subsequently Yayasan HAK received support from CAA, AusAID, Oxfam NZ and NZODA for assistance in developing legal aid procedures, policy development and human rights monitoring. Again, in 1995, the Asia Foundation received USAID funding to establish and equip the East Timor office of the newly established National Commission for Human Rights (KOMNAS HAM). Additionally, USAID provided \$240,000 in 1997 to support the Commission for Peace and Justice founded by Bishop Belo. In 1996 USAID also provided funding to help establish an independent media in East Timor. The idea was to support such activities as business and journalism training. NZODA likewise offered support for journalism training (Pederson & Arneberg, 1999, 145).

## ***Evaluation/Quality of Aid***

As one ACFOA study has shown, those groups permitted to operate inside East Timor in the early 1980s were severely compromised and were obliged to play a subservient role to the Indonesian government and, in the case of one organization, additionally to the U.S. government. But the ICRC was also compromised in the sense that general operations inside East Timor were under the control of the PMI, allowing minimal involvement by trained ICRC personnel. Such traditional concerns as prison visitations, the monitoring of the Geneva convention, the location of missing persons, etc., were disallowed, although had been permitted under the Fretilin administration, four years earlier. Indeed, it would appear that negotiations on the question of mandate with the Indonesian authorities bogged down, with the overall result of setting back the commencement date of ICRC operations in East Timor (Gunn with Lee 1994, 216).

While the ACFOA study looks exclusively at the role of the ICRC and the CRS, some of the conclusions equally apply to the role played out by the World Bank in East Timor and, particularly, the Australian government. Indeed, the price of Australian government assistance to East Timor, was acknowledgment of East Timor's de facto and de jure incorporation of the territory, with the additional bonus for Jakarta of negating the claims of Australian-based NGOs to operate inside East Timor (Gunn with Lee 1994, 215).

Some estimation of the quality of aid delivered would be in order. According to one survey, levels of funding were probably around US\$800,000 per year, of which USAID and ICRC were the largest providers. This would amount to around US\$1.00-1.30 per capita, obviously an extremely low figure by any comparative measure (Pederson & Arneberg 1999, 137). But even if Indonesian

government subsidies to East Timor are included, this would have been small solace to victims of famine who were simply not able to receive assistance or at least timely help from humanitarian organizations. Through the 1990s funding increased steeply to over US\$1 million annually, spiking to US\$5 million in 1991, as new projects came to be implemented, almost doubling to US\$9 million in 1996. While per capita ODA was now above the World Bank's estimated Lower Income Country Average, by comparison with small island states or even other former Portuguese colonies, it is apparent that East Timor received far less per capita ODA (Pederson & Arneberg 1999, 137). Even so, this report is silent on the question of delivery of aid, as testimony provided to CAVR in August 2003 has revealed that large amounts of aid were siphoned off by ABRI/TNI. A recitation of figures and statistics also obscures the fact that East Timor was under military occupation, certain zones were contested and large cohorts of needy people were simply outside the relief net.