

NOAM CHOMSKY

December 2006

Dear friends,

For a decade and a half, the East Timor and Indonesia *Action* Network (ETAN) has campaigned tirelessly to support the rights of the East Timorese people, challenging the complicity of successive U.S. governments in denying those rights. **That work is not yet complete.**

East Timor's path since independence has not been smooth. Recent violence – between police and military forces as well as gangs of unemployed young men – grows from seeds of impunity, poverty and oppression sown by the Indonesian occupation, fertilized with political and military support from the United States, and watered with the blood of one-third of East Timor's people. Most residents of Dili, the capital, have been displaced from their homes for half a year. The country remains the second-poorest in Asia.

Indonesia's road to democratic reform has also been rocky. Despite initial progress after the ouster of the dictator Suharto in 1998, the military still retains much power. Military reform has stalled, and perpetrators of past crimes have evaded justice for human rights violations.

ETAN has been steadfast in its support for justice for people of East Timor and Indonesia, and its work remains absolutely crucial. However, ETAN can't do its work without your support.

The incoming Democratic-controlled Congress offers new opportunities. But resources are needed to help realize these opportunities. With your help, ETAN will continue to press Congress, as it has successfully done over the past 15 years, to reassert its responsibility to be a counter-weight to the Bush Administration and restore genuine justice and real reform to the agenda of U.S. relations with Indonesia and East Timor.

Fifteen years ago, the Indonesian military engaged in a brutal crime that might have gone unnoted except by the victims' families. As thousands of East Timorese young people peacefully demonstrated for freedom at the Santa Cruz cemetery, troops slaughtered more than 270. Journalists Amy Goodman and Allan Nairn (who were nearly killed by Indonesian troops) witnessed the massacre. A TV photojournalist secretly filmed the atrocities.

On November 12, 1991, news of the massacre broke into the Western press, bringing the U.S.-backed Indonesian occupation before the eyes of many for the first time. Since that fateful day, ETAN's ultimately successful campaign focused on the crucial line of support from the U.S. government to the Indonesian military regime.

Thanks to ETAN's efforts -- and your support – Congress restricted arms sales and military training to Indonesia, and East Timor won its independence. Significant democratic space has opened up in Indonesia. But justice for the many victims of

Indonesia's military remains elusive. This impunity has prevented East Timor from fully achieving independence. It also keeps the Indonesian military powerful.

This spring, East Timor will hold its first national elections since independence. But the current climate of crisis has put the integrity of the election process in question. In response, civil society groups in East Timor have asked ETAN to help monitor the entire election process. ETAN has consequently formed an Observer Project.

In cooperation with grassroots Timorese organizations, ETAN will send experienced, nonpartisan activists to travel on this critical road with East Timorese citizens and political parties. Their goal is to try to ensure that the process is fair, the campaigners are free, and the voters' will democratically expressed and accurately tabulated. Much is riding on this vote, which, if properly conducted, can help East Timor get through this difficult period. **Your support will enable ETAN to significantly contribute toward a peaceful, truly independent East Timor.**

But still no military or political leaders have been held responsible for the Santa Cruz massacre and many other crimes. Last year, the Bush administration overrode the last Congressional restrictions on U.S. military financing and export of lethal equipment for Indonesia, allowing unrestricted assistance to the Indonesian military. These changes in policy do not foster respect for human rights in the region.

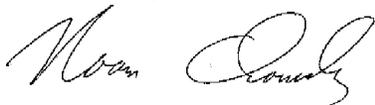
These challenges are huge for any organization, but especially so for one as small as ETAN. ETAN's budget is tight and its funding has become more precarious since East Timor's independence. **By giving generously, you can help strengthen ETAN for the coming year, so that together we can meet the difficult trials ahead.**

You can make a secure contribution through ETAN's website: <http://etan.org/etan/donate.htm>. To support ETAN's political advocacy work, you can write a check to "ETAN." For ETAN's educational efforts, tax-deductible donations of over \$50 should be made out to "A.J. Muste Memorial Institute/ETAN."

Please mail donations to: ETAN, PO Box 21873, Brooklyn, NY 11202-1873.

Thank you for joining me in supporting ETAN's invaluable work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noam Chomsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Noam" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Chomsky".

Noam Chomsky