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QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

Letter dated 15 October 1979 from the Permanent Representative
of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman
of the Fourth Committee

I have the honour to submit the attached document concerning relevant facts about the Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste Independente (FRETILIN). I should be grateful if you would arrange for it to be circulated as an official document of the United Nations General Assembly, under agenda item 91.

(Signed) José Carlos LOBO
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative

Enclosure

Noted dated 9 October 1979 from Mr. Roque F. Rodrigues
of the Central Committee of FRETTILIN

In view of the coming discussion in the Fourth Committee on the question of East Timor, my delegation wishes to draw the attention of the Committee to some relevant facts:

1. The Portuguese first arrived in East Timor in 1512. The people of the Territory have been under colonial rule for almost 500 years.
2. East Timor has an area of 18,899 square kilometres (7,400 square miles) and the population is estimated at between 700,000 and 1,000,000.
3. The people of East Timor have their own cultural heritage, language and history. Ethnically, culturally and historically, the people of East Timor have formed a separate identity.
4. Indonesian languages, culture, traditions and history are completely alien to the people of East Timor.
5. East Timor has proven reserves of oil, natural gas, manganese and other minerals, which make it a country with excellent economic potential.
6. Following the change of régime in Portugal in 1974, the new Lisbon Government stated that the people of East Timor should be granted independence.
7. However, on 7 December 1975, Indonesian armed forces invaded the Territory.

War of genocide

8. Since the Indonesian invasion, many tens of thousands of East Timorese have died. It is estimated that more than 100,000 and perhaps as many as 200,000 have perished from war-related starvation, disease and indiscriminate killings by the invading army. Currently, 200,000 people in Indonesian-occupied areas of East Timor are suffering from malnutrition and disease: of these, according to a recent assessment by a high United States official, 60,000 are said to face death unless an immediate, massive relief operation is permitted by Jakarta's military.

9. Indonesia maintains in the Territory an occupation force of approximately 30,000 troops, including an air force, helicopters, tanks and armored cars.

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10. The great majority of the East Timorese people are strongly united under the leadership of FRETILIN in a determined resistance to Indonesia's attempted annexation.

11. After almost four years of Indonesia's full-scale aggression, Jakarta's expansionist and colonialist designs have been foiled by the East Timorese people. Most of the Territory remains under FRETILIN control, while even in Indonesian-occupied zones, deep resentment and opposition to Indonesia's military presence - already strong - has increased.

Last Timor in the United Nations

12. The question of East Timor is a clear-cut question of decolonization.

13. General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960, in particular Principal IX, which spells out the procedures to be followed before a Non-Self-Governing Territory becomes integrated with an independent State, have not been complied with.

14. Since Indonesia's invasion of East Timor, the following resolutions have been adopted by the United Nations: (a) General Assembly resolutions 3485 (XXX) of 12 December 1975, 31/53 of 1 December 1976, 32/34 of 28 November 1977 and 33/39 of 13 December 1978; and (b) Security Council resolutions 384 (1975) of 22 December 1975 and 389 (1976) of 22 April 1976.

15. All of these resolutions have insistently called upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw all of its troops in order to enable the people of East Timor to exercise freely their right to self-determination.

16. However, the Government of Indonesia has refused to comply with the United Nations resolutions.

East Timor in the non-aligned movement

17. In 1976, the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Colombo 1/ from 16 to 19 August 1976, expressed support for United Nations resolutions on the question of East Timor.

18. The Sixth Conference of the same group, held at Havana, from 3 to 9 September 1979, reaffirmed the United Nations resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops from East Timor.

1/ A/31/197, annex I, para. 36.

International support

19. The Portuguese Parliament adopted on 22 May 1979, in a record unanimous vote, a strong resolution stating:

- (a) Its deepest concern over the situation in East Timor as a result of Indonesia's continuing occupation of the Territory;
- (b) Its knowledge that the people of East Timor are continuing their armed struggle against the Indonesian occupation,
- (c) Its condemnation of Indonesia's illegitimate, illegal and violent occupation of East Timor;
- (d) Its fraternal solidarity with the peoples of East Timor in their struggle for liberation.

20. On 20 May 1979, an International Seminar on East Timor held at Lisbon, was attended by 800 delegates from throughout the world. The Conference adopted various resolutions in support of the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence, and for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops.

21. Several international organizations, namely the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Peace Council (WPC), the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the Afro-Asia People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), have called upon the Government of Indonesia to comply with United Nations resolutions on the question of East Timor.

22. More recently, the 66th Interparliamentary Conference, held at Caracas, from 11 to 22 September 1979, reaffirmed the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence.

Indonesian manoeuvres

23. Indonesian schemes to annex East Timor are of the same nature as Ian Smith's manoeuvres to prolong white minority rule in Zimbabwe and South Africa's contempt in the face of United Nations efforts to bring about full independence for Namibia.

24. Following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor on 7 December 1975, the Government of Indonesia staged a farcical "People's Assembly" in Dili, the capital of East Timor, while the city was under military siege. The 28 members of the so-called Assembly were hand-picked and forced at gun point to assent to Indonesia's expansionism.

25. No referendum or plebiscite was held, let alone one in accordance with United Nations principles.

26. The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had no role in the proceedings leading up to the announcement of the People's Assembly.

FRETILIN's position

27. FRETILIN seeks complete and total independence for East Timor, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

28. Indonesia's invasion and continuing occupation of the Territory is an impediment to the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

29. FRETILIN states that Indonesia has neither legal, legitimate nor historical rights in East Timor.

30. Indonesia's invasion of East Timor is a violation of the principle of self-determination for colonial territories and peoples and a serious violation of internationally recognized territorial boundaries.

31. FRETILIN challenges the Government of Indonesia to comply with its obligations to the international community, as a Member State, in accepting an internationally supervised referendum in East Timor, on the basis of universal suffrage.

32. FRETILIN is willing to establish friendly relations with the Republic of Indonesia and will endeavour to promote co-operation and peace in the region after Indonesia's recognition of East Timor's sacred right to independence.
