

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 25, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Rice:

We are writing to urge a greater commitment on the part of the U.S. government to promote justice for human rights violations perpetrated against the people of Timor-Leste during and immediately following the Indonesian occupation. The U.S. government should respond to this situation and take a leadership role in bringing the perpetrators of these horrific crimes to justice. More specifically, the U.S. government should formally respond to the report of Timor-Leste's Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (known as the CAVR) and work for an international tribunal to try those most responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity during Indonesia's occupation. In addition, we are concerned by the State Department's endorsement of the Joint Indonesia-Timor-Leste Commission on Truth and Friendship (CTF) before the commission's report has even been released.

Genuine accountability for these violations will contribute to peace and stability in Timor-Leste and strengthen reform and democracy in Indonesia. Along with many others throughout the world, we have watched recent events in Timor-Leste with deep concern. The attacks on the country's president and prime minister, as well as the intermittent unrest over the last several years, have many and complex causes. However, the failure to achieve justice and accountability for past crimes is high among them, resulting in a climate of impunity in Timor-Leste. Many believe those responsible will not be held accountable for their violent crimes, while others lacking confidence in formal processes take justice into their own hands. Despite Indonesia's progress in building a vibrant democracy in recent years, it is widely recognized that reform of the military lags far behind that of other institutions.

Efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice have failed. Indonesia's Ad-hoc Human Rights Court on East Timor ended with the acquittal of all those brought before it. The Indonesian government's refusal to cooperate with the UN-backed, and now largely dormant, Serious Crimes process in Timor-Leste has resulted in nearly 80% of those indicted enjoying sanctuary in Indonesia, including a number of high-ranking Indonesian officials.

If credible trials and appropriate punishments of those responsible for major human rights violations are to occur, an international effort is needed. The CAVR report contains a number of recommendations for such an effort, some of which address the U.S. in its roles as a UN Security Council member, as a country which armed and trained the Indonesian military, and as an aid donor to Timor-Leste. The report was formally delivered to the U.S. government more

than two years ago and deserves a considered response, especially to its call for an international tribunal to try those most responsible.

When he was prime minister, current President José Ramos-Horta acknowledged the far-reaching nature of the CAVR's recommendations and committed to "endeavour to implement them." He proclaimed, "We owe it to the people, we owe it to the victims, we owe it to the current generation and the future generation so that Timor-Leste can live in peace." We urge your Administration to make a similar commitment, when it comes to the CAVR's recommendations relevant to our own country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Kennedy

Samuel D. B. Long Jr.

Maureen Dandridge

Dennis J. Lucinich

Samy Balchun

Paula Fattah

Edouard

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