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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 24 July 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. DONIRI

(Papua New Guinea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR (continued) (A/AC.109/1999/10)

Hearing of petitioners

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Soares (East Timor Students' Movement) took a place at the petitioners' table.
2. Mr. SOARES (East Timor Students' Movement) said that the future of East Timor was to form part of Indonesia and that the special autonomy proposed was fully acceptable to the population of the Territory because it allowed it to relegate the bloody civil war to the past and continue working for development together with the Indonesians. In view of the fact that some East Timorese were trying to inculcate in their fellow countrymen separatist political ideas, prompted purely by their own political and economic ends, it was important to implement properly the Agreement offering East Timor a status that gave it broad autonomy. The will and determination of the Government of Indonesia to facilitate the implementation of the 5 May Agreement should be noted in that connection.
3. Consequently, it was indispensable for the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to maintain its neutrality and not be swayed by misleading information or take sides with pro- or anti-integration groups.
4. The Territory's police force was the only body responsible for verifying information, and a failure to rely on it for that purpose could feed speculation about non-existent crises.
5. Mr. Soares withdrew.
6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Miclat (Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor) took a place at the petitioners' table.
7. Mr. MICLAT (Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor) said that although the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in particular had enabled progress to be made in the situation in East Timor, the fact that the item remained on the Committee's agenda despite the United Nations-sponsored Agreement between Indonesia and Portugal indicated that an arduous process still lay ahead.
8. Actually, the Indonesian side had disregarded the Agreement and made a mockery of the United Nations and the UNAMET presence in East Timor. Every day murders, acts of intimidation, torture and atrocities were being committed, unfortunately in some cases by East Timorese with obvious Indonesian backing. The most recent UNAMET report had confirmed that behind the terror sowed by the so-called militias stood Indonesia's army.
9. The climate of terror, which had prevailed in East Timor for 24 years, had revived in the last few months, as the people readied themselves to exercise their right to self-determination. The previous April, for example, while representatives of the East Timorese people were meeting in Melbourne to elaborate a development programme for the new nation, the Liquica massacre had

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taken place and the militias had unleashed a wave of terror. Entire villages had become virtual refugee camps where food and medical care were almost completely lacking, and the Indonesian authorities were not allowing any independent monitoring of the situation of the refugees.

10. The ultimate irony was that it was the Indonesian army, the occupying force in East Timor, that had been given the mandate to enforce security in the Territory and the rule of law and order until the holding of the 8 August referendum. It was to be hoped that the United Nations would revise that mandate. Still more ironic was the appointment of Eureka Guteres, one of the most notorious militia leaders, as head of the police forces that would be in charge of supervising the conduct of the referendum; that constituted a blatant violation of the Agreement, a travesty of the Charter of the United Nations and a mockery of the Office of the Secretary-General.

11. The United Nations must bring pressure to bear on Indonesia to respect the Agreement and comply with it fully and in good faith. It might be that not everything that was currently taking place could be imputed to an official policy, but the Government was obliged to control what went on. The continued climate of terror suggested either that the Habibie Government was not capable of restraining its own forces or that it was secretly giving the nod to the atrocities while proclaiming its support for the United Nations process.

12. Consequently, the United Nations must ensure favourable conditions for a free and peaceful vote on 8 August, the disarming of the militias, the return of the army and the police to their barracks or their withdrawal from the Territory, and the entry presence of the United Nations peacekeeping forces. The United Nations must, furthermore, insist with the Government of Indonesia that it must set free the leader of the East Timorese resistance, Xanana Gusmão, and the many political prisoners languishing in prison.

13. The Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor was contributing to the historic development in various ways; for example, it currently had in East Timor a dozen women from different member countries of the Coalition, who had come to give moral support and advice to the women of the Territory, doctors had been sent to assist a small group of voluntary doctors already in the Territory and, in coordination with the International Federation for East Timor, the Coalition had offered to participate in an independent observer mission that would assist UNAMET in administering the referendum.

14. At a time when the population of the Territory was on the verge of fully exercising its right to self-determination, the Asia-Pacific Coalition entertained the hope that in the new millennium East Timor would become the youngest Member of the United Nations.

15. Mr. Miclat withdrew.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its hearing of petitioners on the question of East Timor, and that he took it the Committee wished to continue consideration of the item at a later date.

17. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.