EAST TIMORESE CHILDREN INVOLVED IN ARMED CONFLICT

CASE STUDIES REPORT

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UNICEF EAST TIMOR

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Introduction: Brief Methodology

This document was prepared by a UNICEF consultant as part of a UNICEF regional study on “Children Involved in Armed Conflict in East Asia and the Pacific”. Interviews were conducted with child combatants in the conflict in East Timor between October and December 2000 in the following districts: Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro, Covalima, Dili and Los Palos. The child combatants came from two opposing sides in the conflict: the pro–independence supporters who served in the guerilla army Falintil and the clandestine network supporting them, and those who supported pro–autonomy and fought with the militia groups. In order to show a variety of experiences of these children, seven pro–independence cases, five pro–autonomy cases, and two pro–independence informants acting as militiamen, were chosen. The pro–autonomy supporters came from a number of militia groups predominantly from the western districts, and the pro–independence supporters came from districts all over East Timor.

In order to complete the case studies, the interviews with the child soldiers were supplemented with information from commanding officers, village headmen, family members and other adults who had contact with these children during and after their service. Information was also provided by organisations in West Timor who for reasons of safety cannot be named and a number of NGOs in East Timor who are working with youth in general.

In West Timor it is difficult to interview children in the militia as many children are believed to be held against their will by militia groups, and could therefore not answer questions in a free environment. Furthermore, after a number of violent attacks on humanitarian workers from both Indonesian and international organisations in 2000, it is not safe to conduct research openly. In East Timor, it is also arduous to find and conduct interviews with militia children who have returned from refugee camps in Indonesia. In most cases, the village leaders are trying to reintegrate these children into society without drawing attention to their activities in the past. It was also hard to find demobilised Falintil children, as many had been returned to their homes before this report was researched. As East Timor’s communication system was destroyed in 1999, locating these children was a laborious task.
I. History and Background to the Conflict

East Timor was a Portuguese colony for over 450 years. Following the Portuguese “Carnation Revolution” in 1974, which saw the demise of the Salazar regime and led to the de–colonisation of Portugal’s territories, Portugal acknowledged East Timor’s right to self–determination and independence. East Timor legislated to form a transitional government in preparation for the election of a popular assembly in 1976, and was preparing to end Portuguese sovereignty in 1978. Political parties were formed with varying political aspirations such as The Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) that advocated immediate independence, the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) endorsing association with Portugal for a time–frame before the territory became independent, and the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (APODETI) which supported East Timor’s integration as an autonomous region within Indonesia.

By mid–1975 the different political parties began to clash and the situation deteriorated into civil war with two parties backed by Indonesia, Apodeti and UDT. By November, Fretilin had gained control of most of East Timor thanks in part to the allegiance of many of the East Timorese soldiers who had served in the Portuguese army and their arsenal. The armed wing of Fretilin became known as the National Liberation Forces for East Timor or Falintil. Fretilin declared independence on 28 November 1975.

1. Indonesian rule & pro–independence resistance

Indonesia launched a naval, air and land offensive against East Timor on 7 December 1975 and soon gained control over the territory despite Fretilin’s armed resistance. On 17 November 1976, the president of Indonesia announced the integration of East Timor into Indonesia as its twenty–seventh province. Portugal had not yet relinquished its authority as administrating Power of the Territory. The United Nations Decolonisation Committee, and thus the UN itself, considered East Timor as a non–self–governing territory, with Portugal tasked with the responsibility to complete decolonisation. The United Nations never recognised the authority of Indonesia over East Timor.

Under Indonesian rule the Indonesian military was involved in counter–insurgency operations against Falintil and its supporters. The armed forces employed a strategy that included engaging Falintil in armed fighting. This strategy also included, according to Amnesty International, a campaign of arbitrary arrests, torture, and ill–treatment, ‘disappearances’, and extra–judicial executions against anyone suspected of supporting Falintil and independence.

In early 1976, tens of thousands of people fled to the numerous mountain bases of Fretilin and joined Falintil forces to avoid the extreme violence inflicted on the population by Indonesian troops. Many children and youth joined Falintil at this time after having witnessed killings and atrocities committed against their families. Many orphans were also taken in by Falintil and later became soldiers. In order to wipe out the mountain–based resistance strongholds and to force the population to return to the cities the Indonesians launched a military operation that became known as the “encirclement and annihilation” campaign in September 1977. This operation

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1 *The United Nations in East Timor: Self–determination through Popular Consultation*, UN Department of Public Information, New York, NY, p.3.

2 See: *Paramilitary Attacks Jeopardise East Timor’s Future*, Amnesty International, 16th April 1999

East Timorese Children Involved in Armed Conflict, Case Studies Report
October 2000 - February 2001, UNICEF East Timor
included intensive air bombing and ground attacks on the resistance army and the population sheltering with them.

By 1980 Falintil had been decimated: it is estimated that by this time Falintil had lost 90 per cent of its arsenal and 80 per cent of its troops. Falintil’s troop strength in 1975 was estimated at 7000 trained soldiers and 20,000 reservists and by 1980 had 2000–3000 troops. It could no longer support the large civilian population sheltering with its troops. Hundreds of thousands of those returning from the mountains were put in Indonesian military–controlled resettlement camps or deported to Atauro Island, which was effectively a prison camp. Falintil encouraged many of the civilians to return to the villages and towns. Between 1980 and 1984 the Special Rapporteur on Extra–judicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions alleged that a further 100,000 people had been killed or had died of starvation. Indonesia claimed that the deaths numbered around 30,000. The Indonesian army had almost successfully crushed the armed resistance.

After the devastating losses of the late 1970s, Falintil commander Jose Alexandre “Kay Rala Xanana” Gusmão and around 700 fighters regrouped in 1979 in the mountains of central East Timor. They re–structured Falintil along guerilla lines under four regional commands, and set up a clandestine network of resistance operatives that returned to towns and villages all over East Timor, providing Falintil with supplies, information exchange and performing military operations. By the mid–1980s, many youth and children worked for these clandestine networks. Large numbers of them joined to avenge what had happened to family members during the early years of the invasion and because of a strong belief in their right to self–determination.

In 1981, the Indonesians implemented Operasi Kikis (the “scraping off” operation also nicknamed the “fence of legs” operation) in the east. The Indonesian army used around 80,000 East Timorese males between the ages of 5 and 50, many of them youths, as human shields to literally walk across sections of Falintil’s areas of operation. If Falintil’s forces had tried to attack, they would have to kill East Timorese first. The objective was to flush out the guerillas or push them into one area to be captured. In March 1983, Xanana Gusmão negotiated a ceasefire with the Indonesian army that broke down within months of its inception. He also organised the defection to Falintil of many East Timorese serving in the Indonesian army during attacks planned by the Indonesian side on civilian populated towns. Hundreds joined, replenishing the Falintil forces with trained men. Many youth and children again fled the cities to join Falintil after the crackdowns on the population that followed these mass defections.

Falintil performed no active recruitment other than that of East Timorese men who had joined ABRI (the Indonesian armed forces) and subsequently defected. They had few guns and ammunition, little food and supply. Life was very difficult in the jungle for newcomers. Youth and children joined Falintil as a way of escaping Indonesian crackdowns and scrutiny. Falintil discouraged children from joining its ranks, often encouraging them to complete their studies, as their country would need them in the future. Most who joined in the late 1970s and early 1980s were from impoverished villages that had come under Indonesian army attacks. These children would flee to Falintil or be taken in by Falintil when parents and relatives had been killed, leaving the children with nowhere else to go. In later times, once the clandestine structures became more formalised, many operatives fled to Falintil once their lives were threatened by the Indonesian military. Many of these youth were from more wealthy and educated backgrounds.

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3 *The United Nations in East Timor: Self–determination through Popular Consultation*, UN Department of Public Information, New York, NY, p.5
Falintil continued to launch guerilla attacks against the Indonesian army during the late 1980s. Xanana fostered an urban youth clandestine front to support the activities of Falintil. As the resistance army had virtually no support from outside in terms of weapons, food, clothing and general supply, this assistance was vital to their survival.

In 1988, the then governor Mario Carrascalão negotiated with the Indonesian authorities to allow East Timorese youth to leave the closed territory to attend universities in Indonesia. Much of the youth who were sent to Indonesia to study cooperated with Falintil operatives to conduct operations with the resistance army such as demonstrations, information exchange and media liaison so that the outside world could learn of the situation in the restricted area. The main East Timorese youth organisation operating in Indonesia outside of East Timor, Renetil (Resistencia Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste) was known to the Indonesians as a social association yet behind its façade was to become one of the most radical of the resistance’s youth groups. This clandestine organisation worked in concert with other pro–independence organizations and Falintil. Renetil had three sections within it: Disertil – East Timor, Diserin – Indonesia, and Disereks – international.

In 1992, Falintil formalised its structure along the lines of a guerilla force and a clandestine front. Falintil still does not use an official ranking system. Before Xanana’s capture in 1992, all military and political decisions were approved on his final word. After 1992, Xanana Gusmão and the regional commanders made all strategic decisions and were the source of all instructions carried out in the field. All political decisions were still passed by Xanana from prison in Jakarta. Following his arrest, far more autonomy was given to the regional commanders to make military decisions.

The utmost respect is given to Falintil ‘veterans’ or those who joined before 1992. These men are often referred to as “commandantes” as a term of respect. Many of the ‘veterans’ have spent much of their lives in the jungle and for those who joined at a young age, have had little or no education. Those who joined following Xanana’s arrest are often referred to as new recruits or “novatos”. Most of the younger, newer recruits are more educated than their commanders.

2. Early pro–Indonesia military groups

In the 1980s, the Indonesian army, then known as ABRI, set up paramilitary groups and recruited largely East Timorese men. Some East Timorese had fought alongside the Indonesian troops and had taken part in the annexation of the territory by ABRI. The Indonesian army had at first entered East Timor using overland routes from West Timor. They recruited and trained East Timorese men through local regents or Liurai who were in favour of integration into Indonesia. The first group that was trained was known as the Partisans. Most of them came from the Western districts. One of the leaders of the Partisans, João Tavares formed one of the first pro–integration para–militaries, called Halilintar (Thunderbolt). João Tavares later became the Pang Lima (five–star) or commander of all the militia groups in East Timor that operated between 1998 and 1999. Halilintar was the most senior pro–autonomy paramilitary in the western regencies.4

Other paramilitary groups known as “tims” (teams) were set up in the east of the territory where the Falintil was most active. These groups were trained by Kopassus (Komando Pasukan Khusus

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or the military intelligence unit of the Special Forces command). Many former Falintil soldiers who had been captured, surrendered or returned to the towns and villages in the early 1980s were recruited. These include Tim Alpha in Los Palos; Tim Sakka and Tim Sera in Baucau; and Tim Makikit in Viqueque. These units were given arms and uniforms by ABRI and operated under the Indonesian military’s command. The role of these units was to conduct military operations against Falintil and pro–independence groups. These groups recruited few under–18s and although they were still operating in 1999, were seen as elite forces compared with the militias that formed later in 1998 in the western and central areas.5

3. The East Timorese Intefadeh, international opinion and changes in Indonesia

For over a decade Indonesia had failed to win international recognition for its incorporation of East Timor. The United Nations Decolonisation Committee continued to consider East Timor as a non–self–governing territory, with the responsibility on Portugal to complete the decolonisation process. In November 1989, the Pope visited East Timor and an ensuing Indonesian military crackdown led to detentions and the torture of many youth. Following the demonstration the schools and university were temporarily closed down and up to one hundred youth sought refuge with Falintil.

On 12 November 1991, Indonesian troops killed over 270 unarmed demonstrators at Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili. The demonstrators were attending a funeral of a pro–independence activist who had been killed by Indonesian soldiers in a church. This protest was predominantly organized by Ojetil (Organisasão Juventude Estudante Timor Leste), one of the strongest clandestine networks of youth operating in the late 1980s–early 1990s, in cooperation with other groups. The participants were also protesting the Indonesian occupation and expressing their support for Falintil and the right to self–determination. Most of the dead were youth and children who were involved in the clandestine networks set up by Falintil. The massacre was filmed by foreign journalist, Max Stahl, who had the video tapes smuggled out for broadcast internationally. The shocking images of youth and children being killed by Indonesian troops swayed international opinion in favour of self–determination for East Timor. Again many children and youth fled to Falintil to seek refuge from the ensuing Indonesian military crackdowns and to join the resistance army. Many of Ojetil’s leaders were arrested and imprisoned in Jakarta and the organization was suppressed. According to Xanana Gusmão, “In the eyes of the Indonesian invaders, the youth then appeared to be the most dangerous segment of society. After the events of November the 12th, and in response to the breakdown of resistance strongholds, the youth began to divide into smaller groups. Simultaneously, the number of youth members [of the clandestine network] was growing each year.”6

In November 1992, Xanana Gusmão was captured and arrested in Dili. Falintil’s military operations, reduced to some 150 troops, were limited to small hit–and–run guerilla attacks on Indonesian posts or soldiers. The youth clandestine front carried on most of the resistance activities in cooperation with Falintil, although communication between the two organisations was difficult, because messages had to be sent by hand or by word of mouth between them over long distances. By 1984, another youth network had sprung up, taking over much of the work started by Ojetil, before it was suppressed. Opjlatil (Organizacão Popular Juventude Lorico

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5 Interview with Juanico Belo, Tim Sakka Commander, Kupang, Nusatenggara Timur Province, Indonesia, November 2000.

6 Xanana Gusmao speech for the symposium on Reconciliation, Tolerance, Human Rights and Elections, National Council, Dili, 12 February 2001, p.3.
Asuwain Timor Lorosa’e) was one of the most active of East Timor–based youth groups up until the late 1990s. After 1995, Renetil in Indonesia were working more closely with Xanana Gusmão who was serving a twenty–year sentence for subversion in a Jakarta jail, through prison visits. One of their main activities was to publicise the situation in East Timor through demonstrations and other events to Indonesia and the international community. Other clandestine organizations were formed through youth affiliations with martial arts associations, and groups that defended their neighbourhoods.

In 1996, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo, the apostolic Administrator of Dili, and Jose Ramos–Horta, an exiled resistance leader and advocate of East Timorese independence, for their “work towards a just and peaceful solution of the conflict in East Timor”. This award was instrumental in mobilising NGOs and parliamentary groups to influence their governments in favour of self–determination for East Timor. Bishop Belo had for years protected youth and children from the Indonesian army in his Dili residence. He was often called out to negotiate between the Indonesian army and parents whose children had been taken away for questioning by the authorities or for those who had ‘disappeared’.

In 1997 the newly appointed UN Secretary–General Koffi Annan gave high priority to the tripartite process on East Timor’s future between the UN Secretariat, Portugal and Indonesia. In May 1998 the Indonesian President Suharto stepped down after 32 years in office and was replaced by his Vice–president B.J Habibie who had had little involvement in the East Timor question. This change in the Indonesian government gave additional momentum to the tripartite dialogue on East Timor. By June 1998, Indonesia informed the Secretary–General and Portugal that it was prepared to give East Timor wide–ranging autonomy. Indonesia looked at the proposal as the end of the problem whereas Portugal viewed autonomy as a transitional arrangement pending the eventual exercise of the right of the East Timorese to self–determination. The East Timorese resistance, under the leadership of jailed leader Xanana Gusmão, had since 1992 accepted the concept of a transitional autonomy within Indonesia for an agreed number of years to be followed by a referendum.

East Timor experienced a period of relative calm between June and September 1998. There were regular pro–independence demonstrations in Dili and the umbrella organisation for the pro–independence movement, the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), was able to operate freely for the first time and established offices all over East Timor, its leaders emerging from the underground. One of the prominent student organisations operating in East Timor, the Student Solidarity Council (DSMTT), was comprised mostly of clandestine youth from the National Indonesian University of East Timor (Universitas Timor Timur – UNTIM). This organisation began to travel the country holding “dialogues” with students, civil servants and villagers on independence and the need for a referendum, as well as reconciliation meetings with pro–autonomy and militia groups.

On 27 January 1999, President Habibie announced that if the people of East Timor did not agree to be part of Indonesia on the basis of the autonomy plan under negotiation, they could separate from Indonesia. The decision of the Habibie government did not receive unanimous acceptance in Indonesia and despite the endorsement of his cabinet highly influential forces within Indonesia’s power structure remained strongly opposed to the possibility of east Timor’s separation. Many leaders of the Indonesian armed forces (renamed the TNI on 1 April 1999) had served for long periods in East Timor and alleged that the letting go of East Timor could have an adverse effect on the unity of the diverse archipelago. The East–Timorese pro–integration forces,
such as the various militia groups, saw the president’s decision as tantamount to betrayal and began to express their determination to violently oppose any move towards independence.\(^7\)

On 8 February 1999, the foreign ministers of Portugal and Indonesia agreed on what became known as the “second option”, ruling out the choice of transitional autonomy, and accepting the plan for autonomy as an end and not an interim solution. Therefore, accepting Indonesia’s proposal for autonomy meant full integration into Indonesia, and rejection meant independence. By 11 March it was agreed that a referendum or direct ballot would be used to measure acceptance or rejection of a permanent autonomy status within Indonesia.

4. The pro-autonomy militias

Various militia groups sprung up in East Timor in late 1998 with the aim of preventing independence. A number of different defense units and paramilitary units had operated alongside regular Indonesian army units since the invasion. Civil defense groups (Partahanan Sipil Hansip) were trained and used by the military in their operations. These units included the well-known People’s Resistance (Perlawanan Rakyat – Wanra) and the Public Security (Keamanan Rakyat – Kamra).\(^8\) However the militias set up in the year prior to the vote had a direct focus – to ensure that the referendum turned out in favour of autonomy within Indonesia.

Hard-line factions within the Indonesian military supported the militias politically, institutionally and financially. Although there were genuine supporters of integration with Indonesia, the militias were portrayed by pro-autonomy leaders and Indonesian authorities as having sprung purely from a need to defend pro-autonomy people against attacks from pro-independence groups. The killing of six Indonesian soldiers and a civilian in Falintil attacks on Alas in Manufahi district, in late October and early November 1998, led to the intensification of military operations in order to apprehend those responsible. Five Timorese were extra-judicially executed and the area was surrounded and blockaded for at least one month. The Indonesian authorities used this Falintil attack to justify crackdowns all over the country. The first of the 1999 militia groups were formed immediately following the Falintil raid.

5. Militia groups and the use of children

The militia groups were formed and operated without any legal basis under Indonesian national law and were allowed to act with impunity. An organised campaign of violence and intimidation was set up by these groups against pro-autonomy supporters and entire districts with the aim of forcing a pro-autonomy result. Most of the incidences of human rights abuses such as detentions, torture, rape, extra-judicial executions, disappearances and forcible recruitment of militia through intimidation and threats came from the western districts of Liquiça, Ainaro, Bobonaro and Covalima.\(^9\)

Many under-18 youth and children who joined the militias were from the western districts. Few details on their numbers remain as existing lists were destroyed in the violence that followed the vote or taken with their leaders to Indonesia. Most children joined for the following reasons: the prestige and power of being able to carry a gun, wear a uniform and gain respect from elders; coercion such as intimidation and threat of death or the death of family members; payment; and a

\(^7\) Interview with Nemencio da Cavalho and Cancio da Cavalho, Mahidi militia leaders, Kupang, Nusatenggara Timur Province, Indonesia, November 2000.
\(^8\) See: Paramilitary Attacks Jeopardise East Timor’s Future, Amnesty International, 16 April 1999, p.2
chance to escape from abusive or impoverished family situations. Almost all the children interviewed for this study had completed low levels of education under the Indonesian school system. They came from backgrounds of impoverished rural villages; families with pro-autonomy connections in towns who had often made their money through having these connections; *bolar guling* (young members of gambling rings set up by older youth) and broken homes. As Xanana Gusmão stated, “In Timor… there was not enough employment opportunities to absorb those coming out of school. This created a fertile ground for the Indonesian army to pervert the morals of many young people by promoting gambling and disorder as well as payment for acts of political persecution and surveillance”.10 All children interviewed for this study claimed to have been forcibly recruited and some were paid. Recruitment targeted entire villages, particularly in the west. By mid–1999 the militias claimed to have a following of 50,000 members.

By mid–1999 there were more than 20 militia groups operating in East Timor. When the groups were established, the Indonesian military took a behind–the–scenes role in human rights violations in order to give the conflict the appearance of a purely East Timorese problem. However the militia frequently used Indonesian military compounds, Indonesian military and police were often at the scenes of attacks and violations, and the Indonesian army continued to train and arm the militia groups.

The final stages of the tripartite negotiations between the UN, Portugal and Indonesia took place against a backdrop of increasing political violence in East Timor. On 6 April, pro–integration militia killed over 25 civilians seeking refuge from intimidation in a church in Liquiça. Many of the survivors and displaced people from other districts people took refuge in the house of pro–independence leader Manuel Carrascalão in Dili. At least 13 of these people were killed and many injured when pro–integration militia from East Timor’s 13 districts traveled to Dili to attack them. The massacres were presented as a response to a CNRT statement released by Xanana Gusmão on 5 April 1999, saying that each East Timorese had the right to defend himself or herself against further militia and Indonesian military attacks. Across East Timor, pro–integration militia groups perpetrated acts of violence against pro–independence groups with total impunity. The main targets of these attacks were pro–independence supporters, CNRT members and students. The militia maintained “hit–lists” of those from these groups who were to be targeted. As a result of this intimidation campaign, thousands of villagers fled their homes to seek refuge in churches and with Falintil. There were also instances of revenge and violence instigated by the pro–independence groups.

On 21 April, following the massacres, the Commission on Peace and Stability was established in Dili by TNI (Indonesian Armed Forces) chief General Wiranto. It included representatives of both pro–independence and pro–integration sides as well as local government, police and military commanders. The Commission, in cooperation with the UN, was tasked with creating a code of conduct to be abided by all parties for the period prior to and following the ballot. The code of conduct also aimed to ensure that both sides adopted the necessary steps towards disarmament. However, in the days immediately following the signing of the accord, several killings committed by militia groups were reported. On 5 May, agreements were signed by Indonesia and Portugal on the question of East Timor, outlining the security arrangements and modalities for the referendum, which was called a ‘Popular Consultation’ by the United Nations. Indonesia was given the responsibility to ensure a secure environment devoid of violence and intimidation during the popular consultation.

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During the negotiations, the UN Secretariat made recommendations to the parties regarding security, such as the disarmament of all paramilitary groups, the confinement of Falintil and the withdrawal of some of the Indonesian forces prior to the consultation. In early 1998 Falintil had only around 300 troops and continued to oppose Indonesian rule with sporadic attacks on Indonesian military targets. Its numbers swelled from mid–1998 up until the referendum. Many clandestine youth, between the ages of 16 and 21 years old, fled to all four regional command areas as they became targets of increased militia and TNI violence. Just prior to the vote Falintil stated that they had an estimated 1,500 troops in cantonment.

The May agreement also emphasised the absolute neutrality of the Indonesian armed forces and the Indonesian police (POLRI). POLRI were given the sole responsibility of maintaining security during the lead–up to the ballot. Indonesia refused the proposed presence of UN peacekeepers. President Habibie was in a tenuous situation as he had not been guaranteed a second term and many of his political rivals opposed the agreement. However, the UN, Indonesia and Portugal decided to make use of the “window of opportunity” despite the deteriorating security situation in the territory. On 5 May the United Nations agreed to a UN supervised referendum. Resolution 1236 was passed on 7 May to establish a UN presence in East Timor prior to the vote.

On 11 June 1999, the UN Assistance Mission to East Timor (UNAMET) was established by the Security Council to organise the popular consultation. It promptly placed its offices and personnel in the territory. By early August, following the deployment of UNAMET, Falintil had unilaterally cantoned its 1,500 troops at four locations in East Timor, and had refused to disarm. The ballot was originally set by the UN Security Council for 8 August, but was postponed by the Special Representative to the Secretary General, Ian Martin, until 30 August due to the intimidation and violence. In the lead–up to the vote the militia violence forced CNRT offices to close and their members to go into hiding. The militias continued their violence, killing more pro–independence supporters, forcibly recruiting more members and conducting a campaign of terror that sent thousands more villagers to seek refuge in the mountains with Falintil. On 20 August, just prior to the vote, the Independent Electoral Commission wrote to the Head of UNAMET Ian Martin: “the security situation in East Timor is deteriorating by the day”11. An agreement, “The Baucau Agreement” was brokered on the eve of the ballot between the pro–independence and pro–autonomy sides, but failed to get either side to lay down their arms. Falintil had remained in their cantonments and had refused to be drawn into what would have appeared to be a civil war. The militias continued to carry their weapons and commit acts of violence.

6. The “Popular Consultation”, post–ballot violence and the international peace–keeping force

On the day of the vote 98.6 per cent of those East Timorese registered (446,953 people) voted and despite the killings of two local UNAMET employees the vote went ahead with few incidents and fairly peacefully. The results were announced on 4 September: 78.5 percent of the population voted to reject autonomy. Following the vote, the security situation in the territory deteriorated rapidly. The Indonesian military and the militias went on a rampage. Working together, militia and TNI carried out an organised operation across East Timor, burning and destroying whole towns and villages and forcibly relocating much of the population to West Timor. Thousands

fled to the hills and to Falintil cantonment areas. Thousands also sought refuge in Bishop Belo’s residence, the ICRC office and the UNAMET compound in Dili. Between 4 and 7 September UNAMET staff were evacuated from the regional offices and non–essential staff were sent to Darwin Australia. Xanana Gusmão was released from house arrest in Jakarta on 7 September but due to the security situation could not return to East Timor immediately.

The Indonesian military declared martial law on 6 September and new Kostrad battalions were dispatched to East Timor. Despite the presence of the new troops, the militia and TNI continued to systematically loot and destroy buildings across East Timor. The international community was outraged and strong pressure was brought to bear against the Indonesian government. On 12 September President Habibie announced the decision to unconditionally accept an international peacekeeping force to restore peace and security and to implement the results of the ballot. He also expressed Indonesia’s willingness to allow the evacuation of all UN staff in the compound to Australia on 14 September, to facilitate food–drops to displaced people in the hills and to ensure that Falintil remained safe in the cantonments.

The Australian–led international peacekeeping force, Interfet, deployed in East Timor on 20 September. One month later, on 20 October, the Indonesian parliament voted to repeal its annexation of East Timor. On 24 October Xanana Gusmão returned to East Timor. By 31 October, all Indonesian troops had left the territory.

On 25 October, the United Nations established the United Nations Transitional Authority of East Timor (UNTAET) and tasked it with overall responsibility for the administration of East Timor (UNTAET did not begin operations until a month later.) In February 2000, the United Nations Peace Keeping Force replaced Interfet. The conflict in East Timor had now largely ended.

7. The Situation in West Timor

In West Timor, where an estimated 250,000 East Timorese refugees had fled or were forcibly deported, the militia and TNI continue to hold refugees and train troops. Militia activity remains a problem on the ground, with militia causing large–scale social unrest in West Timor particularly along the border with East Timor and near large refugee settlements of East Timorese. The militia has launched incursions of armed troops into East Timor who have attacked and killed international peacekeepers and threaten the security of the country. By June 2000, over 165,000 refugees had returned home. Since the killings of three international UNHCR workers in West Timor by militia on 6 September, all UN and humanitarian agencies have suspended their operations. This has led to a severe food and medicine shortage in the camps. Indonesian authorities have expressed a desire to repatriate the remaining refugees as soon as possible.

Most children who joined the militia remain in West Timor in refugee camps under militia control. Very few have returned to East Timor for fear of revenge; because their families have not yet returned; or because the militia and TNI are still using them. Serious concerns have been expressed for their safety and well being. They have been exposed to at least two years of extreme violence and continue to be trained and used for military operations – their psychological and physical health is at grave risk. As one West Timorese aid worker stated: “they are so badly behaved – harassing people and subjecting them to violence and making problem. Violence is a normal part of their lives – they can tell you stories of eating people’s hearts like they were talking about eating breakfast. There will be terrible problems for the society when they return to East Timor.”

12 Interview with West Timorese aid worker, Kupang, Nusatenggara Timur, Indonesia, November 2001
8. Falintil and the new East Timorese Defence Force

Falintil has decided to accept training from a number of countries to become the future security force of East Timor, the East Timor Defense Force (ETDF). This process leading to the establishment of ETDF is being closely synchronised with a programme aimed at assisting FALINTIL members who have been demobilised at adjusting back into civilian life. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank have been working closely with FALINTIL on the design on this programme – FRAP (FALINTIL Reinsertion Assistance Programme) – which will be implemented by IOM and funded by USAID’s Office of Transitional Initiatives and the World Bank. Their commanders have sent almost all soldiers under the age of 18 home to their villages and back to school. Until now, there had been no specific programmes aimed at specifically assisting demobilised Falintil child soldiers in East Timor, yet a number of NGOs and UN agencies are assisting children in general. On 1 February 2001, The National Council (the United Nations–appointed legislative body) decided that the minimum age for future recruitment is 18 years old.
II. The Structure of Falintil and Militia

1. The Structure of Falintil

From the time of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975 until 1987, Falintil was the armed wing of Fretilin. In 1987, after the formation of the Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Maubere (CNRM), Falintil became the national liberation army of East Timor serving most pro-independence organisations under the CNRM umbrella organisation.

Falintil was under the military command of Xanana Gusmão, who in 1981 restructured the forces and advised the regional commanders to consolidate clandestine networks in order to support the regional commands and their soldiers. When Xanana was captured in 1992, operational command was passed to Ma’hunu (Jose Antonio da Costa). Xanana continued to maintain his role as supreme commander from prison in Jakarta, but far more decision making power was devolved to the regional commanders. When Ma’hunu was captured in 1993, field–command was passed to Nino Konis Santana. Following the death of Konis Santana in 1998, Taur Matan Ruak (José Maria Vasconselos) took over the command in the field. Between 1992 and 1998, Falintil officially restructured itself along dual lines: an armed force (Conselho Executivo de Luta Força Armada or CELFA) and a clandestine network (Conselho Executivo de Luta Força Clandestina or CELFC).

Before July 1999, Falintil maintained four regional commands that operated inside East Timor, as well as one special regional command of clandestine operatives in Indonesia. These regional commands were:

- **Region 1**: Lautem District and Viqueque District under the command of Lere Anan Timor (Tito Ililawa).
- **Region 2**: Baucau District and part of Manatuto District under the command of Taur Matan Ruak – who simultaneously maintained the position of operational commander for the whole of Falintil.
- **Region 3**: Same District, Dili District – eastern sector, part of Manatuto District, part of Aileu District and part of Covalima District, under the command of Falur Rate Laek (Domingos Raul).
- **Region 4**: Ainaro District, Bobonaro District, Dili District – western sector and part of Covalima, under the command of Ular Reik (Virgilio dos Santos).

By 1999, the regional commands were all dependent on local clandestine networks that supported them with food, general supplies and ammunition, as they received little assistance from foreign governments.

By July 1999, in the months before the ‘Popular Consultation’ or referendum, Falintil, on the orders of Xanana, went into four cantonment areas at Uaimori in Viqueque, Atelari in Baucau, Poetete in Ermera and Aiassa in Bobonaro, at regional command headquarters. See also the Chart of the Pro–Independence Structure at Appendix 4.

Following the Indonesian military and militia campaign of violence and destruction, Falintil moved into a single cantonment area at Aileu in November 1999. Falintil organised itself into five companies of around 120 men which followed the previously used regional command structure. Under each company there were three to four platoons. At that time the youth involved in the clandestine groups that formerly operated under the regional commands continued to maintain informal ties with Falintil.
At the time of this writing, it is not clear what the current relationship of the former clandestine networks is to the armed force. Since the demobilisation of Falintil that unofficially began at the start of 2000, many of the thousands of former clandestine youth operatives became disenfranchised, despite Falintil commanders expressing a need for their re-deployment in return for the support that they provided to the guerillas. There are reports, however, of some former clandestine members becoming involved in illicit, gang-type activities.

2. The Structure of the Militia

A number of different East Timorese defense units and paramilitary units have operated alongside regular Indonesian army units since the invasion in 1975. Civil defense groups (Partahanan Sipil Hansip) were trained and used by the military in their operations. These units included the well-known People’s Resistance (Perlawanan Rakyat – Wanra) and Public Security (Keamanan Rakyat – Kamra). In the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of elite paramilitary organisations were set up by the TNI and were trained as and/or by Kopassus units. These include Halilintar (Thunderbolt) from Maliana, and various “Teams” (Tim in Bahasa Indonesia) such as Tim Makikit (Eagle team) from Viqueque, Tim Alpha from Los Palos, and Tim Sakka and Tim Sera, both from Baucau. Special youth groups were also set up by the Indonesian armed forces in the mid-1990s, such as the notorious Dili-based Gada Paksi (Youth Guard to Defend Integration). All of these civil defense groups and paramilitaries were under the direct command of the Indonesian armed forces. See the Chart of the Pro-Autonomy Structure at Appendix 5.

As the campaign for independence began to operate openly after the fall of Suharto in 1998, more than 20 militia groups were set up, either under the direct command of TNI or by their East Timorese proxies. Some were formed and operated by East Timorese elite paramilitaries such as Halilintar in Bobonaro District, who were in command of the Dadurus Merah Putih and other subordinate militia groups in the district. The aim of the elite paramilitaries was to crush the East Timorese resistance to Indonesia, while the militia groups formed after 1998 specifically aimed to ensure that the referendum results favoured autonomy within Indonesia. The elite paramilitary groups tended not to use under-18s as they could recruit enough adults to fill their quotas since they had been formed in the 1980s and early 1990s and therefore had enough time to hand-pick their members. However the new militias needed numbers in order to fulfill their aims in a very short time, and therefore once adult recruit pools were exhausted, they used youth to fill their ranks. Most of the 1998 militia groups were run directly by the Indonesian military and their political counterparts – East Timorese pro-autonomy parties such as the FDPK (Forum for Unity, Peace and Justice). Hard-line factions within the Indonesian military supported the militias politically, institutionally and financially. These factions wanted to maintain the integrity of the Indonesian nation and feared that the separation of East Timor would encourage separatist movements in other parts of the country such as Irian Jaya and Aceh. This was also related to the military having lost standing in Indonesian society with the downfall of Suharto.

Many under-18 youth and children who joined the militias were from the western districts. As Xanana Gusmão stated: “During the Indonesian occupation, there were gangs controlled by Eurico Guterres (who worked for the Indonesian intelligence and later became vice-commander of the pro-integration militias). These gangs were often made up of elements from the western region of the country.”13 The Halilintar paramilitary in Bobonaro district had been successful in wiping out most resistance to the Indonesian invasion in the west. Most Fretilin and Falintil

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guerillas in the area had been forced to surrender in 1979 due to crackdowns by the military and paramilitary forces, and many had been killed or imprisoned. Halilintar recruited few former Falintil soldiers who were captured, whereas paramilitary organisations in the East, such as *Tim Alpha, Tim Sakka and Tim Sera*, actively recruited surrendered or captured guerillas. Falintil commanders also claim that pro–independence ideas came later to the west than the east, as those living in the west shared closer familial, cultural and political ties with the bordering Indonesian province of West Timor, and therefore were less concerned about independence. Furthermore, they maintain that in the late 1980s, when the first university in Dili was opened and students were allowed to travel to attend universities in Indonesia, many students from the western districts were given more opportunities to study, as the Indonesian authorities did not suspect them of having connections with Falintil.

According to pro–autonomy political leaders as well, there were large numbers of youth conscripted into the militia in the western districts of East Timor. This was fueled by a belief that if they could win the a majority of the votes from these districts, then the pro–autonomy side could request a partition of the western part of country for themselves in the advent of a pro–independence victory. Therefore there was a massive recruitment drive in the region and many youth who were under–18 were forced to join the militia to ensure that the pro–autonomy side won by whatever means. This plan was thwarted when the UN mixed the votes, so it was not apparent which regions had voted for either side, ensuring that areas that voted strongly for one option would not be penalised by the other side.
III. Use of children and youth by pro–independence and pro–autonomy groups, with comparative analysis

1. Numbers of children involved in the conflict

Both the pro–independence and pro–integration forces in East Timor used children as armed combatants during period of the Indonesian occupation and its violent resolution after the 1999 referendum. On both sides of the conflict the age of child soldiers ranged from 10 to 18 years old, although most were between the age of 15 and 18 years old. Accurate figures on the number of children combatants participating on either side are impossible to obtain. In the past, Falintil did not maintain consistent records of the ages or the names of its soldiers. Only in 2000–2001, as Falintil started the process of demobilisations and transformation into the new East Timor Defense Force (ETDF), was a comprehensive list of the active members of Falintil compiled. Many of the child combatants had already been unofficially demobilized by this point, making even figures for child combatants active during the 1999–2001 period impossible to track. On the pro–autonomy side, the militia created lists of recruits, including those who were under 18 at the time of recruitment. However these lists were either destroyed or remain with militia leaders or the Indonesian army in Indonesia.

2. Children arrested, wounded and killed

Similarly, it is impossible to ascertain the numbers killed, wounded, arrested, and taken prisoner on either side. Nevertheless, it is well documented by local and international human rights organizations that thousands of young pro–independence supporters were arrested, detained or executed over the course of the conflict. Further, it is known that militia youth have been detained against their will in West Timor, and that the militia has executed some themselves. Extra–judicial killings by Falintil have also been reported, particularly during the period 1975–1980. However it is impossible to know how many of these may have involved youth activists.

3. Radicalization of youth

On both sides of the conflict organizations used different strategies to radicalize youth and make them active. Children were also radicalized through their own personal experiences. Youth from the pro–independence side were revolutionized predominantly because they witnessed abuses against family members and colleagues perpetrated by the Indonesian military. This made them want to join clandestine organizations that served Falintil, student groups and other pro–independence groups. The clandestine organizations also actively encouraged the radicalization of children. The activities undertaken by these pro–independence associations were mainly clandestine work such as collection and delivery of supplies for the Falintil guerillas; organizing demonstrations; sending and receiving messages from Falintil, other groups and the international community; and arranging international campaigns. Their activities were also occasionally violent such as killings of Indonesian authorities and East Timorese associated with them.

Paramilitary and militia groups recruited youth and radicalized them. These pro–autonomy groups were formed by elements of Indonesian army. For example, Gada Paksi (Youth Guard to Defend Integration) set up in the mid–1990s by Lt. General Prabowo of ABRI to involve youth in a formalized paramilitary structure that supported ties with Indonesia. In 1999, remnants of this group became incorporated into the Aitarak militia. Some youth who joined militia groups such as Aitarak were also radicalized by their own experience. Some had family members who were
killed or ostracized by pro–independence groups and signed up for this reason. The activities undertaken by the militia youth included violence and intimidation to influence people to vote for the option of integration with Indonesia.

The environment of conflict and instability since the Indonesian occupation of East Timor also created an atmosphere that made the radicalization of youth from both sides of the conflict possible. As Xanana Gusmao observed, “The occupation resulted in a common conscience of repression, a consequence of foreign domination. Given the characteristics of the resistance, there was a clear division in the whole youth sector: between those on the margins protected and paid by Indonesian Intelligence, and those who were nationalists.” A lack of meaningful employment, poverty, and a feeling of alienation from the Indonesian system exacerbated the situation. The function of radicalizing children was for both sides to gain participation in large numbers for their respective causes. The pro–independence side began to systematically use youth in the early 1980s for the purpose of fostering a future movement for an independent East Timor. At the same time, the Indonesian armed forces and paramilitaries began to use youth to aid them in destroying the pro–independence faction and co–opting their supporters into their ranks. By 1999, with the advent of the militia groups, the pro–autonomy supporters recruited youth for the specific aim of ensuring that their side won the referendum.

4. Social impacts and psychological effects of radicalization

The revolutionizing of pro–independence children brought some positive effects such as moral development, self–confidence, organizational skills, and a sense of responsibility to the community. However, involvement in the activities of the clandestine groups and Falintil also entailed sacrifices such as an education foregone and extreme punishment (detention, torture and execution). The negative effects of the radicalization of these youth include trauma and a lack of trust in civil society, government and authority in general. Many of these youth are now also having difficulty in organizing above–ground, stable civil society and governmental institutions as they have become so accustomed to operating in an underground and secretive fashion.

The radicalization of pro–autonomy youth brought few positive effects. In some cases children were given a sense of community, or being part of a group, that was important to some of them. However, most of the effects recorded for this study were negative. Most children who joined the militia report feeling guilt and shame, and appear traumatized by their experiences. Many also seem to have been desensitized to committing acts of extreme violence. Most, like the pro–independence child soldiers, expressed distrust in authority, particularly government institutions.

5. Modes and patterns of recruitment and salaries/benefits

Comparing methods of recruitment, as well as salaries and benefits, on the part of the two sides to the East Timor conflict presents inherent difficulties. Falintil was a mobile guerilla army, organized along a fairly standard military model, which waged war over the course of 25 years. On the other hand, the vast majority of the militia groups existed for only a ten–month period – the first of the referendum–era militias was formed in November 1998. Similarly, the militias were formed for very specific purposes, while Falintil acted as a liberation army representing most pro–independence supporters in East Timor.

As a guerilla army, completely dependent on the support of the populace, Falintil simply could not afford to alienate their supporters through forced recruitment. Nor could they financially or materially maintain a large force. Falintil commanders also stated that if they were to operate in large numbers, and launch more attacks on the Indonesian military, that the people would have suffered more retribution. This would have meant more suffering for the people that Falintil wanted to defend, and would have resulted in a loss of vital support. These factors meant that Falintil recruitment for all ages was strictly voluntary, and in fact Falintil often had to turn potential recruits away. Further they were unable to offer their recruits any form of salaries or benefits, other than the considerable social prestige associated with being a member of the force.

By contrast, the militia groups enjoyed the considerable financial and logistical resources provided by the Indonesian armed forces and government organizations, during the short time when they were active. Forced recruitment was a standard feature of militia activity, particularly in the western regions. In some towns, militia leaders went door-to-door, demanding that all males join the militia, often under threat of death if they did not sign up. In other cases, leaders went to gambling rings or public places frequented by disaffected youth. Further, the militia offered significant financial and material inducement to join. At the time of recruitment, many received food, clothing or cash, and were often promised further payment. However, in many cases militia members never received the full payment they were promised.

6. Treatment of children during the armed conflict

A noticeable feature of the case studies involving Falintil and clandestine children is the frequency with which those interviewed refer to the fellow Falintil members as “treating us better than our own brothers did.” Falintil commanders clearly fostered a familial atmosphere among their recruits, taking good care and emotionally supporting their young members. The commanders felt responsible for all their soldiers, but children in particular, attempting to provide them with spiritual and moral guidance as well as being their leaders. The views and observations of those interviewed are overwhelmingly positive with regard to their commanders.

When child soldiers in Falintil were wounded, the main form of treatment given by older members was the use of traditional medicine. In the mid–1980s, the clandestine movement began to systematically supply the guerillas with manufactured medicines from Indonesia. By the early 1990s, depending on the quality of clandestine supply routes to the guerillas, combinations of traditional herbal medicines and Indonesian drugs were used. Child soldiers described the medical treatment from their seniors as being satisfactory despite a lack of medical equipment and drugs to treat serious wounds.

Among the militia, commanders used a combination of fear, intimidation, praise, and peer pressure in order to control child recruits. The militia child recruits interviewed referred often to tactics of intimidation used to induce them to carry out orders. Child militia members would be praised for carrying out orders, by their commanders and fellow members, but received no moral guidance or emotional support as they attempted individually to come to terms with the results of their own acts of violence. Furthermore, one militia leader described child recruits as acting like “robots,” meaning they were easier to command and manipulate than their older counterparts.

None of the child soldiers interviewed from the militias stated that they received medical assistance when they were wounded, from their commanders, nor were they given leave to attend doctors or Indonesian military or government hospitals. Furthermore none reported that they received drugs for treatment of illness or to alleviate pain.
After situations of combat or attacks, those interviewed from among the Falintil state that they felt excitement and exhilaration at holding a gun or shooting at Indonesian soldiers. Those who were wounded report that they received psychological encouragement from their commanders and colleagues. However, among the militia youth, those interviewed describe feeling deeply traumatized by the conflicts in which they took part, fearing they would die and becoming deeply depressed, without any source of solace or emotional support.

7. Post–service treatment of children

Regarding post–service awards, medical treatment, or benefits for young veterans, neither side has been able to offer their youth recruits support, albeit for very different reasons. In the wake of the pro–independence vote, the militias are no longer in any position to support their demobilized youth members. Most of the formerly active youth militias now live in difficult circumstances in refugee camps in West Timor. The few who have returned to East Timor receive little or no support. Falintil, with the support of the International Organisation for Migration, has offered compensation packages to former members who have been officially demobilised. However this will not be made available to children who chose to leave Falintil ranks after the arrival of the peacekeeping force in September 1999, or who were unofficially demobilised in 2000. The youth involved in the clandestine movement receive no material support from Falintil as the force has difficulties in supporting its own membership. Local groups, such NGOs Sa’he and Yayasan HAK; student groups such as the Student Solidarity Council of East Timor; and church bodies, have organized trainings and information–sharing activities with youth from the clandestine groups. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has organized a programme to assist youth in areas across East Timor with vocational, educational and social activities. However there is still much to be done to assist these children and youth.

8. Psychological and social effects on the child soldiers and community reactions

It is difficult to authoritatively describe the psycho–social effects on children who have been involved in the conflict in East Timor. No statistics have been kept or research conducted that has definitively linked anti–social behavior to the war. However evidence suggests that the population of East Timor in general, particularly the urban areas, suffers from increasing petty crime and gang–like violence. Hospitals and police have also noted high levels of alcohol abuse and domestic violence in East Timor. There are also press reports of increasing involvement of former clandestine youth in extortion rings and illegitimate business practices. Much of the increase in crime and violence has been anecdotally linked to the disaffection among former clandestine youth activities since the referendum. This is to be expected with alarmingly high unemployment levels and little opportunities for education or vocational training. Among the former militia youth, of the few who have returned to their villages and towns, most have been ostracized and branded by their communities despite local programmes to reintegrate them. As a result they have attempted to maintain a low profile and reconcile peacefully with their villages. On the other hand, NGOs active in the refugee camps in West Timor report very high levels of violent crime, alcohol and drug abuse, and domestic violence among former child members of the militia.

Former Falintil youth, despite receiving little material assistance, are treated well by their communities and receive respect for their involvement in the armed struggle. Former clandestine youth were underground, and due to the structure of their networks were often unknown to the populace. Although those who are known to local people are still held in high esteem, those who feel disaffected and angry who have become involved in criminal activities are losing the respect of the public. These youth feel left out of the process of rebuilding the country that they fought
for. Many feel that they have given a large part of their lives to the movement and therefore neglected their schooling. Now many cannot gain positions at university, as they have not studied properly for years. They have difficulties with gaining meaningful employment that they feel entitled to. Some of these disaffected youth are now turning to crime out of frustration and due to a need to survive.

On the other hand, the few militia youth who have returned to East Timor often face extreme anger from their communities, many of whose residences were destroyed and some of whose families were harmed during the violence in 1999. The CNRT-appointed village chiefs have received a mandate from their leadership to promote reconciliation and reintegration of these youth, and the success of these programmes varies from village to village. In West Timor, where thousands of militia youth remain, the local communities are generally dissatisfied with the presence of these children. Since the arrival of the militia groups in September 1999, the West Timorese population has been exposed to extreme violence from them and some have even been displaced, harassed and killed by the militia.

In the refugee camps these youth appear to be well received by the refugees, many of who support the pro-autonomy movement or are family members. However, international agencies withdrew humanitarian aid to the camps following the murders of three UNHCR workers in September 2000. With a lack of material support the children there have little resources to survive on as the Indonesian government can provide only limited assistance. The child combatants remaining in active service are the most vulnerable, having been exposed to violence for over two years now and possibly for all of their lives. Local organisations in West Timor claim that these children will be very difficult to re-integrate into normal life either in Indonesia or on their return to East Timor.

9. East Timor’s new defence force and its policy on child soldiers

On 31 January 2001, Falintil was officially demobilised and dissolved. The new East Timorese Defence Force, of which former Falintil members form the core, stated that recruitment would be open to men and women above the age of 18. From the pro-independence side, the vulnerable youth are those who were unofficially demobilised during 2000 and the clandestine youth that supported them.

10. Conclusion

Children in East Timor participated in the conflict for different reasons. The numbers of child soldiers involved are impossible to ascertain. Children who joined the pro-independence clandestine groups and Falintil expressed that they did so willingly, and usually as a result of ill-treatment of family members and friends by the Indonesian armed forces. These child soldiers were committed to the cause of an independent East Timor. Some members of the pro-autonomy militias joined because of abuses from the pro-independence side, and a commitment to integration with Indonesia. However most were forcibly recruited with violence, or offered payment. Children who joined Falintil and the clandestine network were treated well by their commanders, whereas those involved in the militia groups reported that their seniors used fear and intimidation to ensure that they carried out their activities. Neither side has provided adequate post-service compensation or services specifically directed at child soldiers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that children involved in the pro-independence side had positive experiences on the whole, although coupled with some negative aspects. However those in the militias were exposed to excessive violence and often show high levels of trauma and anti-social behaviour.
The full social implications of the experiences of these children will not be known for years to come and deserve further study.

11. Recommendations

Xanana Gusmao has made a number of suggestions to resolve current conflicts and the dissatisfaction felt by both pro–independence and pro–autonomy youth living in East Timor. His propositions include the following:

“To promote a greater involvement of young people in open discussions about social problems; a greater involvement of civil society in debates about these same problems; a greater involvement by political leaders in youth education; and a greater involvement of the media in the civic education process … the establishment of an adequate strategic development programme can demonstrate to everybody the possibility that they will have a role in the future. Concurrently it is important to immediately define vocational training programmes, aimed at young people, so that each one of them will know that they will one day have the qualifications necessary for a job in the future and be able to participate in the development process.”

Specific development programmes that take into account the psychological and historical experiences of children and youth in East Timor are required to rebuild a tolerant society, free of violence and social conflict, and in which the future adults are prepared to take over governance of the nation.

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IV. Case Studies – Pro-independence and Pro-autonomy

1. Pro-independence child soldiers

1.1. Bersama, Pro–independence Falintil Child Soldier

Code name: “Bersama”
Recruited/joined at: 12 years old (1983)
Age at interview: 28 years old
Armed Group: Falintil, Region 2 (currently serving in Region 4)
From: Uma Kiik Village, Viqueque District

1.1.1. Description

Bersama is well built, light–skinned and around 160cms. He has a broad Southeast Asian face with almond–shaped eyes and his rounded cheeks make him look younger than his 28 years. His black hair, consistent with the style sported by young military men, is cut short all around. He wears jeans, a brown T–shirt and sandals. He is very polite and patiently answers all of the questions with a thoughtful approach, and looked me straight in the eye as he methodically told his story. His expression becomes very serious when he remembers the bad times in the past and his features appear older than his years. His demeanor is very calm and disciplined and he demonstrates emotional control in his actions and in the way he speaks. But when he remembers the good times he smiles and his whole face lights up like that of a child. Bersama has served Falintil for 16 years. He was born in Uma Kiik village in Viqueque District.

1.1.2. Background

Bersama was interviewed on the verandah of a house that Region 4 commander Ular and his family lived in. Commander Ular and his troops occupied the houses after the Indonesians left East Timor in late 1999. When Falintil moved to Aileu village in early 2000 it took over many of the buildings abandoned by the Indonesians and converted them into Falintil headquarters and residences. Aileu was chosen as it was one of the last urban strongholds of the Fretilin command after the Indonesian invasion in late 1975.

Many East Timorese in their late twenties remember fleeing to the mountains with the Falintil as children. Much of the population of the Baucau, Viqueque and Lautem districts escaped to the hills with Fretilin/Falintil after the 1975 invasion. Bersama’s early childhood experience is typical for this age group and for those from the eastern districts. According to Falintil commanders, most youth who joined Falintil did so during the early 1980s.

Bersama was orphaned at the age of 12. His father, a leader of a clandestine pro–independence group, was killed by the Indonesian military during a battle with Falintil in Viqueque district. Commander Ular and his troops discovered the boy in the jungle. “There was no choice,” remembers Ular, “we could not leave Bersama behind when we withdrew”. Bersama was eager to join the troops, as he wanted to avenge the death of his father, and he really had no other place to go. He carried his first gun at the age of 14 and, without any formal military training whatsoever, he was soon fighting in the front lines.
Bersama was useful to Falintil not only as a soldier, but also as a translator: he could speak Bahasa Indonesia at a time when many of the Falintil commanders could only speak Portuguese and the local languages. He also worked for the Falintil as a scribe. Through his work with the Falintil, Bersama became quite close with the other soldiers. He later recalled that he felt as though the Falintil commanders were like his parents and the soldiers were his siblings.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s there were more youth like Bersama among the guerilla troops than there are now. The youngsters had fled persecution and therefore wanted to fight with the Falintil. Commander Ular said that by the mid–1980s, the Falintil did not want so many youth joining their forces. This was for three main reasons: (1) in guerilla warfare, it is generally safer to operate in smaller number as unnecessarily large groups attract the enemy’s attention; (2) the urban youth were often not tough enough to survive the difficult conditions in the jungle, especially when the troops lacked sufficient food or medicine; and (3) even though many youth were eager to join the struggle, the Falintil felt it was more important for the well–being of a future independent East Timor that the children stay in school.

Now that East Timor is independent, Falintil has begun re–structuring itself along the lines of a regular defence force and Bersama has been chosen to play a role in the new army. As Falintil is currently working in cooperation with donor countries, Bersama’s new role is not yet clear. He was sent to Australia to discuss the future of the Falintil with defense experts there, and he is currently based in the Falintil cantonment of Aileu and works with Commander Ular. Bersama is in good spirits. He has just married and has a positive outlook regarding his future; he is happy that the pro–independence side won the referendum, and that the Falintil has been able to leave the jungle and begin the transformation into a regular defense force.

1.1.3. Interview

I was in Region 2 but now I am in Region 4. I was a Political Assistant and now I am one of the commanders of Region 4. I am working in the Falintil secretariat and sometimes I receive orders from headquarters and then I go and work there.

There were three children in my family but my brother died and so now there are two left. My parents were working as farmers. I went to elementary school for three years. We had a traditional East Timorese house and we lived in big village.

In 1979 was very hard for us to get food. We were very hungry because at that time we had just returned to our village after three years of hiding in the jungle from the Indonesian soldiers. I remember when Indonesia first invaded East Timor. I was young and we fled to the jungle. Everyday we had to move from place to place. I saw the Indonesian troops come down from the sky in parachutes and people started running away from their villages. We were so scared and we had to hide the babies in the bushes near our village so that the Indonesian soldiers would not hear the babies crying and capture us. Sometimes at night if possible we went home and if it was not possible, we could not go home at all. The Indonesian troops moved very fast and we had to move fast as well to escape them and eventually had to leave our village for good. At that time I was about six years old.

I was scared all the time in those days because there were always battles between the Indonesians and Falintil all over the Viqueque area. The Indonesian military was very strong and Falintil in a weaker position and a bad situation. Every day their forces were reduced and they had to flee to the jungle. We had to return to our village because so many people had been captured and the Indonesian military was bringing people back from the jungle to the towns. Falintil couldn’t
defend the population in the jungle. We received orders from Fretilin President Nicolau Lobato (the first president of Fretilin who was killed by Indonesian troops in late 1978) saying that if we had to, Falintil and the population could return to the cities, but he warned us not to give up the spirit of independence in our minds and souls. He said that even if our bodies gave up, our principles must live on, and that one day we would win the war. That was why many people returned to their villages.

When I was in the jungle I didn’t think about my future, the only thing that I remember thinking about was how to get independence because every day Falintil talked about freedom. When I was in school in my village, a clandestine unit operated there and it was organised by my father. We had received instructions from President Xanana to make revolution after the cease-fire with the Indonesians broke down in 1983, but many villages couldn’t make revolution because they were beaten down by the Indonesian military. Kraras village and some other villages tried to make war and there was big fighting between Falintil and the Indonesian army at that time.

That was in August 1983. After a Falintil attack on the Indonesian army and a brutal crackdown by the Indonesians in my village, I fled to the jungle. The Indonesian army burned our village and we had to run to the hills. I remember they killed many people there that September. My father was a clandestine leader so it was easy for us to know where Falintil was based. We found them and sheltered with them. My father was shot dead by the Indonesian military when I was 12 years old and that is when I went to join Falintil. They accepted me to join because there was no other place for me to run and the only choice was to join Falintil and fight. As the defender of the people, Falintil had to protect us from the enemy.

My first job when I joined Falintil was as a writer (for the high-ranking commanders). I was called by Commander Konis Santana (a former commander-in-chief of Falintil) and was given orders to make lists and inventories. That was in 1984. In 1985, I was called by Commander Lere (Commander of Falintil Region 1) to join him and to continue with the same work. The first time I held a gun was in 1985. My first gun was an FBP – a small gun. I didn’t belong to a specific regional command because sometimes I was working with Region 2, Region 4 or headquarters. The first time I had to fight was when we attacked Buikari village in Viqueque. We had two teams, one to attack the village, and the other to wait on the road. After we attacked the village, the Indonesian army called for help from Viqueque, and we attacked the reinforcement convoy. Many Indonesian troops were killed and we took 10 guns from them. I was with the team that attacked the village. I didn’t know if I killed any of them or not because it was night when we made the attack.

When I held a gun for the first time, I remember thinking about the many people who had been killed by the Indonesian army, and I wanted revenge. I was 14 years old at that time but because of the responsibility I had been given to hold a gun I quickly became more adult than before. I started to think carefully about military strategy and tactics and about how to kill and take the enemy’s guns to protect us. I learned for a short time about how to use the gun before I held it but I didn’t have any military training. When I went to battle for the first time that was my first training.

One of my first fighting experiences was when we attacked some Indonesian troops in Laleia village (in Manatuto Sub-district) while they were washing their clothes. I came close to four of them and I took their guns without them knowing I was there beforehand. After I took their guns I said, “Don’t move!” They were so scared. Their colleagues came after that and shot at us and I just shot back at all of them. Three of them were killed and one was injured. My aim in using the gun was not to kill. Originally we had planned to capture them and take them to Kribas Village...
to try and negotiate their release with the international community. The plan was destroyed when they started to shoot at us and I had no choice except to shoot back and kill them.

One of the main objectives of soldiers from every region was to seize guns; otherwise if youth came to join Falintil they would have no guns to use. I was not afraid when I moved close to the Indonesian soldiers. I was focused on how to get their guns. I was very excited after I killed three of them and took their guns. I was very proud and the commander was very happy with what I had done. At all times I had to control my fear because I lived in a war and I had to know how to stay alive. I was aware that what I had to do was fight for independence because from the beginning I believed in this.

I didn’t get paid by Falintil because it was even hard for all of them to find food. When I first joined Falintil I saw many under–18s but many of them were killed and now there are only a few of us left. There were no female children in my group but we had some women who decided to stay with their husbands in the jungle.

When I was young, Commander Falur, Commander Taur Matan Ruak, and Commander Xanana Gusmão called me because I could write. That was why I was selected to work as a writer for them. I wrote the history of the invasion for the commanders, as well as letters to members of the clandestine movement in Dili and Jakarta. I didn’t receive any formal military training. Our training was on the battlefield. The good things that I learned from Falintil were discipline, administration and also politics. I learned about human rights from documents that we received from the church, and also from the leaders because they talked a lot about human rights. I learned general knowledge from documents we received and from discussions we had when we had meetings. In Falintil, my assigned job was to write and we didn’t have favorite jobs – we did any kind of job that we could do happily.

The commanders treated us very well. They helped us when we had to fight and they treated us better than our parents did. Most of the commanders liked me because I did my work for them well. I didn’t get punished because I didn’t do anything wrong. I saw some soldiers punished – they had to make self–criticisms in front of the group when they did something wrong. We had to confess what we had done wrong to the group. Sometimes the punishment would be push–ups or doing somersaults.

Between 1984 and 1986, Xanana gave orders to attack the Indonesian army and to take their clothes as well as their guns. When we killed them we took off their clothes and sometimes we even had to cut off their legs if we couldn’t get their boots off. To wash our clothes we used soap–wood (a wood that East Timorese traditionally use as soap), to brush our teeth we used sand, and for our body we used mud. For food it depended on where we were. If we stayed in an area with many coconuts, we would eat coconuts every day. We used traditional herbal medicine for dengue fever or stomachaches, and we learned about these medicines from an old man who was a traditional herbalist. Sometimes we received medicine, ammunition, and food from the clandestine movement that supported us. If the Indonesian army shot a member of our group, often we couldn’t go and save them because of the battle situation and we would have to let them die. But if there was any possibility for us to save them, we would. We gave them Indonesian medicine (from the clandestine movement) and traditional medicine. We also fed them and tried to make sure that they would be fine.

I want to continue working with Falintil and to do that I recently went to Darwin and Canberra for training. I took an English course and met professors at the Australian National University in
Canberra. I talked to them about the future of Falintil, the position of Falintil in East Timorese politics and about the future of East Timor.

I got married recently and I hope I will have children soon, but at the moment I haven’t had a baby yet. Sometimes I miss our life before in the jungle but I don’t want to go back to the jungle. If we ever have a war again I will fight in the city and I won’t go back to the jungle. Sometimes I dream that we are still fighting in the jungle and wake up in shock.

When I heard the result of referendum I was so excited and I knew that our suffering was over and that finally we had won the war and the people could live in peace now. When we were in the jungle so many of us were killed – children, youth and the older Falintil. Finally our suffering has ended.
1. 2. Maulelo, Pro–independence Falintil Child Soldier

Code name: “Maulelo”
Recruited/joined at: 15 years old (1996) clandestine front and 18 years old (1999) Falintil
Age at interview: 19 years old
Armed Group: Clandestine front and Falintil Region 2
From: Tiril olo village, Baucau District

1.2.1. Description

Maulelo is a strong, short young man and is around 162cms tall. He has big brown eyes and short black hair. His skin is smooth and light. He wears a pair of jeans, an orange T–shirt and sandals. He laughed a lot telling jokes with his commander before the interview. He waited patiently and listened carefully while his commander talked to him about the study on child soldiers before starting the interview. He is direct with his answers and looked the translator in the eye when answering questions. Sometimes he became shy, looking at the ground and laughing nervously as when asked if he was married or had a girlfriend. Maulelo began working for the clandestine movement when he was 15 years old, and in 1999 he became a Falintil soldier. He was born in Trilolo village in Baucau district.

1.2.2. Background

Maulelo was interviewed in a large white house in Aileu that was taken over by the Falintil Commander Berdu’u. The militia and Indonesian army destroyed most of Aileu village when they left East Timor in late 1999. This particular house was abandoned, and Berdu’u’s troops have since moved in and redecorated, applying a fresh coat of paint and installing aluminum–roofing material. The re–occupied house serves as Berdu’u’s residence and Regional command office. Berdu’u was formerly in charge of a sector of the Indonesian clandestine movement outside East Timor, but now he controls the East Timorese Region 5 from his post in Aileu. Commander Berdu’u recruited and trained Maulelo. Before the interview with Maulelo, Berdu’u spoke about the involvement of children in Falintil and the conflict in the Baucau District.

In the wake of Indonesian crackdowns after large demonstrations in 1995 and 1996, a number of youth fled into Berdu’u’s area from their villages. In the months prior to the 1999 referendum, paramilitary groups, namely the Tim Sakka, the Tim Sera and the TNI were the perpetrators of violent intimidation against the local Baucau population. Much of the oppression was designed to scare people into voting for the pro–autonomy side or not to vote at all. Many youth were targeted, as they had been at the forefront of the pro–independence clandestine movement for years, and were conducting ‘dialogues’ about the referendum with the local people. Most of the Baucau youth were also linked to the vast clandestine network, and the paramilitary’s threats forced them to flee to the villages to join the Falintil cantonments. There were, however, special problems for the young recruits: often they would come from the relative comfort of urban environments, and were often unprepared to handle to the extremes of life in the jungle camps.

According to Falintil reports, of the approximately 500 new soldiers and families at the Uaimori cantonment in August 1999, many of them were youth from Baucau district, and during those few months, they received thirty new under–18 recruits. Maulelo’s story is typical of many of these youth from Baucau district.
After fleeing his village, Maulelo asked Commander Berdu’u if he could join his troops. The Falintil had a legendary status among villagers, and Maulelo felt that “… to join Falintil was the best way to defend our people and our land”. His decision to become a soldier after the post-referendum violence was also motivated by a feeling that the Falintil had been working for many years for the good of the people of East Timor. Commander Berdu’u accepted Maulelo as a new recruit in 1999.

Maulelo now wants to be a member of the new East Timorese Defence Force. The Falintil is working on designing the new defence force structure and so Maulelo’s position is not yet clear. He is proud and excited to be involved in the new military force and views his future as bright: “I am happy that Falintil will become the new defence force for East Timor and I am ready for the new training”. He is currently based in the Falintil cantonment of Aileu and works with Commander Berdu’u. He hopes to marry soon but says that at the moment he has no time for that.

1.2.3. Interview

I am now 19 years old. I have one brother and two sisters. My father was a farmer. In our village we had some difficulties – we had to find food and medicine by ourselves. I was also beaten up by the Indonesian military when I was stopped while driving a car in my village. I completed five years of elementary school. I grew up in a traditional East Timorese house in a big village. Most of the people from my village were farmers. They planted and grew corn and some of them worked in the rice fields. They raised chickens, pigs, horses, buffaloes, and goats. When I was young and living in the village I always wanted to be a car driver.

I joined the clandestine movement in 1995 when I was 15 years old. I was in a clandestine group that was under the control of Falintil Region 2. I joined the clandestine movement because I wanted independence and also because the TNI (Indonesian military) beat people without any reason and I didn’t like that. My father and mother didn’t think much about politics, just about their own daily survival. My relative was a member of a clandestine group and I really wanted to join and so he recruited me. My first jobs were driving for members of the clandestine movement and for Falintil members. I also took food and water to clandestine bases for them. I was never scared because the enemy didn’t know that I was a clandestine member, but once I was accused and it made me very worried. I felt very happy when I delivered goods for Falintil. I felt very proud. I would never accept payment by Falintil because I just wanted to get independence for my country – and they could not pay us anyway. Many of my friends also worked as clandestine members and most of youth from the east of the country joined clandestine movements.

I joined Falintil in 1999 and at that time I was 18 years old. At that time I joined Falintil because of the crackdowns of the TNI and the violence of the militia in Baucau. I was scared they would discover that I had been a clandestine member. I went to Uaimori (Falintil headquarters) to join Falintil. Nobody asked me to sign up – I joined Falintil because I wanted to – I had always wanted to. When I came to ask permission to become a member of Falintil, I met with the commander of Region 2. I told him that I had come to Falintil because the situation in my village was not stable and the violence there was getting out of control. The commander allowed me to enlist immediately. That was July 1999 before the referendum. I was very happy when the commander accepted me into the force. I stayed with them from July until I went back to my village to vote in the popular consultation in August 1999.

My job between July and August before I went back to vote was to carry a gun and to take care of security for my area of the camp. Before I held a gun, we had been in training for four hours
every day during July, until just before the referendum. We also did physical excercise. I didn’t have any difficulties with the training because the commander treated us very well.

Most of us were youth around eighteen including five women in a group of thirty new recruits. Most of us didn’t have a good education – only four or five of us had finished high levels of schooling. Most of us were in the clandestine movement before we joined Falintil. We all knew each other very well as we had come from the same area. We came to join Falintil in July because at that time many of us were threatened by the TNI and militia and the situation had deteriorated so much. We decided to join Falintil because we thought that this was the best way to defend our people and our land.

My duty as a security sentry was to guard the headquarters. We took turns in sleeping every two hours. I didn’t feel tired when I was doing my duty because I enjoyed it. I liked all the jobs that the commander gave me. I wasn’t punished because I never made mistakes. I never fought while I was with Falintil and I never felt afraid when I was with them. Our commander always talked about human rights when we had meetings – he always spoke to us of the need to protect the people, not to kill and beat the people. We didn’t get any political training but we knew what we were fighting for and that was independence and freedom.

We received food from our clandestine network – each Regional command of Falintil relied on its own networks to supply them with food. We ate three times a day. Sometimes we ate rice and hunted deer. We had soap or toothpaste from the clandestine groups and received uniforms that older Falintil had taken from dead Indonesian soldiers who they had killed. I have learned many good and useful things from Falintil for example discipline and war instruction. The commander they didn’t tell me anything about pro-autonomy and the Indonesian side because I knew what the Indonesian military was like since I was young – they beat people and killed people. I knew about the Indonesian army through my own experience.

When I went back to vote in Baucau the commander didn’t ask me to tell people to vote for independence because before we came to Uaimori we had already been discussing what voting for independence would mean with the population. They knew themselves what they would do. I was not afraid when I returned to Baucau to vote because no body knew that I was member of Falintil. After I had voted I returned to the Falintil cantonment in area in Uaimori while the TNI and militia destroyed everything in East Timor. When I returned my jobs were to take care of security (guarding huts in the headquarters), cooking, and carrying orders from one commander to other commanders. We didn’t get seriously ill but sometimes I had headaches. We received medicines from clandestine groups for treatment.

I made the decision to stay with Falintil even after Interfet (the international peacekeeping force) had arrived in East Timor. This is because I admire the way they had suffered for so many years for the people of East Timor and I wanted to be a soldier. I have not thought about having a family as I have no time now, but one day if it is possible I will get married. I am happy that Falintil will become the new defence force for East Timor and I am ready for the new training.
1.3. Mausina (Bahu), Pro–independence Falintil Child Soldier

Code name: “Mausina”
Recruited/joined at: 17 years old (1999)
Age at interview: 19 years old
Armed Group: Clandestine group *Fundamento* and Falintil Region 2
From: Bahu village, Baucau District

1.3.1. Description

Mausina is well built and does a lot of physical training. He is dark–skinned and around 160cms tall. He has a square jaw and defined features. He is shy, well disciplined and soft–spoken. He seems to have much respect and deference for his leader, Commander Maubuti. Mausina is polite and sometimes looks embarrassed when he can’t understand a question. He wore a plain green military T–shirt and Indonesian military camouflage pants. He was approached to join a Falintil clandestine organisation when he was 17 years old. He was born in the Bahu Village of Baucau District.

1.3.2. Background

Mausina was interviewed on the front porch of Commander Maubuti’s house. This structure in Aileu Village was one of the former Indonesian army residences that the troops of Region Two took over. Commander Maubuti is a vice–commander of Region 2. He and his men moved into an abandoned group of houses in a street in Aileu in early 2000 after the Indonesians and militia had destroyed the village following the referendum in late August of 1999. The Region 2 soldiers have repaired many of the damaged houses.

Commander Maubuti explained how many youth came to join Region 2. After the massive demonstrations of 1991, and the ensuing Indonesian crackdowns, intimidation drove youth away from their villages and into Falintil areas. Maubuti also said that some youth had joined simply because they always believed in Falintil. Mausina is a good example of this.

Mausina’s father used to be a civil servant for the Indonesian government, so his family was afforded some degree of protection from harassment. There were many government workers in his village, so there were fewer conflicts with Indonesian soldiers than in other villages of comparable size. When Mausina was 17, his friends recruited him to the clandestine movement, “Fundamento.” Through his activity with that movement, he began to feel strongly about the future of an independent East Timor, and came into contact with Falintil, and learned that they needed youth to work with them. By achieving political independence, Mausina believed, the people of East Timor would have a better future, with more possibilities than were currently available under the direction of the Indonesian authorities. Many East Timorese believed that Falintil had a capacity to suffer and go through many hardships for the liberation of their people from the Indonesians. Mausina claims that joining Falintil would also provide him with new opportunities to do something meaningful with his life. It was then that Mausina decided to join Falintil.

Falintil accepted Mausina as a soldier on 20 August 1999, the anniversary of the founding of the force. Soon after, Mausina learned of the Indonesian military’s plans to destroy much of East Timor. He returned to his village to warn his parents about the impending invasion, and encouraged them to flee to the mountains after the vote. In the months before the referendum,
hundreds of youth had already fled their villages and towns for Falintil cantonment areas. There was a shortage of weapons and food in some areas, and Falintil reports indicate that there were at least 500 new soldiers and families at the Uaimori cantonment in August 1999. Many of these were youth from Baucau.

Mausina now wants to be one of the Falintil soldiers who will take part in the new East Timorese Defence Force. Falintil forces were still undergoing major re-structuring at the time of the interview; Mausina did not know what his new position would be. He was eager to participate in Falintil’s new standard army training as opposed to guerilla warfare training. He likes being a Falintil soldier. He is also clear about what he wants in the future and has a course of action available to him to carry out his goals of becoming a soldier. Mausina also explained that his family’s support of his decision both to join and to remain part of Falintil in the future has been a positive influence on his decision–making about his future.

1.3.3. Interview

I am 19 years old. I completed senior high school. Now I am staying with Falintil Region 2. I have three brothers and one sister. I come from a village and my house was made from cement. During the Indonesian occupation my father worked as civil servant and my mother was farmer. My family didn’t have too many difficulties during the time when the Indonesians were here; they didn’t make many problems in our village.

I joined a clandestine network when I was 17 years old. The group was called Fundamento and was led by a Falintil commander named Lairisa from Region 2. I had good relationship with friends who were in the clandestine movement and they trusted me and asked me to join so I did. I thought that as a Timorese I had to become a member if I wanted to get what I wanted for my future. My first job when I became a clandestine group member was to deal with problems that faced our group leader. For example if he needed help, I would pass his requests on to the other members. We sought out different kinds of supplies that we thought would be useful to them and sent them to the hills.

The reason why I enlisted in Falintil was because Falintil had suffered for the people and I thought that I should make sacrifices for them too. I also thought that it would be a new experience for me. When I was in the clandestine movement I had always planned to become a member of Falintil. I didn’t think about becoming a Falintil soldier before I had joined the clandestine movement, but after working for the underground groups for some time I decided that I wanted to. I had contact with Falintil before I came to them. At that time I heard that Falintil needed youth to work with them and that was another good reason to join.

The first thing that I did when I became a member of Falintil was learning to march and hold a gun, and I was very happy and enjoyed it because it was first time in my life I had done military training. That was the first time I held a gun. Before we took this instruction, we used to learn how to clean the guns and put each part together. We also had political education, in the form of discussion groups, from our commander about what we should do about the situation in East Timor.

I was the last one to enlist in Region 2 (before the referendum), and before me there were many youth who had already signed up with Falintil. We didn’t have any women join our regional command. As a Timorese I became a member of Falintil because I wanted to join. They could not pay us to serve with them.
I still eat well here, as I did when I was in my own village at home. We usually ate three times a day. We received food from our headquarters. Falintil also supplied soap and toothpaste for us. When I got sick I could go to the military hospital. When first I joined sometimes I got flu or a cough, but I didn’t get malaria. The good thing that I’ve learned from Falintil was about discipline – for example the discipline of how to live under military command and how to respect each other. When we wanted to go anywhere we would always ask permission from our commander. There were different roles for civilian (clandestine) and military members. Since I have been with Falintil I have never fought for them. The commander always treated us well, for example he taught me the right way and wrong way for soldiers to behave towards the people. The commander taught us military discipline and about human rights. He also taught us that it was wrong for the military to kill civilians.

I worked in the Falintil mess hall. When I woke up I spent the whole day in the kitchen from morning until night. If I had security duty I also had to do that during the nights. The punishment if we were late or fell asleep on the job was decided based on how serious the mistake was. Usually it would be doing push–ups or somersaults. As a soldier I had to do any kind of job that I was given and that is why I don’t have favorite job. If I want to achieve, I have to suffer, that is why I don’t hate any of my jobs. Now I have decided to stay with Falintil in the future. I don’t know what will happen in the future to the armed force, but if there are to be any changes in Falintil, for example a change from guerrilla warfare to standard army training, then I am ready for that. I joined Falintil not because I was forced, but because I like the way they operate. My parents gave me full support in my decision. They said that I was old enough to make up my own mind, so when I decided to enlist they agreed with my decision.

I never felt afraid when I was with Falintil. I knew that TNI (the Indonesian military) and militias would destroy East Timor after the referendum but I didn’t feel fear. The only thing that I was thinking about was how to save my life and the lives of my parents. I joined Falintil on August 20th, 1999, on the day of Falintil’s twenty–fourth anniversary. I went back to my village to tell my family to go to the hills because I had heard that the TNI and militias would destroy everything and kill people after the ballot. When I left to join Falintil it was because I wanted to and not because of the violent situation in my village.
1.4. **Amico, Pro–independence Falintil Child Soldier**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code name:</th>
<th>“Amico”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruited/joined at:</td>
<td>14 years old (1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at interview:</td>
<td>31 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armed Group:</td>
<td>Falintil Region 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From:</td>
<td>Loihunu Village, Ossu Sub-district, Viqueque District</td>
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**1.4.1. Description**

Commander Amico is slight, light–skinned and around 154cm tall. He has defined features and a thin expressive face. He wears a plain green military T-shirt, blue jeans and sandals. He tells his life story in an animated way and explains the hard times with good humour. He is energetic and is very direct. He does not get shy or embarrassed by any of the questions and often laughs when he remembers the past. Commander Amico has served Falintil for 17 years. He was born in Loihunu Village in Ossu Sub–district.

**1.4.2. Background**

Commander Amico was interviewed on the porch of Commander Maubuti’s house in the Region 2 area of Remexio. Commander Maubuti said that more child soldiers joined Falintil in the early 1980s than in the 1990s. He stressed the importance of interviewing not only the “veterans” who joined in the early 1980s, but also those who joined in the late 1990s, as their respective experiences in the Falintil differ greatly. After an interview with a new recruit to Region 2, veteran Commander Amico came forward to speak.

Many East Timorese now in their late twenties remember fleeing the Indonesian invasion, and seeking refuge in the mountains with the Falintil in the early 1980s. Most villagers from the Ossu sub–district spent the years between 1975 and 1979 in the mountains either fighting against or hiding from the Indonesian military. Commander Amico’s experiences between 1976 and 79 are typical of many people of his generation from the eastern region of East Timor.

Although Commander Amico had suffered years of fear and suffering in his childhood, when I asked him about his feelings when he and his parents fled their village to hide in the jungle, he claimed that he couldn’t remember feeling anything at all. He just remembered the sound of airplanes, gunshots and hungry people crying. It seemed unusual that he would not remember such a significant event with more detail. He always answered my questions, looking me straight in the eye, and it appeared as though he had seen so much suffering, that this was just the tip of the iceberg. Perhaps it is too painful for Commander Amico to describe his feelings as a six year old, as he has seen so much suffering in his life that what he experienced as a young child was minor in comparison. He explained that the violence he has witnessed in a matter–of–fact way. He had obviously steeled himself emotionally after having lived as a guerilla for 17 years and participating in some of the worst aspects of the war.

When Amico returned to his village, he watched an Indonesian paramilitary soldier beat his mother with the butt of a gun. This had a profound effect on him. He began to despise the Indonesian occupation, yet felt powerless to do anything about it. He felt that if the Indonesian military had intended to occupy East Timor in a peaceful manner, they would have intervened to put an end to the fighting. Instead, they seemed to have exacerbated the situation between those two groups. Other members of Amico’s family remained in the jungle with Fretilin/Falintil and...
became strong pro-independence supporters. Back in the village, many of his neighbors and friends had been deported to the notorious prison camp on Atauro Island, where torture was commonplace and hundreds of political prisoners starved in the early 1980s.

In 1983, at the age of 14, Amico decided to join Falintil as his brother was already a soldier. At that time, he was the youngest Falintil member in the group. He says that Falintil treated him better than his own family did. At that time anyone who could use a gun could join the guerillas and so Amico was given a gun and was given permission to fight in place of his father in a military operation. He felt that he had passed a right of passage from being a boy to being a man by carrying a gun. He had heard the other soldiers speak of fighting and felt brave and proud with a gun, so much so that he refused to return it to his commander after the operation. He started to emulate the older Falintil soldiers when he first went to battle and saw them as heroes. He learned to fight in the field without any formal military training. Now 31 years old, he believes that new recruits to the army should be over 18 years old. Anybody younger than that should not be allowed to join as “… they are still just kids and can’t make their own decisions properly”.

When Amico first joined, he was constantly living in fear, but after he got through the first year, he realized that there was no place to escape to. He had no choice but to stay and fight. This is around the time when Amico learned to have faith in ‘Lulik’ (the traditional East Timorese animist religion). According to Lulik philosophy, a Lulik Master gives his followers Lulik relics before they fight. Provided that the man follows the Lulik guidelines (i.e. eating certain foods and avoiding contact with women) the relic amulet will give him a supernatural ability to avoid danger. After seeing men who had been shot while wearing Lulik amulets get up and walk again, Amico’s faith in Lulik became unshakeable.

Commander Amico is known as a ‘veteran’ as are most Falintil recruits that joined between 1975 and 1983. He wants the new government of East Timor to provide for the demobilisation of the ‘veterans’ in terms of accommodation and government initiatives for their livelihoods. He worries that Falintil soldiers may want to join the new defense force but may not be able to do so as a result of injuries or health problems. He laughs when he says that he would like to live in one village with all his comrades who are veterans “so that they can still organise themselves like before”, and that they should be given this privilege by the new government. Despite his concerns about the future of Falintil in general and the veterans in particular, for him, “the struggle has ended.” He has recently married and now has one daughter. He is very happy about finally having a family and looks forward to taking care of his wife and child in a situation of peace and stability.

1.4.3. Interview

My name is Amico da Camara and when I was little boy my parents called me “Amico”. At first when Indonesia invaded East Timor I was six years old and couldn’t go to school because at that time I was living in the jungle (hiding from the Indonesian military forces). I stayed in the jungle for three years. When I returned to my village I went to elementary school for four years. I am 31 years old now. When we were in the jungle I was only six years old so I don’t remember what I felt. I only remember the sounds of airplanes, gunshots, and people crying because there was no food. When I was crying my dad and mom would always try to stop me from crying – that was the first time we had lived in a war situation.

I remember when we were all taken back to our village. I didn’t know where all the Falintil soldiers went. They left us in a village named Builo and we were found by Partisans (an East
Timorese paramilitary group that worked with the Indonesian military since the invasion) and Hansip (a military home guard that worked with the Indonesian military). They evacuated us back to the village. In Ossu, one of the Hansip members beat my mother with his gun. I was very angry and I said to myself, “if Indonesia win they will be lucky, but if the East Timorese win we will negotiate properly”. When I was growing up I knew that Indonesia was bad, because if they were good they would have tried to stop the pro–Indonesia and pro–independence East Timorese groups from fighting with each other, but they made the situation worse than before by supporting one side. They were here to destroy us.

Before I joined Falintil in 1983 the general situation in my village was very bad – many of my friends had been detained and transported to Atauro Island (where political prisoners were imprisoned in the late 1970s by the Indonesian army). They took husbands away from their wives and tortured them. What I saw during that time made me realize how cruel the Indonesian military could be. At that time many of my family were still staying in the jungle, one of them was Lu–Olo (the political secretary of Fretilin). There were 12 children in our family but two of my brothers were killed so there are only 10 of us left. I didn’t see it when my first brother was killed because at that time he was in combat at the front–line. I saw the other brother die – he died of a disease. I became interested in Falintil the first time when they made a cease–fire with the Indonesian army. The Indonesian army’s plan was for all members of Falintil to return to their villages from the mountains and to disarm them.

Falintil’s plan was to make revolution against the Indonesian army and I agreed with Falintil because they never killed people and that was what made me decide to join them. I had contact with them before 1983 because my brother was a Falintil–member and my father was a member of a clandestine movement. When I ran to the jungle, I was 14 years old. I did not know of many other youth in my group – there was only me and my ‘brothers’ (friends and fellow soldiers are often referred to as ‘brothers’ in Tetum) from Buanurak Village. At first there were very bad conditions for the many people who were living in the jungle, so when we first joined Falintil we were divided from the main Falintil group, but we had one or two Falintil members stay with us teaching us how to hide from the enemy.

I did not carry arms when we first joined Falintil. At that time I stayed within the population and our job was to hide and not to fight. I officially joined Falintil in 1987 and before that I had carried a gun. Those who could use a gun were able to get arms from and join Falintil. I was 14 the first time I held a gun. At that time my father was sick so I had to replace him. My first gun was an FBP (a small rifle). The other soldiers tried to get the gun back from me but I wouldn’t give it to them and I told them that I loved this gun! Every day the other Falintil members were always talking about fighting and I was very excited when I held the gun. I was very proud and I thought that I could be a fighter. I started to act like a man who could be a good fighter even though I was only 14 years old. I didn’t have any military training – the only training that I had was how to clean guns, pull them apart and put them back together. The only thing that I heard from Falintil about fighting was “if you see enemy you shoot him. If you don’t shoot him, you will be killed”.

I was taught that I could not reveal the secrets of Falintil and the clandestine movement if I was captured. The senior Falintil soldiers said ‘don’t dig a hole for your friend’, which means ‘don’t bury your friend’. That was when the clandestine was already running – before the clandestine movement was functioning, they didn’t tell me what to do if I was captured. The commander always told us that if some wanted to surrender, they should go ahead but that they should hand over the gun to another Falintil–member before doing so, and that they must not reveal secrets or attempt to betray the others.
When I had to fight I didn’t go to the front–line because even though I loved to hold guns, I was scared so I stayed in the back lines and supported them by screaming and yelling! The first time I shot an enemy was when we were surrounded once. At that time I had to find a way to escape. I met one member of the Indonesian army and I shot him but I missed when the gun became jammed. I was lucky that I could escape. One of our friends was killed then – it was 1987. I didn’t feel anything when I saw my friend killed because as a guerrilla the only thing that we could focus on was saving our lives. We didn’t care if one of us were killed – we didn’t even bury the body. We only thought about when we ourselves would be killed. That became normal for me. My mother and my brother–in–law were killed but you could only say, ‘this is war’.

Our commander always treated us well. They asked the youth to hide when our group became engaged in battle – but when the enemy became stronger than us, each of us had to take care of our own survival. After 1987, it became very difficult for us to find food because everyday we had to fight at least four times a day – sometimes 10 times a day. The only food that was available for us was the inner part of palm trees and if the enemy was very strong, we had to move to the edge of the village and try to find food there. At that time rice for us was like God; we never saw it! We didn’t wash our clothes because sometimes you walked in the rain all day until night. All we could do was wait until the clothes dried. We got clothes from the Indonesian army, we took the clothes that been discarded and repaired the others that we got from other places. Once they had been repaired we would have clothes with many different coloured patches on them. They looked so funny. When we killed Indonesian army soldiers we took their clothes because too many of us still didn’t have enough clothes. We didn’t have any manufactured medicine then; the only medicine that we had was herbs that we had traditionally used. At that time few of us got sick. The worst health problem was gunshot wounds from the Indonesian military.

We have always believed in Lulik (the traditional East Timorese Animist religion) because it was our way of life. Our ancestors believed in Lulik but when the Portuguese came to Timor they built churches, brought a new religion and many people lost their faith in Lulik including me. But after we fled to the jungle we tried to find an elder who could recall our Lulik history for us. After we had spoken to him we started to have faith in Lulik again. Sometimes when we used our Lulik talismans and one of us got shot, I saw men who had been killed get up again. This is why we believe in Lulik. We have always had somebody who knows how to recall our Lulik history, and one man shared it with us, but each of us has to make an individual decision about whether or not you want to believe in it. I believed that Lulik could save my life. All of us believed in Lulik.

I didn’t have any military training before. When I shot at the enemy for first time; that was training for me. I was happy when I hit one of the enemy because our commander always told us to keep the enemy on their toes. If we missed all the time the enemy would think he was brave and gain enough confidence to capture us. That was why I was happy when I shot one of them. Sometimes we were sad if our shots missed them. I was scared all the time when I first came to the jungle but after one year I didn’t feel fear any more because I thought even if we are afraid there is nowhere for us to go. This is our land.

I will not retire from Falintil unless there was authorization from the organization to announce that all veterans from 1975 to 1983 must become civilians. Because I am in the organization I must wait for decisions from my organization. I cannot make my own decision to leave Falintil. I have lost my chance to study for this organization – this is the only job that I can do. What I want from this organization if I leave is that veterans must be taken care of, especially in terms of
accommodation and government initiatives to assist them. If there is no welfare offered and no appropriate explanation made about this matter we will refuse to retire.

A good age for youth to join the army is over 18–years old because new under–18 recruits are still just kids and they can’t make their own decisions properly. Sometimes when I was a child I had problems with my brothers but since I joined Falintil we have never had problems between us. We treated each other better than we treated our own families. This organization has been very good to the people and also to its own members. I know that one day many of us will have to leave this organization.

Many Falintil soldiers can’t be recruited into the new defense force because of injuries and an inability to pass the new recruitment tests. I want all of these former soldiers to live together in one village so we still can organize ourselves like we did before. Even if we have to retire from Falintil we will always support them with our minds and our souls. Physically we will be able to take a rest from Falintil but not mentally or spiritually. As the struggle has ended, I have finally been able to marry and now I have one daughter.
1.5. Mausina (Laga), Pro-independence Falintil Child Soldier

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<tr>
<td>Recruited/joined at:</td>
<td>14 years old joined <em>Sagrada Familia</em> (Scared Family) clandestine group (1995) and at 17 years old joined Falintil (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at interview:</td>
<td>19 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armed Group:</td>
<td>Falintil Region 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From:</td>
<td>Laga village, Baucau District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1.5.1. Description

Mausina is strong and around 165cms; average height for an East Timorese man. He has big brown eyes and long black hair tied back in a ponytail, a hairstyle very popular with pro-independence supporters. Before the Portuguese colonised the country, when East Timorese warriors fought each other in tribal wars, they wore their hair long. East Timorese warriors believed that if they cut their hair while fighting with another ethnic group or clan, that they would be killed in battle. This ‘Lulik’ tradition still survives to this day and so many Falintil guerrillas believe that they cannot cut their hair without undergoing a special ceremony. Indonesian soldiers cut their hair short in typical military style. Therefore, long hair became associated with the resistance and became very popular among pro-independence youth. Mausina’s skin is smooth and dark. He wears a pair of jeans, a white T-shirt and work boots. He is polite yet proud and direct when he answers questions. He becomes very serious when he explains some actions of the Indonesian military and militia, yet smiles and laughs when recounting stories like the first battle he was involved in. Mausina has served Falintil as a soldier since 1999 but has served the clandestine movement since he was 14 years old. He was born in Laga village in Baucau.

1.5.2. Background

Mausina was interviewed at a hotel restaurant in the East Timorese capital city of Dili, where he now lives. He joined the Falintil guerrillas at the age of 17. Mausina described the destruction of his technical college 10 kilometers south of Dili in Hera village. The buildings are now abandoned, burned–out shells, the roofing supported by charred walls. The militia and TNI (the Indonesian military) destroyed the school and much of Hera and then went to West Timor in early September 1999.

In the spring of 1999, the TNI and the Aitarak militia perpetrated a number of attacks on the Dili Polytechnic college at Hera, eventually forcing more than 30 people between the ages of 17 and 21 to flee.

In one incident on 10 May that was reported by Amnesty International, “TNI and militia had positioned themselves at the front of the college and ordered all inside to leave. The TNI claimed that the operation was carried out in response to reports that the Hera students were using college equipment to manufacture weapons. The students – in anticipation of a militia attack – had been making weapons including bows and arrows by attaching knives to sticks”\(^\text{16}\). Following the attack, TNI and Aitarak effectively occupied the college until the referendum in August. Throughout East Timor, many young people fled to the Falintil cantonment areas at this time, and Hera youth made their way to the cantonment area of Uaimori, or the Falintil headquarters. Most

\(^{16}\) *Seize the Moment*, Amnesty International, 21 June 1999
of the youth that joined Falintil in 1999 never participated in active combat, so Mausina’s story is of particular interest because he was involved in the fighting just prior to the referendum.

Mausina joined Commander Eli Foho Rai Boot’s “Sagrada Familia” (Sacred Family) clandestine movement when he was 14 years old. After fleeing his college at the age of 17, he decided to become a soldier for Falintil. He got in touch with Falintil guerillas by asking local villagers near Hera who already had contact with the movement. Approximately 30 students around the age of 18 joined the guerillas at that time. When they met the Falintil soldiers, they were told that they would be permitted to stay for the time being but, because they were studying at the university, they had to promise to return and complete their studies once the situation normalised.

Mausina participated in the clandestine movement, the “Sagrada Familia,” which Commander Eli Foho Rai Boot founded in 1989. In the following decade, the Sagrada Familia became one of the most popular clandestine groups for youth from Baucau and Dili. “There is no ideal age to join the clandestine movement,” explained the Commander. “It depends on when the individual is ready. A good age to become a soldier is when you can fire a gun.” Eli Foho Rai Boot believes that students should remain in the clandestine movement and not join the guerillas unless absolutely necessary, such as the students who were directly targeted for arrest by the Indonesian military. When Falintil did not have enough food and supplies, they could not recruit many soldiers.

Commander Eli Foho Rai Boot believed that youth were very good at certain clandestine roles such as intelligence–gathering, organising demonstrations and contacting members of the international community to make sure that news of the real situation in East Timor was reaching the outside world. He claimed that anger stemming from the abuses perpetrated by the Indonesian military motivated many youth to join the movement. He also thinks that educated young people like Mausina are valuable to build a new country, as “… the youth are the strength of our future and they must therefore understand the struggle.”

Mausina considered the Falintil soldiers as his family and believed that they treated him “better than our own brothers did”. He decided to follow through on his promise to Falintil when he joined them, to return to his village and to leave the guerillas in order to finish school. The technical college at Hera has not yet re–opened and although Mausina would like to continue his studies in electronics and engineering, he must look for a job, as he cannot afford to re–enter school full–time. He says that few of the people he now associates with know that he was ever involved with Falintil. Mausina believes that Falintil has had a profound effect on his life, as it taught him how to organize himself and how to take responsibility for his actions.

1.5.3. Interview

I served under vice–commander Eli Foho Rai Boot, the head of the Sagrada Familia clandestine group. I have four brothers and three sisters. My father’s job was as a driver and my mother was farmer. My brothers and sisters were students. I was at the Dili Polytechnic (the Hera Technical College) for two semesters – at least one year. Most people in my village were working as farmers and fishermen. My family told me about the history following 1975 when people came back from hiding in the mountains. Many people were killed when they returned to their villages – they were shot by Indonesian troops. I saw one of my friends being beaten by Indonesian soldiers because he had long hair and was therefore suspected as being a member of Falintil or Fretilin. I was very sad and angry but I couldn’t do anything because I had no power to fight back against the Indonesian army.
Between 1975 and 1996 there were many problems in our village, but I never saw direct fighting between the Indonesians and Falintil, however I did hear fighting between them once at a nearby village called Binagua. For our family it was normal to have enough food, but it was sometimes scarce depending on the frequency of the rains – if the rain was good we would have enough food but if not it would be hard for us. When I was young I wanted to be an electronic engineer.

Now I am 19 years old. I joined Falintil because the situation in 1999 was very bad. On 10 May 1999, the militia attacked our university and we tried to fight them off but our teachers warned us not to do this as they could eventually kill a woman or a child. That was why we decided not to fight and instead fled to join Falintil. The militia surrounded our university from 5.00 am to 6.00 pm and on that occasion none of us were injured. Before they attacked our university they (the Aitarak militia) joined with Rajawali (an elite Kopassus military unit) and 744 Battalion and went to people’s houses behind the university and stole many of the people’s belongings. At around 6:00 pm, when the Brimob (riot police) collected the goods that had been stolen by the militia, the militia also attacked a car that was full of university students and one of our friends was injured after being slashed with a machete. The militia said that they had attacked as they suspected that we had made bombs and guns inside the university compound. The other reason they gave for the attack was that we held a meeting with Falintil on September 1998 at the University, and that they knew all about that. (According to the students there was no meeting held with Falintil at this time at the university).

I joined the clandestine movement in 1995. The group I joined was called Sagrada Familia under the command of Commander Eli Foho Rai Boot. We were able to join Falintil as there were local people who lived near the university who had contact with Falintil. When we met with the locals and explained our situation, they contacted Falintil about us. The militia and military from the area were after particular students and they were practically occupying the university compound. Falintil said that we were their own children and they asked the local people to bring us to them. At that time I was 17 years old and I joined Falintil. I stayed with them for eight months. We did not receive any payment. There were 30 of us, all around the age of 18. They all joined Falintil for the same reason as I did. We were all men. When we first met with Falintil they told us that, as university students, we would all have to go back to school again when the situation became normal.

The first duty I had for Falintil was as a security guard at night and I made security operations with the older Falintil near our area. After three months, I joined them to train and I learned how to hold a gun, how to clean it, and in what position to shoot it from. We had classes in training discipline that contained some discussion about human rights and politics. Falintil also said that we had been living in the villages so we knew more about the general situation there than they did. That was why they did not give us any formal political training. Before I joined Falintil I learned about human rights from my experience of life in East Timor. I also learned about human rights from the university students’ organisation the Student Solidarity Council of East Timor when I joined them.

The first work I did for Falintil was as a security guard at night for twelve hours straight. I felt that it was very difficult but I had no choice – I had to do it. The activity that I loved most was physical training and military parade training. I had to fight when Commander Taur Matan Ruak (the Commander–in–Chief) decided to order members of Region 3 to Laleia Village and to evacuate people to the jungle because at that time the situation was deteriorating everywhere. I didn’t think that I would have to get involved in the fighting because we didn’t have plans to fight. We heard that the Brimob (riot police) would return from Viqueque to Dili, and we had made preparations without detailed planning to attack. The situation changed when they saw us,
many of them were scared, they panicked and tried to retreat. Some of our friends attacked them and we got 17 guns from the Brimob. I was confused because I didn’t know what would we should do – fight or not. After we had attacked I realized that we had come here to fight. I was not afraid and I thought that I could be a soldier. We didn’t fight when we attacked them but later they arrived in Manatuto with Kodim (the Indonesian army command) and members of the Mahadomi militia group. Then we fought against them.

I felt afraid before I had fired a gun for the first time, but once I had fired a gun once, I didn’t feel any fear anymore. I am sure that I hit one man but I don’t know if he was killed or not. Before I shot the man my heart was beating very fast but after that everything became normal. I felt something between sadness and excitement when I realised that I had hit one of them. The commanders always treated us well and they set a good example of how to be a good Falintil soldier. Some of us were traumatized because we had to escape when we were totally surrounded. I had to work all night as a security guard and when I had free time I asked the older Falintil soldiers to tell their stories or I read books. I received punishment if I was late, like orders to do push–ups or to run to the top of a mountain. But the senior Falintil always treated us better than our own brothers would.

When I joined, at first I was sad because I missed family living in the village. But after two weeks there I was never sad again. My parents thought that I had been killed, but after three months they knew that I was alive because one of my cousins came back from the jungle and told them that I was all right. Three of our group went back after three months in the jungle because they missed their families.

We ate anything that we could find that was edible. Sometimes we had corn or rice given to us by some members of the population who came to see us and support us. The first time we ran from the university to the Falintil area, we didn’t eat for two days and we only had water. When we ran to join Falintil we had one set of clothes that we were wearing, we didn’t have any other clothes. Some Falintil had more than one uniform and they shared them with us. Sometimes we washed our clothes with detergent if we had it but most times we washed them without detergent. We had to brush our teeth without toothpaste because we didn’t have any. When we were sick we received medicine from the clandestine groups who sent it to us and we used it. Sometimes we used both traditional herbal medicine as well as injections. When we got malaria we used traditional medicine. During the Laleia Village incident many were injured. The most seriously injured Falintil soldier had been shot in the head and hand, and months later was taken to Dili for treatment by Interfet (the International Peacekeeping Force).

I decided to return to my village and to leave the guerillas because when we joined Falintil they told us that one day when the war finished, all university students had to finish school. That was why I returned. The best thing that I have learned from Falintil is discipline and I know that this will be very useful for me in the future. Falintil created their own discipline and nobody taught it to them. Falintil discipline teaches you how to organize yourself and how to take responsibility for yourself – that is the discipline. Nobody really cares that I was a Falintil–member in the past; everybody looks after himself or herself. I would still like to be an electronic engineer, but I have had financial problems and that is why I have decided to look for a job instead.
### 1.6. Luis, Pro–independence Falintil Child Soldier

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<td>Clandestine group Fay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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#### 1.6.1. Description

Luis is skinny and approximately 140cms tall. He has a round face, with big black eyes and short, straight black hair. His skin is smooth and light and he smiles with an impish grin. He wears a pair of brown shorts, a multi–coloured T–shirt and runs around barefoot. His brother Fabio and his friend Gilberto spoke to me from chairs surrounded by about 10 children outside a house in the village. These friends were the recruiters of youth into the clandestine movement in the area. Fabio laughed when I asked him how old the youngest clandestine member was in their village and then pointed at Luis sitting on the ground. Luis looked up at us smiling and then looked at the ground shyly. Fabio asked me to interview Luis before him. Luis was obviously nervous when he answered the questions yet put on a brave face in front of his seniors. Luis has served the clandestine movement for two years, since he was 10 years old. He was born in Triloka village in Baucau district.

#### 1.6.2. Background

The CNRT chief of Baucau, Antonio, explained that many rural youth were involved in the clandestine movement and that we must speak to both the rural and urban youth to understand how it operated. He directed us to Triloka Village to speak to people there. Many of Falintil’s messages and directives to the movement passed through key villages like Triloka in Baucau area. Veteran Commander Eli Foho Rai Boot, who headed one of the largest clandestine groups in East Timor (the ‘Sagrada Familia’ or Sacred Family), had previously told us that the first recruits of the clandestine movement were people from the countryside, particularly young local goat–herders and shepherds. The fields between Triloka Village and Mount Matebian were where many of these people walked in search of food for their animals.

I interviewed Luis, Fabio and Gilberto in front of Luis’s family house. The house was built with red and white earthen bricks and sits low on the ground. The roof consists of traditional Baucau style thatched palm leaves. Most of the houses in Triloka are made from woven bamboo. Before the Indonesian military left Triloka in September 1999, they destroyed approximately 70 per cent of the houses in the village. Since then, Triloka has had no electricity. After returning from their hiding places in the nearby hills, villagers managed to rebuild some of the houses.

Mount Matebian, the second tallest in East Timor, was visible on the horizon. It was the place where tens of thousands of people hid with Falintil during the late 1970s. Starting in the early 1980s, Falintil used Triloka Village as a communication center for their clandestine movement. Though Indonesian military troops were based there, Falintil used youth “estafeta” (messengers in Portuguese language) such as Luis to get supplies and information through the village.

Fabio is Luis’s adopted brother and was recruited as a clandestine member in 1984, when he was 12 years old. He was responsible for recruiting Luis. Fabio’s biological parents died from starvation while hiding from the Indonesian military in the mountains in 1976. He said that many
of the members of his clandestine group were orphans whose parents died during the late 1970s. Fabio was captured and tortured by the Indonesian military six times. When I asked him how he was treated by them he said that he was tortured so severely that, “if I try to tell you all about those times it will take hours and it will make me so depressed that I will cry”.

Gilberto, Fabio’s friend, was recruited at the age of 20 to do clandestine work in the late 1970s. Gilberto explained how the clandestine movement began in their area. “Before 1979, in the jungle, the Fretilin leaders began planning the formation of a clandestine movement so that when the people returned to the villages the civilians could assist the soldiers still in the jungle. By 1979 Fretilin had realised that unless they sent the villagers back from the mountains they would all die. So they began to implement the clandestine network plan in the villages when the people returned from the mountains. At that time, they planned a movement for the whole country. Village clandestine heads were chosen and when information was passed from the jungle guerrillas to the villagers, these people passed it on to the whole village or the appropriate persons.”

Gilberto said that Fretilin/Falintil wanted to use youth for the movement so that future generations would never forget the importance of liberation and self–determination for East Timor. Fabio adds that a major role of the clandestine youth was to bring international journalists to the Falintil commanders in the jungle so that the reality of the war in East Timor could be understood, and to influence the international community to assist East Timorese. When asked what he considered the ideal age for recruitment, Gilberto explains, “Many youth disappeared and were killed during the movement, many were injured permanently and paralysed and were broken mentally. I think that youth over the age of 18 are better for this kind of work as they have the ability to learn much better”.

Fabio believes that older people are better at doing clandestine work because they can keep secrets. He said that when the youth had information they often told others and the Indonesian military therefore discovered their networks. Fabio also said that it was difficult to become a member of the clandestine movement as they had to “sacrifice their lives, forget themselves, face dangerous situations and be prepared to die”. Fabio continued, “We don’t measure our capability by age, it is dependent on our bravery. When we face all the evil and free ourselves from the fear of this evil, only then are we fit to join the clandestine movement.”

When Fabio and Gilberto recruited children like Luis to join in the clandestine movement they gave them work as a group at first organising low–level events such as minor political actions. The second job was to help take care of orphans and to help the homeless build shelters. They were also asked to collect food and distribute it to the poor and send part of it to Falintil. Both Fabio and Gilberto believe the social welfare component of the work is important for building a suitable moral attitude towards serving the people. Later they helped these youth organise demonstrations. They also taught the children such as Luis that everything had to be done in a disciplined way based on orders received from Falintil. They also explained to the youth not to act violently as it could violate human rights. They regularly explained, “we are in a war situation. If you keep on fighting for your human rights you will eventually get independence”.

At 10 years old, Luis was aware of his brother Fabio’s capture and torture by the Indonesian soldiers as a result of his involvement in the clandestine movement. For this reason, Luis experienced insomnia and anxiety. Fabio was beaten, burned, given electric shocks and other physical and psychological torture. He tells me within earshot of Luis that when one is captured by the Indonesian military “you will suffer– they do with you whatever they like – I cannot tell you everything about it – it’s too disturbing and I don’t want to remember it. After I saw the
attitude of the Indonesians – after they had tortured me, they had burned me, even though my physical body was almost destroyed, I refused to give myself mentally to them.” Fabio explains that they were totally dehumanised when tortured but that the torture only encouraged him to do more for the clandestine movement and that “only death could separate us from our struggle”.

Fabio said that youth were terrified of capture by the Indonesian army, as many were detained and tortured by them. As a senior member of an underground organisation, he said that youth that were captured and later revealed the names of others involved in the movement were not punished. When they were released they were watched and no longer trusted. Fabio said that in his area there were more men than women involved in the clandestine movement in the countryside because traditionally the men moved around everywhere and women usually stayed in the home but that “overall everybody was in some way involved in working for the clandestine movement”. Fabio and Gilberto both clarify that Falintil did not have a policy to recruit new soldiers, as they could not support them with food or weapons in the jungle. However when a person operating in the clandestine movement was in danger or under strong suspicion by the Indonesian military they could be moved to Falintil areas for protection. Fabio explains that they had to smuggle many youth out of the towns and into the hills. Some of those who went to guerrilla areas later became Falintil soldiers and others returned to their homes when the situation became safer.

When we had completed the interviews and were preparing to leave the village Fabio told us, “We are youth who were involved in the clandestine movement and we don’t want to suffer again. We ask our leaders who are now in high positions to pay attention to us. When I was a child I didn’t enjoy my childhood because of the war – we all knew that once we participated in this struggle we could forget about our childhoods. We didn’t have a chance to enjoy our childhoods because of the war we were a part of.” Fabio has four children a wife and works on his farm. Luis enjoyed working for the clandestine movement and at age 10 saw joining as a right of passage. Now he is 12 and sees himself as a young boy when he started two years ago. He says that once the Indonesians left he became content and stopped being afraid. Luis wants to study and worries that there are no study materials available, such as pens and books, at the school. He is not sure what he wants to do when he finishes school. He helps out on the farm after school.

1.6.3. Interview

The name of the clandestine group that I joined was called Fay and this group worked for Falintil. I am 12 years old now. I was a child when I became involved in the clandestine movement and I am not sure of my age at that time. My brother said that I was 10 years old when I became involved. There are altogether five children in my family – one sister and four brothers. My mother’s job is to cook for the family and my father’s job was working in the rice fields. I went to school when I was involved in the clandestine movement. I am not sure how old my parents are but they live here in Triloka Village. First I studied in my village then I moved to Laga Village. I studied up to elementary school level. Most of the people who stay in this village work in the fields.

Before the referendum the difficulties we faced here were that the Indonesian military used to come and search for members of my family and other people here, they then came and arrested my friends here and some had to flee to the jungle. Some of them are dead and some of them are still alive. When the Indonesians were here it was difficult to find food. We only ate potatoes and corn. We raised animals like pigs and chickens. Falintil fought against the Javanese (the Indonesians are often referred to as Javanese or people from the Indonesian island of Java) and
they fought to win the battle for independence. The Indonesian military came here once and searched for my father and arrested my brother and I also saw the Indonesian military catch and beat people. That is all of the bad things that I have seen them do. When I saw them do these bad things to people I prayed to God. I was afraid at those times because I was a child. The Indonesian military brought many bad things to East Timor. They are bad because they tied people up, beat them and killed them.

When I was working in the clandestine movement my job was to bring potatoes, potato leaves and sweet potatoes to Falintil. I also brought milk to them. After I brought food to Falintil, they sometimes asked me to report to them on the situation in the village to them. At that time because I was a child, the Falintil soldiers did not tell me about the plans and attitude of the Indonesians. The clandestine movement hid Falintil commanders in our village and our family house at different times when I was growing up. I met Commander Taur Matan Ruak (current commander-in-chief), Commander David Alex (former commander-in-chief), Commander Amico, Commander Bella, Commander Berdu’u, Commander Akito and I still remember their faces. I met them when I was under 10 years old. They hid in this village, in this house. There was no fighting near my village though.

I had to find information for Falintil. I had to listen to other people talking and report on this to my brother Fabio. When I did this I was afraid. I watched the houses of certain people. My brother asked me to go and do this and I told him what they said and did. There were no other youth who had this job in the village. I also brought water and vegetables to Falintil in the fields behind the village. I pretended that I was going to work in the fields. I did my clandestine duties after I finished school in the day. I was afraid of the Indonesians. I was most afraid in the afternoon when I did my duties. Falintil never gave me anything for doing this work. They were kind to me. They told me I had to try hard at school for the future of East Timor.

I can’t remember if I had bad dreams when I worked as a clandestine member as I was a child then! Now I am older so I can’t remember! When I was younger I cried when I saw the Indonesian military because I was afraid of them. They made me afraid when they captured my older brother in front of me. I cried and I was afraid. I knew what would happen to him. My mother was very sad when my brother was arrested, so were the other villagers. I was very sad when my brother was taken. Sometimes I didn’t sleep well. I would sleep and wake up, sleep and wake up. I thought about my brother all the time. I woke up and I remembered him.

When I brought the food to Falintil I was not afraid that I would be captured like my brother had been. In fact when I had finished my work for the day with Falintil I felt more brave. When I worked for Falintil I felt brave and very happy. I used to think all the time about how to free our people. I was very content when the Indonesians left last year. I was not afraid anymore. Life is better since the malae (foreigners in Tetum language and in this context signifies Indonesians) left but now we have no pens, schoolbooks or clothes. I want to go back to school but I am not sure what I want to do when I am older.
1.7. Helena, Pro-independence Falintil Child Soldier

Pseudonym: Helena
Recruited/joined at: 15 years old joined the Sagrada Familia (Sacred Family) clandestine Group (1996) and at 18 years old joined Falintil (1999)
Age at interview: 19 years old
Armed Group: Clandestine and later Falintil Region 3
From: Lamigua Village, Baucau Distrét

1.7.1. Description

Helena is around 156cms tall and is slim. She has big brown eyes and curly dark brown shoulder-length hair pulled back into a ponytail. Her skin is smooth and light. She wears a black knee-length skirt and a chocolate brown T-shirt. She is shy and soft-spoken when her mother Fabiola is present, yet exudes an inner strength and maturity when she speaks alone. At first she looks away shyly when I ask her questions but she soon relaxes and begins to answer directly and at length. Helena has been involved in the clandestine movement since she was 15 years old and joined Falintil when she was 18. She was born in the Lamigua area, a section of Baucau town.

1.7.2. Background

I interviewed Fabiola and Helena in front of their house in a downtown neighbourhood of the old part of Baucau City. It is a large three bedroom cement house constructed below the street into a large rock-face. There are a number of tunnels that start in the back garden of the house and lead through the rock face to another street that were sometimes used by Helena’s mother to hide pro-independence activists. Few houses in Baucau old city were destroyed following the referendum in late August 1999, and probably as Helena’s step-father was working as a soldier for the TNI (Indonesian military), the house was left standing.

Helena’s mother Fabiola was a recruiter of clandestine youth in Baucau and was responsible for Helena’s recruitment. After the Indonesian soldiers invaded Baucau in 1975, Fabiola was arrested and severely tortured, even though she was pregnant with her first child. Her first husband fled to the jungle with Falintil and she didn’t meet him again. After her release three months later, she watched most of her colleagues be detained and/or ‘disappeared’. By the late 1970s she had remarried an East Timorese soldier in the Indonesian military. In 1982 with the formation of the CNRM (National Council for Maubere Resistance – the first umbrella group uniting all groups supportive of independence), Fabiola became actively involved in forming a clandestine network in the town of youth to support Falintil in the jungle.

Fabiola said that by the early 1980s, “the older men and women of Fretilin had become afraid of the Indonesians and began to cooperate with them. Then in the late 1980s the youth were organised to fight for independence under the ‘Sagrada Familia’ or the ‘Sacred Family’ (a large clandestine organisation made up predominantly of youth). Fabiola believed that most of the youth joined because they wanted independence and were inspired to work more towards this aim when “they saw the Indonesians kill people in front of them – when the children and youth saw things like this they became committed clandestine members.” She is adamant that the brutality of the Indonesians pushed many youth to join Falintil.
While her husband was working for the Indonesian military, Fabiola recruited Helena to join the clandestine movement. Helena saw the differences between her parent’s political beliefs as natural and that “it was their right to decide, and it is also my right to decide which side I would choose.” However, having one parent tell Helena “to support Indonesia and stay out of politics”, while the other parent told her about the clandestine movement and what they did, must have been confusing for her. It would have also been difficult for Helena to keep her mother’s secrets from her father, but she said her mother began to tell her about the clandestine movement when she was 15 and by then she was old enough to keep quiet. Helena’s mother offered her the choice of staying out of the movement, but by the age of 15 she had already decided to commit to this work. She was brought up with a strong respect for Falintil. She also grew up aware of the torture and ill treatment that her mother had received from the Indonesian military and wanted to avenge this.

Helena described her clandestine work as being social welfare-orientated, in addition to providing direct assistance to Falintil. She worked with the church and with the poor and ill. This work made her very happy, and it gave the youth a sense of purpose and community. She found all the work she did interesting and wanted to continue doing work to help people. She also made friends she could trust and earned an amount of respect from people because of her involvement in the movement. She thought that these things united the clandestine youth or “brought them together” as family. When she was shot and saw a man killed in front of her during a demonstration when she was 15, it only strengthened her resolve to support the independence movement. She said that there were more women than there were men in her clandestine group because the men were more afraid, as were their parents, and were targeted for arrest more often.

When Helena was in the clandestine movement, she learned about moral courage, discipline, and political organisation. She joined Falintil as she thought it would be good experience for her and she wanted to learn to become a soldier. They treated her as family. Helena believes that between 20 and 25 is a good time to join the military, “This is the right time for teaching people and they are mature enough to use their experience to share with the other people who want to join. It is the right time for people to be receptive to the ideas and the work. For people who want to be involved in the clandestine movement it is better to start at around 10 years old.” When she lived with Falintil, they provided her with an almost spiritual belief in the liberation of her country. She described that time as one of “peace, solidarity, discipline and moral courage. If we walked on the wrong path before when we stayed with them they helped us to find the right way”.

Fabiola said that before independence, “the youth were happy and proud to serve the clandestine movement. They were disciplined and were fighting for something. They suffered terribly sometimes but they felt close to an objective. Now that they have independence, they are sad.” Many former clandestine youth say that before independence they had food; Falintil paid attention to them and depended on them implying that it gave them a sense of self-worth; they could attend university more cheaply, employment was possible; and the language of education was Bahasa Indonesia that they had used since school began. Now food is difficult to find; Falintil is restructuring its forces and does not pay attention to them; the universities have just opened with limited courses and entrance numbers are very limited; unemployment is rife; the national language has changed to Portuguese, and many of the youth are worried as they do not speak the language.

Fabiola now worries that many former clandestine youth were turning to alcohol and aggression to solve their problems. She explained their situation: “Before the energy of the youth was directed at the struggle for independence. Now many of them have no direction to follow.
Sometimes the youth I recruited attack my house now with rocks because they are drunk and depressed and want something in return for their service to the movement.” She tries to tell them that now that East Timor is independent, the people will have to rely on others for a while because everything has been destroyed. She told them, “There is a lot of corruption now but we will have to sort these problems out”. Helena believes that the youth involved in the clandestine movement must have the opportunity to study and work as they did not have a chance to study as all of their time was taken up with their work for the movement. Fabiola says that torture was worse for the youth when they were arrested for working in the clandestine movement and that therefore they deserve an education or a chance at work.

Helena is living in Baucau and would like to study at university and do more to help the youth in her area. She lives at home with her mother. Her father remains in Indonesia and she has no contact with him.

1.7.3. Interview

I worked with Falintil Region 3 commander Eli Foho Rai Boot. My father is a refugee in Indonesian West Timor. My mother is here with me and her name is Fabiola. We have five children in our family. One of my brothers and my sister are in Dili and so three of us stay with my mother here in Baucau. My father worked as a soldier with the Indonesian military. My mother works with the CNRT (the National Council for Timorese Resistance – the umbrella group uniting all groups supporting independence) giving assistance to the people and she also helps the church. My mother is 45 years old.

When I left my house and went to the jungle I spent one year and two months there. I went to the jungle in January 1999. Before that I already helped Falintil through joining the clandestine movement. I started my work when I was 15. I was studying and I brought food to Falintil like cake and vegetables that people sold in the market. My father didn’t know that I worked with the clandestine movement but my mother knew.

I live in this house. Most of our neighbors are vendors and the difficulties that they face are that they have little money. Some youth came from other areas and stay around this suburb. Sometimes they are very brutal if people don’t give them what they ask for. Sometimes they gate-crash and disturb our parties and make problems. The situation has made them like that because they don’t have any money or employment. In the past the situation was better but now parents don’t pay attention to many of the youth and then they go here and there and can be very brutal.

I was involved in the clandestine movement from when I was 15 until when I was 18. Now it is better, since the Indonesian military has left, but people have no chance to get an education because schooling is very expensive and their parents have to find money. The situation was better before for education – now children want to go to school but schooling is very costly. When the Indonesians were here it was difficult to find money and it was also very difficult living under military rule because soldiers came and arrested people without any reason. Sometimes the youth harassed the Indonesian military and the Indonesians retaliated and swore at them. The Indonesians were very rude when they spoke to them.

I was very happy when I helped the people and looked after patients who were sick. We would join with the priests to visit patients. We helped Falintil by bringing food. Those things made me very happy and encouraged me to study harder. I also joined church groups. Assisting people made me very interested to help the poor and also myself.
I don’t like the Indonesian attitude because many times they paid Javanese women (for sex) and built brothels here and those things made us feel very sad. I hate the Indonesian military because of what my mother told me they had done to her in the past. It made us very sad. When I was a child sometimes I saw the TNI (Indonesian military) come to the girls boarding house run by the Canossian nuns and bother the girls who stayed there. They also harassed women who were walking along the street and called out to them. Those things made me despise them because the Indonesian manner was very bad. Sometimes they went to take a shower and they wore very little clothes that were unfit to wear. Also they used to change their clothes in public and they threw rubbish wherever they wanted. Sometimes they just beat people on the street for no reason and arrested and imprisoned innocent youth. After I had my Confirmation ceremony at the Catholic Church, we were celebrating and the TNI and Brimob (riot police) came to our house and destroyed parts of the house and arrested one of my brothers. Those things made me very irritated. It happened on 9 July 1997. At that time I felt very afraid but after they had left I felt very angry and kept this feeling in my heart. I was shocked because at the time that they attacked our house we had just sat down to eat.

My mother told me about her work in the clandestine movement and I just listened to her. My father never told me about things like that. My mother worked on one side and my father on the other side. It is their right to decide, and it is also my right to choose a side. My father told me not to become involved in politics, and that we should support Indonesia. It was not confusing that my parents had different political views because it is their right to follow their beliefs, and as we got older we gained the right to pick the right way and to do the correct thing for ourselves. My father spent most of his time in his office at the Kodem (Indonesian military headquarters). Most of the time he didn’t stay in the house.

My mother never told my father about her clandestine activities. When she wanted to do her work she told my father that she was doing something else. When she wanted to go to one place, she told him that she was going elsewhere. My father told us about Indonesian military plans so that we could take care, for example when it was safe to go out and when it wasn’t. If something was going to happen then we were told not to leave the house.

My mother told me about the clandestine movement. She told me not to be afraid and that if I was afraid or didn’t want to do it, that I could just stay at home and she would continue with the work. My mother talked about Falintil and how they helped the people. She also told stories about how often even when the Indonesian military attacked Falintil, they didn’t return fire, and held their positions. My mother also received letters from Falintil telling her to tell the people not to be afraid, and that even when the Indonesians shot at the people, that they must protect themselves by staying indoors.

I am not afraid to tell you about the bad things that happened to me, but I can’t remember them all, I remember what happened to my mother though. I first started to be involved in the clandestine movement when I was 15 in 1996, bringing things that Falintil needed to them. I sometimes went and visited Commander Eli Foho Rai Boot. When I was taking things to Falintil and we saw Indonesian military trucks passing on the way, I was really afraid but once I had arrived at the designated meeting-place I felt very happy.

One of the things that made me feel braver was when the Indonesian military shot me in the arm at the time that the European parliament visited Baucau on 29 July 1996. When I finished praying at the boarding house, and we heard that there would be a demonstration to welcome the European Parliament delegation. I came out of the church and joined the demonstration. One
SGI (military intelligence) car full of men carrying weapons and the youth in charge of security had already closed the gates so that they could not come inside. The people didn’t let them in but saw their weapons and ran towards their car and the SGI people moved back and the people tried to burn the car and broke the windows at the back of the car and the SGI people started to shoot at the people.

When they first fired they hit one of the people right in front of me, Orlando, and he was killed. Then they shot me in the arm. At first when I was hit, I didn’t feel it. I fell down but I felt no pain. Then I ran into the church and only when I sat down I noticed that my arm was bleeding. When I saw the man die I wasn’t aware that I too had been shot. I then moved to the back of the church and people told me that I had been shot. I lost a lot of blood and felt in shock and one of the women in charge of church security treated me at the back of the church. They were shooting so much and I ran to the back of the church. At that time I didn’t feel afraid because we were very strong in spirit while we were demonstrating and this made me have no fear and strengthened my resolve.

Falintil did not pay us to work for them. I have around 20 girlfriends, under 18, around my age, who were also working in the clandestine movement. Many women joined the clandestine movement because they were searching for the right way to help their country and to get independence. My friends were very happy when we were doing our underground actions. We joined church activities and there were more women than there were men. This was because when we called men to join us they were afraid so that’s why we had more women than men. When Indonesians were here, the males were very afraid as they were targeted, and sometimes their parents did not allow them to become involved in politics.

Even though we were young we gathered together to discuss independence and self-determination. We joined church groups and also joined the priests when they gave guidance to the people. As well as working with Falintil to bring food to them and information we also worked with the church to explain the Liturgy to the people and to explain youth activities. We explained the way that we could live in peace and respect each other so that the youth would understand how to love each other. Sometimes we spent our time until 2-3 PM discussing strategies on how we could get independence. We encouraged youth not to hang out in the street but to try and get work and get educated. We also discussed how we could be more united in our struggle.

Some of us had lost their mothers and only had fathers; others had fathers in the army that had fled to Kupang (West Timor). Those friends we trusted and we told each other all our experiences. Now that the clandestine movement is finished and the Indonesians have gone I feel that I can travel everywhere more freely. Now I just want peace and love. From my experience in the clandestine movement I learned about moral courage, discipline, how to organise ourselves and also how to explain the movement to other friends.

Sometimes I sat down with my mother and she explained human rights to us. She explained what our rights were and what was right and wrong. All the work I have done was interesting and even now I want to continue to help people. And I am also interested because I made really good friends in the movement. We had a lot of respect from other people and from parents of our friends. We were shown respect when we went from place to place because of our involvement in the movement. These things brought us together and we performed activities like dance and cultural events for the people. We considered each other as brothers and sisters. We also gathered many people at one place to entertain them and performed comedy for them.
I joined Falintil because I wanted to. I didn’t fight for them but I carried a gun and weapons. They trained us how to use guns and taught us how to use communications equipment such as a walkie-talkie. I felt happy when I learned those things. They taught us how to use a walkie-talkie. That was a good experience for me and I was prepared to join the military. I felt then that I could be ready for any situation. I also wanted to join could use this experience to become a soldier.

The older Falintil soldiers were very respectful of us and of the others who stayed with them. They treated me as a young daughter. We stayed together, ate together and bathed together. When we made mistakes they explained the right way to do things and treated us like their daughters. All of them were kind to me. Commander Eli Foho Rai Boot treated me like his own daughter. When the Indonesians captured the youth, they were treated worse than anyone else. They were kicked, beaten, and tortured. Many times the youth were captured by the Indonesians even though they were innocent. Sometimes they just arrested us and threw us in the car and took us to their place. When members of our group were arrested, and our families found out about it, they would be released after two or three days. But if nobody knew about the arrest the members would ‘disappear’. When we were arrested we were kicked beaten, tortured, and abused.

I saw other people killed by the Indonesian military when I returned to Uaimori (the headquarters of Falintil) in October 1999 and we passed through a town called Manatuto. When we passed the school we saw three dead bodies and others on the beach. At that time I was very sad and depressed, and I almost cried. I was the most afraid when I joined one demonstration against the Indonesian military when I was studying. At that time they were threatening us with their guns outside the place where we were demonstrating. There were many students from different schools there. I joined with Father Rui (a local Catholic priest working with youth in Baucau) many times to demonstrate, marching from Kota Lama (the Old City) to Kota Baru (the New City). At the time of the pro-independence demonstration at the office of the Indonesian Representative Council, the DPR, I was with friends from another school. The military surrounded us and threatened us with weapons when we marched from Kota Lama to Kota Baru.

I never saw Falintil do anything bad or treat anyone badly. When I felt sick the Falintil soldiers cured me as they have their own medics and medicine to treat the sick. I was based in Uaimori (the Headquarters of Falintil). When I was staying with Falintil I never noticed anyone have bad dreams or nightmares. On Friday and Saturday nights we danced together and celebrated for the whole night with the commander Eli Foho Rai Boot, with friends from the clandestine movement, other friends, and the Falintil soldiers. This made us happy and we slept well – I didn’t have nightmares. When I was sick I remembered all of the terrible things that I had seen, and sometimes I woke up in shock. When some of my friends remembered all of the things that happened it encouraged them to continue their work.

The age for joining Falintil depends on Falintil’s criteria. They used youth if they needed youth. Based on my own experience and the experience of my friends I think it is better to start as soldiers at 20 to 25 years old. This is the right time for teaching people, and they are mature enough to use their experience to share with other people who want to join. It is the right time for people to be receptive to the ideas and the work. For people who want to be involved in the clandestine movement it’s better to start at around 10 years old. When I was still with Falintil, I was very happy with them, even under difficult conditions in the jungle. We were living in peace, solidarity, discipline and moral courage. If we took the wrong path, they helped us to find the right way.
For the people who were involved in the clandestine movement before I think it is very necessary to give them the opportunity to study, or to open training and to create jobs for them because many of the youth are now looking to study. Many of the youth in the movement didn’t have much of a chance to really study because of their involvement. Many of the youth are now disappointed because they took examinations and they didn’t pass, whereas some of their friends did well. The youth who failed these tests feel sad and lost. Many of them resolve their problems by drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes. Sometimes they want to join a course but they must pay. Sometimes those that didn’t pass, demonstrate because they don’t know what else to do, and want clarification. In Dili now, many went to the United Nations Transitional Authority of East Timor (UNTAET) and protested. The leaders say that people should study and go to school, but when the youth sat the examinations many of them failed. When people want to study, the leaders don’t care. This makes them sad and they make rallies. It makes them drink a lot and then they have problems with people who do not pay attention to them. This phenomenon makes the youth think negatively. Now they want to go back to school but they can’t.
2. Pro-autonomy child soldiers

2.1. Antero, Pro-autonomy Militia Child Soldier

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym:</th>
<th>Antero</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruited/joined at:</td>
<td>16 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at interview:</td>
<td>18 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Group:</td>
<td>Sakunar (Scorpion) Militia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From:</td>
<td>Oecussi Village, Oecussi District</td>
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</tbody>
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2.1.1. Description

Antero is slim, short and about 165cms tall. He has big black eyes and short wiry black hair. His skin is mottled and dark, evidence of his years as a farmer. He wears a pair of ripped knee-length jeans and a brown T-shirt. He is quiet and reserved and appears afraid at the interview in the visiting room at the prison in Dili. His eyes are bright but he looks shy and nervous. He answers the questions as if his life depended on him answering correctly. When offered a cigarette he looked to the guard for approval. He doesn’t do anything without the guard giving a nod. He answers directly and looks straight at the translator. He only laughs at the end of the interview when asked about his girlfriend. Antero joined the Sakunar militia for one month just prior to the referendum in 1999 when he was 17 years old. He was born in Oecussi district of the Oecussi enclave.

2.1.2. Background

Antero was interviewed in the Becora prison in Dili. Around 20 former militiamen had been detained in the jail and were awaiting trial, most of them for serious crimes committed in 1999 around the time of the referendum in August. The discussion with Antero took place in a large conference room that was partially destroyed by the Aitarak militia in September 1999 with a prison guard keeping watch.

The Sakunar militia was formed in April 1999, and hundreds of East Timorese youth between the ages of 14 and 25 were recruited into the Sakunar militia in the Oecussi Enclave. At that time the Sakunar started to conscript members from the local population, especially young poor farmers. Antero’s parents had warned him about the militias, but when he was recruited, there was nothing he could do. The militia forced Antero to join, intimidating him with weapons and saying they would kill him. The militia also made Antero carry out their directives, such as the burning of pro-independence houses, by threatening him at gunpoint. Though Antero served the militia for only one month, his story is typical of hundreds of young men in the Enclave. Most of these youth are still with the Sakunar militia on the Indonesian side of the border in refugee camps and villages around Kefa.

By May the Sakunar militia had been involved in a number of operations to threaten CNRT members. They burned down houses and intimidated the CNRT members. The CNRT office closed amid mounting violence in the area. By July, when Antero joined, the militia were making regular operations, targeting and burning homes of CNRT and other pro-independence
supporters, in addition to terrorising the local population with the aim of making them vote pro-autonomy or not vote at all.

When asked why he was in prison, Antero calmly answered, “Because I was in the militia”. Antero says he is not guilty of his charges of murder and assault. When asked about his political beliefs he says he believes in “Merdeka” (independence). He cannot answer why he believes in independence though. He says that he and his family were pro-independence, but seems to have little understanding of politics or the policies of each side. He misses his girlfriend, and looked at the ground shyly, giggling when I ask about her. He said he would like to marry her and have a family. He followed her to Kefa. At the time of the interview, his case was being re-assessed and it was later found that there is no evidence against him. He handed himself in at the Peacekeeping Force checkpoint at the border when he returned to East Timor. He is now a witness in a case of a crime that took place last year.

2.1.3. Interview

I was in the Sakunar militia. I am 18 years old now. I am from Oecussi. My father is 50 and my mother is 25. My parents know I am here but they cannot come to see me yet because they live far away in the Oecussi enclave with no telephone contact and it is very difficult to travel to Dili from there. My brothers and sisters also know I am here. I studied at secondary school and graduated from the first part but have not yet completed school. I fled to Kefa and I have been here in prison for three months.

My secondary school is in Oecussi and after I am released from prison I want to continue at school. I am here due to my involvement with the militia. I come from a village in Oecussi. All of the villagers in my village are farmers. There are many sick people in my village but I don’t know why they were sick. The militia threatened to kill me if I didn’t join them – that’s why I became involved with them. In the future when I am released from here I would like to continue my studies. I want to be a ‘big guy’; I want to be a boss. When I was in the militia I did not fight with people. The strategy of the Sakunar militia was to burn houses – this was the instruction from the top level. They beat people but I didn’t beat people myself. I just followed and obeyed their instructions. The burning of houses and beating of people happened for a few weeks only. I was involved with the Sakunar from July until early August 1999. The leader of Sakunar told us that all the young people had to be involved in the militia and if they refused they would be shot. I obeyed their instructions because I was afraid to die. Their instructions were that we had to burn houses because the owners were from pro-independence groups.

My parents didn’t support or allow me to get involved in the militia because they knew that if I became involved with them one day I myself would suffer. I was born in October 1982. I joined the militia in July 1999 at the age of 16 years. After graduating from lower secondary school in Oecussi I had planned to continue my high school studies but they forced me to join the Sakunar militia in my home village. They came armed with guns when I was at home.

By that time they had burned all of my neighbours’ houses and had not yet burned down my house. The next time they started to burn houses I went with them and indicated houses of pro-independence supporters to be burned and their owners ran away. They only burned houses and did not kill any of the people there. When they started to burn everything, I was afraid. I was afraid of both the militia and the people. I didn’t know all the members of my group and they were all above 20 years old. In our group I was not the youngest, there still were some under 18 boys, for example some were 17 years old and I know them all. These under-18 boys also got
involved with the militia as they were afraid to die, and some had already lost parents who had been killed by militia. All the youth whose parents had been killed were male youth, not females.

I saw one East Timorese man shot by militia in November in Kefa (a border village on the West Timor/Indonesia side where many refugees were taken and fled from the Oecussi Enclave). I was afraid seeing someone shot like that. In Kefa there were many under-18s in the Sakunar militia. There were 50-60 youth, from 14 years upwards, mainly from Kefa. Most of them looked afraid. Their commanders could order them to do anything, and if they did not do it, they were beaten badly. The commanders were pointing guns at them.

In East Timor, before the referendum, the commanders ordered young militia to go on operations to burn down houses. They were forced at gunpoint to do these duties, and if they refused were physically abused. Our commanders should face trial and they were responsible for what happened. The militia even burned our family house down before I was forced to join them.

In Kefa, I worked as a farmer and nobody knew that I had been militia. I changed my mind about staying with them and ran away to Kefa because of the militia’s brutality. The militia was still behaving in a brutal way around Kefa, so I planned to escape and return to East Timor. On 3 August 2000, I arrived at Oecussi and soon afterwards the United Nations Civilian Police brought me to prison in Dili.

Since I became involved in the militia, I didn’t learn anything valuable. I only learned about cruelty – the way to kill, destroy and burn everything in East Timor. I heard that pro-independence people were killed all over East Timor but I didn’t see this happen.

I didn’t see and don’t know anything about any military trainings conducted by TNI, Special Forces and Brimob (riot police). When I was in the militia I had no specific task to do, I just had to do what they instructed. If I didn’t, I would be killed. We had to do what the commander of the Sakunar wanted and they threatened us with a gun if we did not obey. I know that our group did not shoot or murder anybody. If we didn’t obey the order to burn houses, we would be killed. Activities like this were done daily.

They always threatened and hit us in my home village. They kicked and beat us with a wooden stick and said that we had not obeyed their orders. One night when we all were afraid to go to work and were supposed to guard a security post, they searched and found us at our respective homes and kicked and beat the whole group. I was wounded from this on my leg. I saw a refugee shot with a pistol at his head. The militia killed him when they caught him. I was just involved with the militia for a short time and in the night I kept guard at a security post. We had bad treatment from the militia especially the under 18 year olds like me. Five of us had to sleep on one small mat.

They didn’t promise to give us good jobs and any money. We had to find medicines or traditional drugs ourselves to cure our diseases or wounds. If we were sick they didn’t give us medicines. Fortunately, I didn’t get any serious illnesses. When I was on operations with them, I saw their and their eyes were bloodshot from drinking. There was no militia wounded or killed during that time.

When I was with the militia, my friends sometimes had dreams and woke up suddenly, shocked because they were remembering the houses burning and being destroyed, as well as the people who were killed. Now, every night I think about my family. I think that some teenagers are firmly in militias’ hands and are unable to move or to return. I also miss my girlfriend who is still
in Kefa now. I miss Oecussi, my parents, brothers and sisters and all my relatives there. Now I am aware the mistakes of my past – that I supported the pro-autonomy side. I regret being involved with the pro-Indonesia side and wonder why I didn’t choose the pro-independence side.
2.2. Venancio, Pro-autonomy Militia Child Soldier

Pseudonym: Venancio  
Recruited/joined at: 16 years old  
Age at interview: 17 years old  
Armed Group: Besi Merah Putih (Red and White Iron) militia  
From: Lauhata Village, Liquiça Sub-district

2.2.1. Description

Venancio is slim and tall and is around 170cms tall. He has big eyes and short, straight black hair. His skin is dark. His hands are unusually large and he nervously pinches his thumbs and wrings his hands throughout the interview. He wears a pair of knee-length shorts and a black T-shirt. He is quiet and reserved. He looks nervously around him and when asked directly about joining the militia and at first says he says that he did not join them. When asked later, after he has begun to relax, about how the militia took him away, he starts to explain how the militia took him with them. Venancio joined the Besi Merah Putih (red and white iron) militia for four months prior to the referendum in 1999 when he was 16 years old. He was born in Lauhata in Liquiça.

2.2.2. Background

Venancio was interviewed on the verandah of his parent’s house overlooking a small garden. Upon arrival, the translator pointed out that the whole family must have participated in the militia, as their house was not destroyed, and the Lauhata Area village was a pro-autonomy stronghold. When asked about this later, Venancio’s father confirmed that the whole family was pro-autonomy before the referendum. The cement house has three bedrooms and has an aluminium roof. The Besi Merah Putih militia and the Indonesian military destroyed around 90 per cent of Liquiça in September 1999, and Venancio’s house was one of the few dwellings that remained intact.

Hundreds of East Timorese youth between the ages of 14 and 25 were recruited into the Besi Merah Putih Militia in the Liquiça and Maubara Districts. The Besi Merah Putih militia formed on 27 December 1998. According to Yayasan HAK, a local human rights organisation, “in the first few months of its establishment, the gang recruited members from ordinary peasants, old people and boys under 18. The process of recruitment was one of terror, intimidation and stigmatisation of the pro-independence supporters. This group is one among those groups that were very active at terrorising, intimidating, injuring and killing civilians”.

On 6 April, around 2,000 people were sheltering in the church compound in Liquiça when it was attacked by militia, Brimob (riot police) and Kodim (Indonesian military) personnel. Most of the people there had fled attacks around the town led by BMP militia, and others had fled militia activities over recent weeks in nearby towns. Over 60 people were killed in the attack on Liquiça Church from gunshot and machete wounds. Venancio was recruited on the same day as the massacre, when a number of machete-wielding militiamen arrived at his doorstep. His mother and father had advised him to stay indoors, but when the militiamen were at the door, his parents

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couldn’t do anything about the situation. Despite the fact that Venancio’s father was a pro-autonomy militiaman, he could not save the boy from being forcibly recruited.

By June, the Besi Merah Putih militia was effectively controlling areas from Liquiça Town to Batugade with checkpoints and patrols. Venancio worked at several of these checkpoints and accompanied the militia on their patrols. Since April 1999 no local or international humanitarian agencies were allowed to operate in the area until UNAMET arrived in June. Between April and August many people fled from the intimidation and violence of the TNI and the Besi Merah Putih militia to the mountains, the Falintil cantonments and other towns like Dili.

Under the control of the militia, Venancio lived in constant fear. He was never sure whether he would live or die. To begin work, militiamen would show up at his house, often drunk, to collect him for his assigned tasks. He had to drink alcohol, and often his commanders took capsules (“angin gila” or “crazy dog” pills - amphetamines) and apparently “went crazy”. Their eyes became wide and they sweated profusely. They then became very anxious and agitated. He had to guard a militia post almost every night, starting at 6pm and finishing at 6am. Such work was exhausting. In the daytime, he had to go with the militia when they burned and looted houses and killed animals. This was standard operation for the Besi Merah Putih militia between April and August of 1999. When he described going on patrol with the militia, he spoke quietly and looked at the floor. He said that many other children involved in the militia were either orphans, from broken homes, those who didn’t attend school or those who ran gambling rings (known as ‘Bolar Guling’ in Bahasa Indonesia). In East Timor, many of these street children were recruited by older youth to work in the gambling rackets that were run all over East Timor. These youth provided a recruitment pool for militia who were also involved in these scams. The youth who were under 18 years of age were regularly physically abused when they disobeyed orders, or when they turned up late.

Venancio still has nightmares about the times the militiamen threatened his life. He gets headaches when he ‘thinks too much” about what happened to him when he was in the militia and he tries to cope with these by “doing things” or keeping himself occupied. He gets depressed when other children at school call him a militiaman, because he says he had no choice. He also sometimes feels like people are talking about him and feels afraid that the militia may return. He was happy to return to East Timor in February 2000, and was pleased that the CNRT and Falintil allowed the pro-autonomy supporters to return. He wants to continue to study at school, but worries about what the other children think about his being part of the militia in the past. He is still angry with the militia who forcibly recruited him. He believes they should go before a tribunal for the crimes they have committed.

2.2.3. Interview

My parents were farmers and fishermen; they grew corn and caught fish to sell at the local market. I have three sisters and two brothers. My father is 49. I completed school in Liquiça. I completed second class at junior high school. I liked going to school and catching fish. My house was made of cement and it had three bedrooms and a small garden with a wire fence around it. I wanted to be an engineer when I finished school.

The militia came here and they told me that autonomy was the best way. They also threatened me and said that if I did not become a militia they would kill me (he indicated this by drawing a line across his throat). The CNRT could not come here at that time, only the militia (the CNRT closed their offices in Liquiça in April 1999 due to the violence). The militia told me that we had to fight against Xanana and the CNRT and they said, “If you want to join with Falintil, you had
better go to the forest and try and find your own food and kill animals to eat”. They told us that the pro-independence would have to *makan batu* or “eat stones” (an expression in Bahasa Indonesia, well-known in East Timor, meaning that if you vote for independence all you will have left to eat after the vote will be stones). They said that they were against the United Nations and that they would kill the foreigners because the foreigners only came here to support pro-independence.

The militia came in April 1999 after they had attacked the church. I was shocked and afraid because they came here with machetes covered in blood. They said, “If you don’t come with us then we will kill you”. There were older ones and young ones. They had been drinking and some of them covered their faces and looked like “ninjas” (para-military special forces in East Timor who dressed in black and covered their faces, who assassinated pro-independence supporters). Sometimes they covered themselves with black cloth and other times they used the Indonesian flag. My mother and father told me to stay here. They said that they couldn’t do anything about the situation. I used to play football with my friends, go fishing and help my father after school before the militia came here. After the militia came I still played *takraw* (a ball game popular in Southeast Asia). Sometimes when the militia came they offered money and other times they threatened us. They said we had to join the militia and that the Indonesians would give us money, but after that we did not receive anything.

Every day they controlled us and said that if we didn’t put the Indonesian flag up here they would … (He drew a line across his throat). If we didn’t raise the *Merah Putih* (“Red and White”, meaning the Indonesian flag) they suspected us as CNRT members and said that we would have to die. I was sad and afraid at that time. I was confused and sometimes I didn’t know if I would live or die. I was 16 when they came and called me to join. I was in my house and they came to get me when they needed me – every day – and they were drunk. I had to drink *Tuak* (palm wine). They also drank blood. The older ones took capsules. After they took the pills they didn’t remember anything they did and they went crazy (becoming aggressive and hyperactive). They took Indonesian and East Timorese people’s blood and mixed it with earth – they took the blood from their arms and put in a bowl and goat blood and earth and wine and put it in with the Indonesian flag. And then we drank the liquid (His father helped him explain the oath they took to the Indonesian flag).

Some of the militia came from Atambua, Ambon and Flores – two or three of them. The Indonesian military also gave orders. After the vote there was a lot of violence near my house. When the militia started to burn everything and kill all the animals and steal everything I felt sad. They took me from here and threatened us and said we had to burn everything. They stole many things and put them into cars and took things to Dili by boats. I felt sad because they took everything away. My family knew beforehand that the militia would take everything from the houses and hid our things so they would not be taken. Many of the other children in the militia were orphans, from broken homes, those who didn’t attend school and those who were involved in gambling rings. Then after the vote announcement I was taken to West Timor to Atambua by car. I didn’t work for them there.

When I worked for them here I had to guard a security post. At the checkpoint we had to check cars for Falintil and CNRT members (he then pointed at the translator who was a well-known Falintil member and said “like them” and they all laughed). We worked from 6pm in the evening until 6am in the morning. We rotated with each other sleeping two hours at a time. They didn’t give us anything to eat or drink. I ate dinner in my house. I didn’t receive training - those at the other post did. They told us about the pro-autonomy struggle at the post every night and every morning when they came to check we were at the post. They spoke to us for four hours at a time
and we were always tired, afraid and nervous. I also went to school at this time. There was no human rights training - I don’t know what that is.

The most difficult job was to build the checkpoint and collect the materials. The Indonesian soldiers came here and told us to guard the checkpoint and told us that we may have to kill people. I was so afraid at that time. The angotta (ordinary ranked Indonesian military) came here and used to tell us to support autonomy. The militiamen were very cruel and they said to us “if you don’t support autonomy we will kill you”. The Kepala Desa (village headman) was cruel to me. Sometimes some of them were kind and sometimes they were very bad. Sometimes they held a pistol or a machete to my head, and I was afraid. The militia beat other young militia at the post. They punched and kicked people who tried to flee to the jungle and I was afraid. They battered other militia by punching them and kicking them. They bashed another militiaman until he died. They beat the younger and the older ones.

They killed people but I don’t know how many – I never saw this but I heard it. I didn’t see any dead bodies. After they went to kill somebody they felt brave and shouted like they were crazy. I don’t know where they killed people. If we slept for too long at the checkpoint they would beat us, and they said, “You want to be CNRT (pro-independence) because you fell asleep”. If we had attempted to talk with or join CNRT or Falintil (pro-independence) we would have been killed. When I was very afraid, I cried alone. The commander of the militia gave us militia T-shirts – no shoes. The Indonesian military gave the commander clothes and shoes. They never gave me money. When we were sick they never took care of us and no doctor came – we had to stay at the post. If we were sick we had to get permission to go home.

Often I had bad dreams that the militia would kill me. When I woke up I was afraid and felt depressed. The other young ones woke up after having bad dreams at the checkpoint too. I get headaches since I came back to East Timor. I try to forget that time but sometimes the bad stories come back so I try to do things to forget. Often I feel sad. Sometimes others at school accuse me of being a militia and this makes me very sad – I had to stay with the militia. Sometimes I think people are talking about me and I feel very sad. I am afraid that the militia will come back here. The militia took old people and children. At my checkpoint there were many children – seven of them.

When I came back to East Timor I wasn’t afraid, I was happy. The militia told us that when we came back the Interfet (the international peace-keeping force) would divide the men and women and would rape the women. We were afraid that Falintil and CNRT would beat us but we were happy when we came and they were good to us. We came back in February.

I worked at the checkpoint from April to September 1999. I felt sick when I worked at the checkpoint because I didn’t sleep enough. I became thin. We want to continue our studies but sometimes it is difficult – sometimes there are people who don’t like us. I think that the militia leaders should go before a tribunal.
2.3. Vasco, Pro-autonomy Militia Child Soldier

Pseudonym: Vasco  
Age recruited/joined: 14 years old  
Age at interview: 16 years old  
Armed group: Besi Merah Putih (Red and White Iron) Militia  
From: Maubara Sub-district, Liquiça

2.3.1. Description

Vasco is wiry and tall and is around 168cms. He has black eyes, a long face and short straight black hair. His skin is dark. He wears faded jeans and a blue T-shirt. In the beginning he is very afraid to talk and speaks in a whisper looking for approval from the village headman. He soon becomes more talkative after chatting for some time yet remains reserved and shy. When answering difficult questions he looks at the ground and puts his head to the wall and with a pained expression on his face. Vasco joined the Maubara chapter of the Besi Merah Putih (Red and White Iron) militia for eight months prior to the referendum in 1999 when he was 14 years old. He was born in Maubara Sub-district.

2.3.2. Background

The meeting with Vasco was arranged by the headman of a remote village in the hills behind Maubara. When Vasco arrived after hours of walking the chief of the village explained that he could not sleep the previous night, as he was nervous about meeting a foreigner. The village chief explained that two Australian soldiers from Interfet took Vasco to Dili for questioning about militia crimes that took place in 1999. Vasco was afraid that he would be taken again. After chatting with Vasco about his hobbies and home he began to feel more comfortable. The translator also assured him that he would not be taken to Dili. Since that trip to the capital, many of his peers started to shun him, calling him a militia soldier, and Vasco refused to return to school for fear that they would take their vengeance out on him.

Following its formation in December 1998, the Besi Merah Putih militia recruited hundreds of East Timorese youth from Maubara. Many of them were forcibly recruited under the threat of death. “Besi Merah Putih had up to 100 under-18s with them who I saw when I visited Liquiça in April,” claimed Rosa Garcia of the Timor Post Newspaper. “I spoke with a few of them and they were young, very young. Some of their weapons were almost the same size as they were”.18

After beating and killing people in his village, the militia forcibly recruited Vasco in January. They told him that he had to join, or they would kill him and his family. They also gave him death threats if he did not obey all of their orders. His parents asked him to become a militia to prevent the rest of the family from being killed. When Vasco performed well for the militia, they gave him some money (250 Rupiahs – about two cents in US currency) and food (10 kilogrammes of rice).

When he described some of the militia operations, he spoke in a whisper, frowning, and looking down at the ground. When he discussed the details of what he had to do, sometimes he turned to face the wall, putting his head to his shoulder and looking down. One of the first things that he

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18 Interview with Rosa Garcia, Timor Post Journalist, Dili East Timor, 2 November 2000.
was ordered to do was to take part in a gang rape. He later denied direct participation, claiming only to be a witness to other militia members carrying out the gang rape.

He describes a normal day with the militia as going with them to “burn houses, kill animals and harass people”. Sometimes he felt happy when he was working for them, as in when he was burning houses, because the group accepted him and was happy with what he had done. He then had second thoughts and felt that it was not good to burn the houses and to hurt people, but said that they only did such things because their lives were under threat.

The militia and the Indonesian military gave Vasco military training. They taught him to use guns and a machete and “how to attack and how to kill”. When asked if the militia ever gave him any human rights information, Vasco laughed and said that the militia never talked about human rights, they “only told us how to rape, steal and kill.” Only when the younger soldiers followed orders were they shown any kindness or rewarded. The senior militia would give the young soldiers money, rice, and better jobs if they performed well. Youth like Vasco guarded a checkpoint by night, sleeping on uncomfortable boards in alternating two-hour shifts, and then were forced to go on patrol with the militia by day. This workload exhausted Vasco, and he was frequently depressed, crying when he went home.

With their patrols and checkpoints, the Besi Merah Putih militia had effectively controlled areas from Liquiça Town to Batugade by June of 1999. Vasco worked at a number of these checkpoints, and accompanied the militia on their patrols. From April 1999 no local or international humanitarian agencies were able to operate in the area due to militia violence until UNAMET arrived in June. Between April and June, many hundreds of people escaped the intimidation and violence of the Besi Merah Putih Militia and the TNI and fled to the mountains, the Falintil cantonments and other towns such as Dili.

After the violence ended, Vasco still felt constant fear, often waking up after having nightmares that people are trying to kill him. He also experienced mood swings, feeling happy one moment, then very sad the next. He worried that foreigners would take him away for further questioning, such as when the Interfet soldiers took him to Dili. He fears the foreigners’ punishment more than that of his villagers, as many local people were forced to become militia members.

2.3.3. Interview

My parents were farmers. They grew cassava and corn and raised goats, chickens and pigs. I have two sisters and one brother. I completed school up to third grade primary school level. I liked to play football – soccer, and shoot birds before the militia came here. Most of the people in my village were farmers. We were often hungry and couldn’t find enough food (the chief tells us that the village was very poor. He also explained that in the Indonesian time there were 144 families living there and now there are 90. The other families were mostly pro-autonomy supporters who are still in West Timor). My house was a traditional bamboo house on the ground. Now the foreigners gave us zinc for the roof. I always wanted to be a teacher.

The militia first came to my village in early January. When they came they beat many people and killed some people in my village. They told us that if we did not join them we would die. They said “autonomy is the best” and that to stay with Indonesia is the right way, and if we followed CNRT or Falintil, they would kill us. We were so afraid and we had to join them or they said they would kill us. They said that if we did not do what they said that they would murder us. The commander came with a group of Besi Merah Putih militia. When the militia came my parents were very afraid and they said to me: “If the militia ask you do anything just do it or they will kill
They were afraid. My parents told me to hide at first but later the militia found me. The first time the militia caught me in January, they said to me: “Now you are a militia!” They promised to give me money and rice and they gave it to me. Sometimes they gave me 250 Rupiahs (approximately two cents in US currency) and 10 kilograms of rice. At that time I was 14 years old.

The first time they took me from my house we had to rape a woman and then kill anything we could find like animals and people. They ordered us to rape. We did this together. Everyday we were taken with them by car to burn houses, kill animals and harass people. Sometimes we were happy to burn the houses because our group were enjoying themselves, but other times I felt that it was not good to burn the houses and to hurt these people, but we had to do this because we were afraid. If we didn’t do this we would die. Every day they came to get us and if we didn’t want to go they would threaten us with machetes. They beat me with a piece of wood every day. The first time they beat me was the most difficult. They killed many people but I don’t know where they put the bodies. They screamed and shouted when they had killed people and showed off their machetes covered with blood and said, “Eat the people”. There was so much blood. They drank alcohol made from palm like tuak and tuasabo and they ate anging gila tablets. I did not drink or take any tablets. I was released when I went to Atambua in September and then we returned here with my family. The other members of my family were not taken to be militia. There were around 15 children in my group. There was only one girl called Romana who was 18.

They threatened me and told me that I had to kill people and rape women. They gave us training in how to use guns and knives also how to attack and how to kill. We were given training at Kaekasain at a house – the headquarters of Besi Merah Putih militia. An East Timorese militiaman was our teacher. We were also trained by the Indonesian military. Every week we were trained twice a week for two hours. They never talked about human rights – they only told us how to rape, steal and kill. They never gave us food and water. They didn’t teach me anything good. If we obeyed their orders they would pay attention to us and be kind to us, but if you didn’t obey the order... If we did a good job we received money or rice and would be given better jobs. Many of our commanders were. The first commander because he killed many people and raped many women – he was a bad man and we were afraid of him.

On the day of the Liquiça church massacre we were taken to kill animals and steal things. I never saw the commander kill anyone – but they spoke about people being “lost” (disappeared) and this meant they were dead. The commanders used to beat us if we didn’t follow orders. They beat us every day. The older ones and younger ones were treated the same. In the morning sometimes we were able to take a rest but in the night we had to stay awake at the checkpoint. The youth guarded the checkpoint in the night. We had to go around with them in the day. Sometimes I had time to play football with my friends. I was very sad and I cried when they killed people and raped people. If I cried in front of them I would die. I would only cry in my home.

I never received food from them. I received a T-shirt and a bandana from them. No shoes. At the post I had to sleep on a bamboo mat on wooden boards. It was not comfortable. I was allowed to sleep for two hours at a time. I never became sick. I was tired all the time. All of us were the same. We never received medicine or saw a doctor. Sometimes the commanders came and woke us up by poking us with their knives and this hurt.

I had bad dreams and I woke up thinking that somebody wanted to kill me. Now I wake up still from bad dreams. I don’t remember my dreams but I feel afraid when I wake up. At this time, I am still constantly afraid. Sometimes I change from feeling happy to feeling sad very quickly. When Interfet (the international peace-keeping force) came and took me to Dili they asked about
all the things that happened under the Indonesians. I was very afraid. The villagers here don’t call me a militiaman but I am the only one who has come back.

I think people should be 25 before becoming soldiers. When I was in the militia I had to prepare food and serve it to them. I had to build a checkpoint. I had to carry messages for them. I had to carry wood, bullets and other things for them. I had to watch out for CNRT and if we gave the militia information about the pro-independence people we received money. I never felt like I wanted to kill myself. The others never felt like that either. I think the militia leaders should go to jail for what they have done. Now I feel very angry with them. I am worried about my friends in Atambua. I worry that they have been killed.
2.4. **Francis, Pro–autonomy Militia Child Soldier**

**Pseudonym:** Francis  
**Age recruited/joined:** 17 years old  
**Age at interview:** 18 years old  
**Armed group:** ARMUI (Atabae Rela Mati Untuk Integrasi – Atabae Would Die for Integration)  
**From:** Atabae Subdistrict

### 2.4.1. Description

Francis is slim and tall at 185cms. He has big black eyes, a long sculpted face and short straight black hair. His skin is dark. He wears dark brown cargo pants and a T-shirt. He is reserved and thoughtful. He is self-conscious and looks shyly at the ground. Francis joined the ARMUI militia for nine months prior to the referendum in 1999 when he was 17 years old. He was born in Atabae.

### 2.4.2. Background

Francis was interviewed at the house of the village headman of Atabae. He walked for hours from his village to the market that opened every Saturday and agreed to participate in the study after the headman explained it to him.

The ARMUI Militia formed in the Atabae District in late 1998. The pro-integration Halilintar (Thunderbolt) paramilitary organisation of East Timor, which had been operating since 1975, formed ARMUI and recruited scores of under-18 males in late 1998 and early 1999.

Around 20 men with machetes came to Francis’s village in January 1999. They were wearing Halilintar T-shirts with the Indonesian flag tied around their heads. They beat most of the people in the village and forced members from each household to join. Francis’ father asked him to join the militia in order to save the family from further problems, so Francis joined. Francis was paid once during his time with the militia, 25,000 Rupiah (approximately US$3-4), and following this initial payment, he was never paid again.

One of the first ARMUI operations that Francis had to carry out involved a house-to-house search for members of a clandestine group. The militia gave Francis’ squad a list of pro-independence supporters, and told him that the people must be caught, as they were supporting the guerillas in the jungle. When the militia squad apprehended the members of the clandestine group, they beat them, and took away their Lulik talismans, or their sacred red cloth belts that according to the Animist religion, protect them from danger. In East Timor, there is a deep belief in the indigenous Lulik religion. One wears a blessed object that is usually wrapped in cloth and worn under the clothes on the body. This object affords the wearer protection and power against potential enemies. Group leaders, or spiritual figures often give new recruits such talismans to symbolize their membership and acceptance. To take a Lulik talisman from members is to take away their strength, thus rendering them spiritually powerless.

Francis felt very guilty about the death of his friend Sico. After he saw the militia tie up his friend’s hands and feet and later dump his body, he felt he should have been able to prevent the killing. But he realized that could not help, as his own life was constantly being threatened.
also felt that he should have been able to prevent the beating of his stepfather by a paramilitary man.

Francis saw members of the high-rank militia taking tablets. Although he was not sure what these tablets were for, he noted that after they took the capsules “they acted very bravely”. This is consistent with numerous reports of militia using “angin-gila” or “crazy dog” medicine, which are amphetamines. They often enhance bravery and enable people to work with little sleep.

Francis explained that many of the under-18 youth who joined the militia were from farms and helped their parents in the fields. He said that he was worried about the state of the farm while he was away with the militia, as he usually spent those hours in the fields. He also pointed out that there were a number of girls in the group who were used as cooks for the high-rank militia.

Francis was forced to harass certain groups that the militia had targeted such as civil servants, students and pro-independence supporters. Sometimes working in conjunction with the Halintar paramilitary, and even the Indonesian military, Francis was forced to burn down the houses of pro-independence supporters. Francis said that he “learned only bad things” from the militia such as how to burn down a house. He left the militia and stayed in a village in West Timor with his family. When he returned with his family, they found that their house had also been destroyed.

Francis returned to East Timor to a hostile group of villagers from his sub-district. They were pro-independence supporters who were angry with the first group of militia returnees. His uncle explained to the villagers that they were forced to join the militia and reconciliation was made with the support of the CNRT in the village and these people are now more understanding. Francis hated remembering the past. Since his return to his village, Francis wanted to catch fish, sell them and buy a new boat. The militia stole the family boat after the referendum in 1999. He wants to marry in the future and have two children, once he has saved some money. He wants his children to be able to study, as he never had that chance, and feels that this could lead them to a good future.

2.4.3. Interview

My father and my mother were farmers; they grew rice in the rice field and corn on their farm. They also raised goats and pigs and had a small boat to catch fish. Most of the people in my village were farmers. I never went to school because although I wanted to go to school my parents didn’t allow me to as they were very old and needed me to help them. I didn’t think about my future when I was small boy. When the Indonesians were here we sometimes suffered from hunger and we had to work very hard to get food. I had to work in the fields from seven in the morning and finished at two in the afternoon. Every day I took care of the animals and worked in the fields and the rice fields.

The Indonesian troops made a lot of problems when they were here. They beat people who supported Falintil and it made people in our village scared. My parents were supporters of independence but they didn’t tell me anything about the independence movement. The first time I saw militia was in the dry season before Christmas 1998. Some of them were nice but others of them were bad. They came to our village by foot with their weapons like knives, machetes, and Samurai swords and there were about twenty of them. They were wearing Halilintar (Thunderbolt) paramilitary T-shirts with Indonesian flags tied around their heads but they didn’t do anything. They were shouting that if pro-autonomy wins all the ‘people in the jungle’ (the
Falintil) would die. They also said that Falintil had nothing, that they slept on the ground, and ate leaves and had no clothes.

They went from house to house and when they found people who had helped the Falintil, they beat them. They beat people in their houses and they also took some of them from their houses and beat them in front of everyone from the village. I felt sad and very afraid when I saw them beating people, I was afraid because I thought they would beat me too. Later they came to my house and threatened my parents. My father was very scared and he asked me to join them otherwise they would kill all of us. Then they forced all people in the village to join them. My father was very old so they didn’t force him to join. They registered people’s names in a book listing the militias’ membership, and my name was on the list.

Once I saw them come to my house and they were shouting “Hidup Otonomi” (“win autonomy”). Their faces looked very evil. They came with homemade guns, Samurai swords and also traditional weapons. When they came to take me, my parents were so scared that they allowed me to join the militia. My brothers were away from our house that was why they didn’t have to join the ARMUI militia. I didn’t have to stay with them at the checkpoint or office. I went to their office every morning. I was paid once, when I first joined the militia I got 25,000 Rupiah (approximately US$3-4). I was given the money by an ARMUI militia leader. After that I never got paid again.

I was forced to make an operation from house to house to find members of a clandestine group. We found members of JHS (Jesus Homeu Salvador) clandestine group. We knew where they were because the militiamen had made lists of all the clandestine members in our village. Later the militia told us that if we joined the clandestine movement we would not get anything. We were also told that the clandestine movement was no good because they were helping people in the jungle (the Falintil). When we found JHS clandestine members they beat them and demanded their Lulik (a sacred red cloth belt). They took their Lulik belts to the post and waited for the owners to come and get them, and then beat them again.

I heard that they killed one member of the JHS clandestine group, a friend of mine named Sico. Before they killed him I saw them tie his hands and legs. They then took him to the beach and threw him into the sea. I didn’t see what happened on the beach, but I saw them when they took Sico to the beach. When they came back after the killing of Sico they were very excited and kept saying, “we have murdered him”. I felt sad and scared because they have killed my friend but I couldn’t do anything. Sico was killed because when the Student Solidarity Council of East Timor from Dili came to our village for a dialogue, the militia saw him carrying East Timor’s flag (signifying that he was a pro-independence supporter). The dialogue was held on 8 November and the next day was a parade.

I was slapped when I came to the post late; actually I was late twice so they slapped me four times across my face.

One day I saw a Halilintar militiaman beat my stepfather because they said that he helped Falintil. They kicked, punched and beat him with a piece of wood. I was not asked to bring any knife or weapon from our house, they gave us machetes when we went to patrol, but after we came back to the post we had to give them back. They didn’t give us alcoholic drinks but the older militia usually drank until they were drunk before going out on operations. Sometimes I saw them taking tablets, but I didn’t know what the tablets were for. Soon after they took the tablets their faces and eyes become very red. They acted very bravely after they took the tablets.
Sometimes I ate in my house; sometimes I ate at the checkpoint. When I worked with the militias no one helped my parents and I was worried about the state of our fields. When I came back to our house from the checkpoint my parents didn’t say anything. Sometimes when I went home, my parents reminded me to go back to the post otherwise the militias would come and beat me up. In the ARMUI group there were many youth like me. There were about 40 young boys, and also many girls; about 20 of them. The girls’ job was to cook when the Halilintar leaders came. In the ARMUI militia we had about 20 sub-groups. One platoon has about 40 personnel. Our jobs were to build their buildings and make fences. The hardest work was to collect the bamboo, build a large house and to make the fences. We built the house to be used as a big office.

Sometimes in our operations we also looked for the pro-independence East Timorese civil servants because the militias said that they had betrayed Indonesia by helping Falintil. Other things that the Halilintar militiamen did on the operations were burning the people’s houses. We went with them when they went to burn the houses because the Halilintar militiamen always said to us, “If you don’t come with us to burn the houses we will kill you”. After we had joined them they didn’t give us any training. Sometimes the TNI (Indonesian military) also joined Halilintar on the operations and they also burnt the houses. When I saw them burn the people’s houses I didn’t like them. Before making operations, we were given orders by both the TNI troops and the Halilintar militiamen. Both Halilintar militiamen and the TNI troops were wearing the same camouflage clothes.

When I was with the militia I learned only bad things: they only taught me how to burn people’s house and all the commanders were bad. There was one militiaman who was the worst as when he found (pro-independence) people he would kill them. I didn’t see him kill people but his colleagues told me about it. I had to work at the checkpoint from nine o’clock in the morning, and went back home at about eleven o’clock in the morning. I didn’t go to the checkpoint at night.

When I stayed with the militias I sometimes felt scared but I didn’t cry. They gave militiamen T-shirts and Indonesian flags but they only gave these to the adult militia members. Nobody took care of us when we got sick. I went to Atambua (West Timor) after the vote. In Atambua I didn’t stay with the militias anymore. I stayed in Fatumean Village. I went to Atambua with my parents. The militias just let me stay at my parents’ house. When I left East Timor the Halilintar militiamen were still burning the houses here. The ARMUI militia members left before the Halilintar militia. When I left, our house was still standing but when we came back we didn’t see the house again. I was sad when we came back and couldn’t find our house. My father didn’t say anything when we came back and the house was no longer there. He didn’t get angry. Now since I have come back I want to go back to the sea and catch fish. I would like to sell the fish so that I can buy a new boat. Before we had a boat but the Halilintar militia took it.

I don’t want to get married now, but I will marry someone in the future and I want to have two children. I will send them to school. I still really like football. When I remember the past I hate it because when we first came back from Atambua, the other villagers were angry with us. They said, “You are militia”, but I didn’t respond to them. Luckily my uncle explained how we were forced to join the militias. Also the CNRT leaders explained our situation to them and encouraged them to accept us. The people understood us and now they are kind to me.
2.5. **Mauricio, Pro–autonomy Militia Child Soldier**

- **Pseudonym:** Mauricio
- **Age recruited/joined:** 18 years old
- **Age at Interview:** 19 years old
- **Armed group:** Mahidi (*Mati Hidup Demi Integrasi* – Live or die with Integration) militia
- **From:** Zumalai subdistrict, Covalima District

### 2.5.1. Description

Mauricio is slim and around 150cms tall. He has big black eyes, a long nose and short, straight black hair parted in the middle. His skin is dark. He wears a pair of blue tracksuit pants and a brown T-shirt. He is reserved and soft-spoken. He looks around nervously when answering questions and pulls at and plays with his hands constantly. Mauricio joined the Mahidi militia when he was 18 years old, a week prior to the referendum. He was born in Zumalai.

### 2.5.2. Background

Mauricio was interviewed at the house of the headman of Zumalai Village, on the day of a traditional celebration. The headman arranged the interview at his house, as he did not want the villagers to suspect that Mauricio was a former militia member. The headman explained that the villagers still harbour much animosity against the militia. Although the local administration would like to promote reconciliation, some people still seek revenge against those who were involved with the militia. Following the referendum in 1999, the Mahidi militia destroyed most of the houses in Zumalai.

The Mahidi militia was one of the largest and most notorious militia groups in East Timor, claiming up to 8,000 members at its zenith. Cancio Lopes da Carvalho, son of a “Liurai” (local regent) and a worker at the provincial justice office, formed the Mahidi militia in Casa village, Ainaro district, in December 1998. According to the local human rights organisation Yayasan HAK, this organisation “terrorised and intimidated people in order to recruit members and threatened to kill anyone who refused to become part of Mahidi”.

The Mahidi began intense operations in January 1999, detaining, beating and killing a number of civilians, and continued until September. This militia group recruited thousands of youth from Ainaro district and Zumalai sub-district during this time. Most of the youth they recruited were unemployed, uneducated, economically disadvantaged or from gambling rings in Ainaro. The CNRT in Ainaro also organised around 1,000 youth from the pro-independence side to join the militia and pass information back to them. The Mahidi militia recruited around 1,000 women, some under the age of 18, mainly from the civil service. They became known as “Maheto” (taking the first part of Mahidi and the last part of ‘feto’ meaning woman in Tetum).

The militia came to Mauricio’s village in May 1999, and threatened to kill his relatives if he refused to join. His parents advised him to join, but to escape as soon as he could. A few militiamen entered his home and threatened him to join at gunpoint. They then took him to their headquarters in Zumalai and accused him of being ‘Maubere’: a Fretilin sympathiser and pro-

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independence supporter. ‘Maubere’ is an old word in Tetum language meaning simple poor men from the mountains and countryside, and also is used to signify that a person is an indigenous East Timorese person as opposed to a person of mixed heritage. After 1975 it was used by Fretilin to describe Fretilin sympathisers and pro-independence supporters. The militiamen pulled out two of Mauricio’s fingernails and beat him unconscious in order to force him to become a member. He shows me his fingers with badly damaged nails and says that they are still painful. The militia leader Cancio said, after his fingernails had been removed, that it would be better to kill him.

Mauricio never received any military training and had to work in the militia headquarters in Zumalai cooking and cleaning for one of the militia leaders. When he worked at the headquarters, Mauricio often witnessed the militia beating civilians, and said that he felt sad to witness this. In one incident, he arrived late, and so the commanders punished him by forcing him to do somersaults until he became ill. It was then that Mauricio decided to escape. He escaped the headquarters and fled to the jungle a week after he had been recruited. He joined thousands of people that had been displaced by the militia violence.

At the time of the referendum, they returned to Zumalai to vote and then went back into hiding in the mountain. They came back to live in their villages after the militia had destroyed Zumalai and fled and following the deployment of Interfet (the international peacekeeping force) in Ainaro in early October 1999.

Now Mauricio finds it very difficult to do farm work. Since the militia forcibly recruited him and beat him with wood he has had chest pains and cannot do the work as he used to be able to do. Although he used to feel depressed and cried when he went home after working for the militia, he no longer feels the constant fear that he described experiencing before the referendum. He does however have recurring dreams about the militiamen who beat him and wakes up feeling afraid and disoriented. He says that he can forgive the militia and that it is up to God to pass judgment on them as prescribed by the Catholic religion.

2.5.3. Interview

My parents are still alive. I have three brothers and two sisters. My parents were farmers. They worked in the fields and rice paddies. They also raised some cows and chickens. Our house was a traditional East Timorese house made of thatched bamboo. All the people in my area were farmers. Most of my family has returned from West Timor now.

When I was little, I liked to play football. I went to elementary school, but I didn’t finish; I left in the fourth year. I remember one year we had real trouble finding food and medicine when I was 17. I stopped going to school because I had fevers. I helped my parents when I finished school. Working in the fields is very hard. It’s hard because we work everyday without having rest and stayed under the sun all day.

In 1996 the Indonesian troops beat some people in my village. It happened because of a killing of a TNI member named Saloman. The Indonesian troops suspected them as being the killer of their friend. He was actually killed by Falintil fighters. The place where they killed the TNI (Indonesian army) member is near my village. When they beat the people I felt very scared. People told me that they were beaten inside the village office.

I first saw the militiamen in March 1999. When they came to Zumalai area they were shooting everywhere and beat some people. I was in Aibaba, and we ran away when we heard them
shooting. But they followed us to the mountains to take us back to our village. Later they beat us in our village. They said, “These dogs want independence.” They thought that people who fled villages were Fretiilin members. I escaped to the mountains because I was afraid that they would kill me. I escaped on the Palm Sunday feast – it was March. In May the militias caught up with us and beat us forcing us to join them. The militia who beat me said, “You are like a dog. You can’t make anything, not even matches, and you want independence?” They forced me to join them, saying that if I didn’t that they would kill all of my relatives.

They brought me to the Mahidi militia checkpoint. They told me that the pro-autonomy side would win the ballot. They said that, “If the East Timorese get independence they wouldn’t be able to produce anything – autonomy has everything.” My parents said: “You can join them but don’t ever give them your heart.” My parents were pro-independence. When I left our house my parents said: “Go and join them, but remember the first chance you have, escape.” The militiamen used to say about Falintil and CNRT: “Falintil has nothing. If you trust CNRT, CNRT has nothing. Xanana also has nothing. If you get independence you won’t have any food to eat.” Cancio and Nemezio de Carvalho (the leaders of the Mahidi militia) said, “If you choose independence you will die. Don’t follow Xanana’s way.” They asked the people whether they supported autonomy or independence, and the people said they wanted independence (by voting against autonomy at the referendum).

I was 18 years old when the militias forced me to join them. I stayed with them for just a little over a week and then I escaped. I went to the militia checkpoint during the day and went home on the evenings. They came to my house with guns and took me to their headquarters. There they pulled out two of my fingernails and beat me until I was unconscious. They accused me of being Maubere (a Fretiilin or independence supporter) and then they asked me: “Do you want to join us or do you want to be killed?” When they pulled out my fingernails I felt so much pain. I couldn’t move my fingers for two days. I thought that I would die. A man who worked for Cancio (the militia leader) took me to the militia post. When Cancio’s men pulled my nails out, Cancio said, “I don’t care about you because you are Fretiilin supporter.” He also said to the militia, “It’s better we kill them.” There were three of us, my brother and another man. The militias forced the three of us to join by beating us with big pieces of wood until we were unconscious.

The militia didn’t offer us money, rice or T-shirts and the three of us escaped just after one week. There were two more young boys in our group. There were also some women but I didn’t know their names. Some of the militia were civil servants, Bolar Guling (from gambling rings in the markets), and senior high school students. Most of them were unemployed. We were not trained. In the mornings the militia had to line up for salute but we didn’t have to because we were working in the house. Our job was the cleaning and cooking for Vasco, the coordinator of militia members. We also had to wash their clothes, and take the water containers to fill up their water tanks.

They beat some people in front of me; most of these people were beaten to unconsciousness. Those who were captured and beaten were the ordinary people. They only beat civilians but they didn’t beat the militias who came late to the checkpoints. I never saw anyone die, but their faces were swollen after the beatings. When I saw people beaten by the militia, I felt very sorry for them. I was very sad. I don’t know whether they took people and killed them in other places or not.

We had to clean the house whenever someone came into it. That’s why I was always thinking about how to escape. We worked from seven in the morning and went home at two in the
afternoon. After we had cleaned the house we had to cook for them. They didn’t give us any food. After working in the post I used to help my parents. I told my parents that I had to work for the militia. My parents knew that I was working for them. The worst thing I had to do was cleaning the house and washing their clothes. The hardest work was to fill their water tanks, because we had to use large buckets to collect water. The buckets were very heavy. If I was late, they made me do many somersaults. After somersaulting I started vomiting. This is the reason I decided to escape. I joined them but I never went out to patrol with them. The commander who treated us worst was the Danki (platoon commander). He was the one who made me do the somersaults.

There were no good militiamen. I don’t know if the militias killed anyone. I could escape because I had some friends who have escaped before us, and they stayed near our place. They had sent us many messages asking us to join them. I escaped the afternoon I had to do the somersaults. I told my parents before I escaped. I went to the jungle. I went with my friends and there were already many people in the jungle. We escaped together the first time but the others haven’t returned to the village since then. I got sick after the militias beat us and now I can’t do hard work. My parents took care of me until I recovered. Sometimes in the afternoons I cried. Usually I cried when I went home.

They didn’t give me any T-shirts, pills, or alcoholic drinks. Before the senior militia leaders went around the villages to patrol, they always drank palm-wine until they were drunk. I only saw them drink palm-wine but I didn’t see them take pills. They never took me to the hospital when I got sick. The militia never talked about human rights. I don’t feel afraid, but I can’t do any heavy work now. I always dream about the militiamen who beat me. I used to wake up trembling when I had bad dreams. I felt very afraid. I had these dreams four times. Sometimes I get malaria after these dreams.

I can forgive the militias who have beaten me. I’m sure God almighty can decide what is right. I escaped to the hills and then I came back to participate in the vote. But after the vote, I went back with many other people to the jungle near Bobonaro area. I stayed with other refugees, not with Falintil. We came back after INTERFET (the international peacekeeping force) arrived. I don’t care about justice and reconciliation. The highest justice belongs to God alone.
3. Children Acting as Informants

3.1. Hugo, Child acting as Informant

Pseudonym: Hugo
Age recruited/joined: 14 years old to Santo Antonio (Saint Anthony) clandestine group and 17 years old to Dadurus Merah Putih militia
Age at interview: 18 years old
Armed group: Dadurus Merah Putih (Red and White Hurricane)
From: Maliana Sub-district, Bobonaro District

3.1.1. Description

Hugo is well built and tall at around 170cms. He has black eyes and short straight black hair. He has a moustache and his skin is light. He wears a pair of jeans and a white pullover. He is reserved yet answers questions directly. Hugo joined the “Santo Antonio” (Saint Anthony) pro-independence clandestine group when he was 14 years old and was then forcibly recruited into the Dadurus Merah Putih (Red and White Hurricane) militia for five months in East Timor just prior to the referendum in 1999 when he was 17 years old. He was born in Bobonaro District.

3.1.2. Background

Hugo sat on the balcony with a group of his friends from the “Santo Antonio” clandestine group in a large cement house overlooking Maliana Sub-district. The house was formerly the property of the militia leader who he worked for and his main job was to guard the building. The house was left intact when the militia left Maliana in mid-September 1999 and so Hugo and his friends moved into the abandoned residence.

Hugo joined the clandestine group “Santo Antonio” or “Saint Anthony”, a large and well-known network, when he was 14. His first jobs for them included gathering food and supplies and sending them to Falintil, as well as organising security for demonstrations against the Indonesian occupation. He joined the clandestine group because he saw that most educated East Timorese youth could not get jobs whereas those from other parts of Indonesia had economic and employment advantages. He also did not like the way the Indonesian military took people for questioning, never returning them to their families again.

In April 1999, the militia forcibly recruited Hugo, threatening him and his parents with death if he refused to join. His father told the militia that they could not force his son to join and that he was old enough to make up is own mind. Hugo decided to join, as he feared the militia would kill him and his parents. He then told the members of his clandestine group that he was forced to join and they agreed that he should regularly supply them with information about militia activities. Once a month Hugo sent them information on next targets of the militia.

Prior to the formation of Dadurus Merah Putih and other militia groups in Bobonaro District, the Halilintar (Thunderbolt) Paramilitary Squad operated alongside combat and territorial troops with close supervision by Kopassus SGI units. The original Halilintar squad was formed by a local ruler in Atabae and had been under Indonesian military command since 1975. The Halilintar and the TNI formed the Dadurus Merah Putih in Maliana on 8 April 1999. By June, militia
companies operating at sub-district level had been formed in a district grid covering each of Bobonaro’s six sub-districts.20

The Dadurus Merah Putih militia recruited hundreds of East Timorese youth between the ages of 16 and 25 in the Bobonaro district. The Dadurus Merah Putih militia started to recruit members from the local population, especially unemployed youth. In the 1980s there had been an influx of 200 families of Indonesian immigrants into the Maliana area to establish it as the ‘rice bowl’ of East Timor. After enduring decades of the Indonesian government’s so-called trans-migration policy, which effectively seized the land of local villagers and put it in the hands of West Timorese, Buginese and Balinese, unemployed East Timorese youth struck back in 1995 by torching the Maliana market. Hugo joined the clandestine movement after witnessing this incident.

While Hugo was with the militia, he was not offered any money, but was promised that he would be eligible to become a soldier if the pro-autonomy side won. Their group received military training from Halilintar, East Timorese TNI (Indonesian military) troops and senior militiamen. There were approximately ten children in his group who were around ten years old. Most of Hugo’s work with the militia involved pro-independence supporter house burning, and standing guard at checkpoints. Hugo witnessed the militia leaders take amphetamine pills and kill an elderly man and his son. This event made him depressed and he felt that he could not show any of his true emotions for fear that he would be killed. He winces and looks away when he recounts the story. When the militia recruits did something wrong, they were punished by being held under water in a nearby river or forced to do somersaults.

In West Timor, Hugo had to continue working with the militia, completing military training, in order to come back to East Timor and fight. He and his family left with UNHCR assistance without informing the militia. Now that he is back in East Timor with his friends from the clandestine movement he is happier than he was in West Timor. He has bad memories of the past and only now is able to sleep well at night. He still has painful memories of the killing of the old man and his son and wishes he could have prevented it. His friends proudly tell me that he and another colleague of his are the only clandestine members who joined the militia who did not betray the pro-independence movement. Hugo wants to start working, but said that there are no jobs available and he is not sure what he wants to do.

3.1.3. Interview

I have two brothers and two sisters. My father was a civil servant and my mother was a farmer. I completed elementary school and I went to junior high school but didn’t complete it. I left after the third year. Our house was a traditional East Timorese house. Most of the people in my village were farmers. Some of them were civil servants; some of them were troops serving with the Indonesian army. The farmers here grew corn and cassava, and they raised pigs and chickens. We didn’t grow rice. Sometimes we sold food at the market. We didn’t have many difficulties. There was a doctor in our village so it was not difficult to get medical treatment. I moved to Maliana when I was very young. When we moved here, we still worked in the fields. I wanted to be a Falintil soldier when I was a little boy.

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I joined the clandestine movement in 1995 through contacts who were my friends. The clandestine group was called Santo Antonio (Saint Anthony). The aim of Santo Antonio was to fight against the Indonesian occupation. When we joined the group we had to agree to fight the Indonesian occupation and started doing this work within four months of joining. My parents didn’t know that I joined Santo Antonio. I was only an ordinary member. We collected some food and then our colleagues would take it to the Falintil fighters. We watched the movements of the Indonesian military. We reported to Falintil when the military captured someone. We made demonstrations and were the security guards. As the security men, our job was to make sure that the enemy couldn’t infiltrate our group.

My parents were pro-independence. I started to be a pro-independence supporter in 1995, after the pro-independence supporters burned Maliana market. I didn’t like the Indonesians because many of our East Timorese brothers who had completed high school couldn’t get jobs whereas Indonesians could. Also because they kidnapped people – people ‘disappeared’. This didn’t make me feel good. Santo Antonio members were mainly students.

I first saw the militia on 4 April 1999. At first they came in small groups. They threatened my parents and then threatened me to join them. They said to my parents, “If your last son doesn’t join Dadurus Merah Putih, we will kill you.” They came to our house with machetes and Samurai swords. They said, “We fight against independence.” They forced me to join them on 28 April 1999. They also threatened many other people. I stayed in my house at night and went to the militia checkpoint everyday. They gave us Dadurus Merah Putih T-shirts and an Indonesian flag. They also gave my parents Dadurus Merah Putih T-shirts. They asked us to bring our own machetes from our houses. When they forced my parents to make me join, my father said, “It is up to my son. If he doesn’t want to join you, you can’t force him.”

I told the members of my clandestine group that I was forced to join and I gave them information about militia activities. I informed them about killings and about the burning of houses. I reported to them monthly. The militia didn’t give us anything when they came to my house. They promised us that we would be allowed to become soldiers if pro-autonomy won but I didn’t believe them. There were many women in the militia, some of them old and some of them very young. On the first days I worked only at the checkpoint. Sometimes we went to the town to make operations. While we were on operations we destroyed houses. We burned empty houses. When we went to the houses, we destroyed the houses first and then took everything outside and burned it all. We did not destroy houses with people in them, only empty houses. Our first operation was in May.

When I first joined them, we destroyed any house we found in Maliana. We had a list of names of people who supported pro-independence to target. I saw the militias beat people and kill some of these people. They captured the people whose name was on their list of CNRT supporters. When I saw them beat people I felt very sad. I saw the militia take anging gila (‘crazy dog’ pills or amphetamines). I didn’t take any of these pills. After they took the pills they became brutal. They took the pills before going on operations. The Maliana District Military Commander at the District Military Command gave the pills to them.

When we worked at the checkpoint our job was keeping guard. We kept guard for two hours at a time. We went to the post at seven o’clock in the evening and went back home the next morning at five o’clock. If we came late or fell asleep we would be dunked in water or we would have to do many somersaults. We were dunked for a while in the river because the checkpoint was close to the river. We had to guard the house where the militia leaders stayed to make sure that no one could get inside without permission.
While I was in the militia I saw them kill people one time. We were about to leave the checkpoint when two members of the militia platoon came to the commander of the platoon, saying that they had captured some people. We then went to see those people. There was an old man, his son who was a university student and some other students. When we arrived the old man said, “Good morning.” The commander answered, “Morning,” and then drew his machete and cut off the old man’s head and slashed him. After that, they took his son and tied up his hands. One of them told another to take the son to the District Military Command, but the commander didn’t agree with this plan. The commander and the others then killed him on the spot. I’m not sure how old the son was but he was over twenty. They just hacked him to death. When I saw them kill people like this I was shocked. I had to act like I hadn’t seen anything, like I wasn’t surprised, but actually I felt dizzy. After they killed the old man and his son they were very proud. They said, “Call the anti-integration people to come here.” They were not drunk but they had taken anjing gila tablets before we went to the place. After they took the pills they looked like they couldn’t control themselves. They killed the old man because they met him while on operation. They said that they killed anyone they found in the jungle because they suspected them as being Fretilin members.  

I stayed with the militia until we went to Atambua in West Timor, from April to September. In Atambua I was still active; they always called me to come to do some work for them. When we joined the militia we were trained how to use weapons. We were trained with wooden guns. They didn’t give us home-made guns. We were trained twice daily, for one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. The senior militia and East Timorese troops from the Indonesian army trained us. We were taught how to load guns. The aim of the training was to learn how to kill people. They always said, “Long live autonomy!” They also used to say, “Autonomy – Yes! Referendum – No!” They said things about UNAMET like, “UNAMET is bullshit. They’re just trying to fool us.”

In our group there were more than 10 young boys, they were around 10 years old. Sometimes they also went on the operations to destroy the houses. They also were on guard duty. We learned only bad things while we were in the militia. We didn’t learn anything useful. We learned bad things because we were only taught how to destroy houses, rape girls, beat people and kill people. They raped girls in their own houses. I didn’t see the militiamen rape the girls but they told me they had done this. They used to tell us about what they did when they went on operation. The militiamen told us very proudly how lucky they were to have raped girls and killed and eaten animals.

They didn’t give us food at the checkpoint, we ate our own food. They didn’t give any medicine when we got sick. When I was with them they never beat me. They bashed another militiaman because he went to Dili without asking their permission. I didn’t feel afraid because I was a member of a clandestine group as well as being a member of the militia. I just felt tired and depressed all the time. I always felt sad. I didn’t worry about what the militias said, that was just talk. I trusted UNAMET because what I understood from UNAMET staff was that they came to East Timor to build a new nation. They were not coming to support autonomy, or either side. That’s why I trusted them.

After the ballot, the militia operations became more intensive. More people were kidnapped and there were more killings. When the results of the vote came out (4 September 1999), the militia couldn’t believe the result. They were very angry that the result was in favour of pro-independence. They said, “Now we have more meat to eat.” ‘More meat to eat’ means more people to kill. They went on operations in the nights after the ballot, but I didn’t go with them,
because I was guarding the checkpoint. I saw the fires cover Maliana town from the hilltop when they destroyed the town after the ballot result came out. At first I thought that militiamen who had just left town were burning those houses. I felt very sad then because they were burning our hometown. The militiamen were given orders by the East Timorese troops, not by the Indonesians. The East Timorese troops pointed out the houses to be burned down. After the vote I noticed that the leaders went somewhere every morning, but I don’t know whether they went to attend meetings or not. The highest-ranking Indonesian TNI soldier who visited here was Lieutenant Sutrisno, the First Section Head of Maliana District Military Command. I didn’t attend the meeting when Sutrisno came.

I felt sad and I couldn’t sleep at nights. Now I feel better, but sometimes when I remember the past I feel very sad and afraid also. I don’t have bad dreams. We left Maliana on 25 September 1999 and I came back to East Timor on 23 December 1999. In Atambua, I had to stay with the militias and we received training at Fatubeno A camp. We were trained with wooden guns. They told us that we had to train to come back and fight in East Timor. The militia and TNI cooperated with each other fully; they always went around together. I came back to Maliana with my parents. The militia didn’t know that I had plans to return to East Timor until I came with some policemen and troops to get my things in the camp. We came back with the assistance of the office of UNHCR (the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). The Indonesian troops didn’t like us. Sometimes they even said: “You better go back to East Timor. You have come here just to give us a headache.” The Indonesian senior military officers didn’t pay the high-ranking militia well. We went to Atambua in the first place because my parents planned to move there for a while until the situation calmed down and then to return.

When the militias burned the houses and killed the people the Indonesian troops just let them do it. When we burned the houses no one from the pro-independence side tried to fight against us. The militia members were students and youth from gambling rings. Many of the militia members are still in West Timor, only a few have returned. When the referendum result was announced the Indonesian troops didn’t react badly; they just left. But the Timorese troops and the militias were very angry. We, the younger militia, got different treatment. For example the commanders always gave the older militia money to buy cigarettes and they didn’t give us any money. If someone did many bad things he would get treated well. Some of our commanders were kind. In our militia group we had four platoons. The worst job I had to do was walking around the village harassing people with a machete. The worst thing I saw was when the militia killed the old man and his son. There were many clandestine members in our group. But only my friend and I didn’t betray our clandestine group out of all the pro-independence members who joined the militia.
3.2. Fernão, Child acting as Informant

**Pseudonym:** Fernão  
**Age recruited/joined:** 17 years old  
**Age at Interview:** 18 years old  
**Armed group:** Laksaur (Eagle) Militia  
**From:** Suai Sub-district, Covalima District

### 3.2.1. Description

Fernão is muscular and short at around 150cms tall. He has almond-shaped black eyes and curly shoulder-length black hair. His skin is dark, mottled and reflects the years he has spent working as a farmer. He wears a pair of ripped faded jeans and a white T-shirt. He is quiet and answers the questions in a slow, considered way. Fernão joined the Laksaur (Eagle) militia for six months prior to the referendum in 1999 when he was 17 years old. He was born in Suai in Covalima district.

### 3.2.2. Background

In order to conduct the interview privately, Fernão was met at a picnic table on the beach in Suai. He did not want local people to identify him as having been a member of the Laksaur militia and so preferred to meet in a secluded place. His colleague explained that although he had worked for the clandestine movement in the past, the villagers in the area could still target him for revenge as a result of his militia activities. The Laksaur militia and Indonesian troops who left for West Timor in September 1999 destroyed around 90 per cent of the houses in Suai town.

The Laksaur or Eagle militia operated in Covalima district, often in concert with the Mahidi militia of Ainaro District. Between January and September 1999, the Laksaur militia forcibly recruited hundreds of youth between the ages of 14 and 25. Thousands of people from Covalima fled the intimidation and violence perpetrated by the Laksaur militia in January and March in particular. Around 6,000 people sought refuge in Suai church in January 1999 due to the operations of the Laksaur and Mahidi militia in Zumalai area and a further 1000 people after attacks by the Laksaur militia, particularly in Tilomar Sub-district. The population of displaced people in the church was to fluctuate between 2,000 and 6,000 between January and September. The Laksaur militia (along with the TNI, Brimob and police) massacred over 160 people in Suai Church on 6 September 1999 according to local witnesses and human rights organisations.

Fernão joined a clandestine pro-independence group in Suai when he was 13. He worked with them collecting information and supplies for Falintil. Later, when he was 17, the Laksaur militia forcibly recruited him. Four Laksaur militiamen came to Fernão’s house with machetes, and said that they would kill him and his whole family if he did not join the militia. He was afraid, so he joined, as did many other males under the age of 18 who he met in the militia. He was not offered any money. He refused to wear the militia T-shirt that he was given so as not to “sell his country”.

He completed months of military training with wooden guns under an East Timorese militia leader. He says that he learned slogans from the militia, but that he learned nothing useful from

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21 Seize the Moment, Amnesty International, 21 June 1999
them. Fernão feels pained and partially responsible for the capture and subsequent killing of his uncle by the military, as he had to point his uncle out. However he had no knowledge of what was going to happen to his uncle and he was very afraid. He also feels responsible for the detention of his brothers in law who were accused of being part of the ‘Sete-Sete’ (‘Seven Seven’) clandestine group. He was distressed by the way the militia took their pro-independence captives’ ‘Lulik’ (indigenous Anist religion) talismans; destroying them and making them eat them (the talismans are often small cloth bags containing sacred items such as blessed wood, crucifixes and stones). The ‘Lulik’ talisman has deep religious significance for many East Timorese and is believed to protect its wearer from harm. East Timorese people receive their ‘Lulik’ Talismans at a young age after undergoing a religious ceremony.

Fernão witnessed a brutal killing of a man in the market by the militia. He believes that the man had his throat cut with a machete because he was suspected of being pro-independence. The militia thought that this man was from Falintil because he wore his hair long. Long hair is a popular style with pro-independence supporters and many Falintil soldiers wore their hair long. He was very distressed when he recounted the burning and looting of Busalau village. He looked at the ground and spoke very slowly. Furthermore, the killing of all the animals by the militia, and the way the Indonesian troops took the carcasses to eat afterwards upset him.

He recounts a trip to Dili with a team of militia, accompanied by teams from Timor’s 13 districts, to attack Manuel Carascalão’s house in Dili. He claims that he did not take part directly but watched from the side of the house. He mentions Eurico Guterres, the leader of the Aitarak militia and vice-commander of all the militia, giving the order to attack the Carascalão house because Manuel was a “two-headed man”, or a man who had played both sides. He says that Eurico called the Laksaur militia the bravest of all the militia because they had killed many people there.

Fernão witnessed what has become known as the Dili Massacre at the Carascalão’s house. Manuel Carrascalão was a retired member of East Timor’s parliament under the Indonesian government and a former supporter of integration with Indonesia. Since the mid-1990s he became very outspoken against the human rights abuses of the Indonesian military. On 17 April, at 2:00 PM, the militia, TNI, and Brimob attacked his house. He had sheltered over 150 people who had witnessed some of the worse violence in East Timor since late 1998 from Alas, Turiscai, Ainaro, Maliana, Maubara and Liquiça. The militia from various groups attacked the house and killed many people with machetes and guns. Manuel Carrascalão was returning from a meeting with military leader Colonel Suratman, and his son and the other people were killed before he arrived home.

It is noteworthy that he describes the worst of the Laksaur militia commanders as those on the Indonesian Attorney General’s list for their involvement in serious crimes in 1999 such as Egidio Manek, Olivio Mendonça ‘Moruk’, and Olivio ‘Tatto’ Bau. Fernão also mentions the militia discussing Father Hilario’s involvement with pro-independence supporters before September. Father Hilario was targeted and subsequently killed by the militia in the Suai church massacre on 6 September 1999 where more than 150 people were killed.

Fernão came under the suspicion of the militia for telling people that they were on militia ‘death lists’ and warning them to hide. He was told that he would be killed for this and so escaped to the hills. He later heard that the militia came looking for him at his house to kill him. He says that now he still feels anxious and afraid when he remembers the killings the militia committed that he

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witnessed. When he was in the militia he felt depressed and exhausted by the violence he saw. Fernão hopes to be able to return to his farm and tend the fields soon. He worries that he will not be able to afford to send his produce to the market because of the high costs of local transport. He currently works for a humanitarian aid organisation.

3.2.3. Interview

We have four children in our family. My parents were farmers, they used to grow corn and beans, and they raised pigs and chickens. Sometimes they sold rice and animals at the market. When the Indonesians were here we had many difficulties finding food and medicines. The Indonesian military did not make any major problems for our family but they watched us constantly. One day the Indonesian troops beat up my older brother in front of our house. I saw this and it made me have very bad feelings about them. I was angry but I kept this feeling in my heart. I went to the Elementary School, but only for one year in first class. After I left school I helped my parents working in the fields. I finished school because my parents had no money to support me to go and there was no one else to help them in the fields. Most of the people in my village were farmers and our village is large. When I was small I didn’t know how to catch fish, so I wanted to become a farmer.

I joined a pro-independence clandestine group in 1994. My first job with them was to collect information and sometimes we collected some money, bought goods and collected food to give to the higher-level people in the clandestine group to send to the Falintil soldiers. I wanted to help the clandestine movement because I wanted to get independence. The higher-level clandestine leaders told us that we had to fight for independence if that was what we wanted. I did this work because I was a member of the clandestine beforehand and then I joined the Laksaur militia group. The militiamen said that if we didn’t join their group they would kill our families and they came with their weapons, machetes and Samurai swords. There were four of them. I was afraid when they came for me. These men said that if we didn’t come with them they would kill us. Since then we had to be militiamen.

I had to carry water to the militia post in the night. We used to guard the post at night to protect the commander, because he was scared somebody would try to kill him. We guarded him in the day and in the nights for a few hours – sometimes three hours and sometimes two hours. Sometimes we slept too long and the commander got angry. He did not beat us but he looked very angry. I didn’t get paid and they didn’t give me anything. Once, they wanted to give me a Laksaur T-shirt but I refused to wear it. One time they offered to pay us some money, some rice and a T-shirt but I refused them because I thought if I accept it, means I was selling my motherland. Sometimes I was asked to bring my own machete from my house. At the post they gave us food sometimes. In our group there were many young boys and old men. I didn’t see any women in our group.

They trained us with wooden guns for two hours every afternoon at the militia post. We were trained by a militia company commander, who was a teacher before. Sometimes some Indonesian troops visited us on the training. They had been involved in the training since the beginning. I didn’t learn anything useful from the training. We were not trained with real weapons. They gave us the real weapons only at night for guard duty. I didn’t carry a weapon; only the platoon commanders were given guns. When we were training they taught us many slogans like: “Long live autonomy! Long live Laksaur! Long Live Herman (the District chief and a TNI officer)!” They always told us “Autonomy is ours!” They also used to say, “Indonesia has built the houses and the roads for you; the CNRT cannot produce anything, not even matches and candles, and Xanana has nothing.” They also said, “Don’t be afraid of the
UNAMET staff. They are not made of iron.” In front of the people they asked us not to kill and beat people, but then they themselves did this out of the public’s view.

I was asked to capture my own uncle and another man from Ermera. We went there one evening and detained them the next morning. Later they killed my uncle. The Kopassus (Indonesian special forces) troops took him by car, and brought him to Nanfalus in West Timor where they killed him on 28 April 1999. They didn’t tell me anything or give us reasons why they wanted to take my uncle. I went with them because I was very afraid and I didn’t initially know whom we were going to catch. We were forced to go and I didn’t know at that time that we were going to go to take my own uncle. That was very hard for me. I felt a lot of pain because they had caught my uncle in front of me and there was nothing I could do. My uncle was a CNRT supporter. I didn’t see them kill my uncle because they took him away; I saw them tie up my uncle’s hands and legs, and take him away in a car.

I saw them capture another two men and my brothers-in-law. The militiamen told me that they were from the clandestine group Sete-Sete. When the militia captured them they took off their Lulik (sacred red cloth belts). The militia forced them to eat candles that they found in their Lulik belts because militia suspected that the candles contained their magic power. I didn’t check the men. I only watched them. They were checked in front of many people but the militias didn’t beat them. I was not sure whether those men were tortured or not because they were taken to the militia post after the militias had checked them. Later I saw them alive and I didn’t see any signs of swelling on their bodies.

When I stayed with them I had seen that some of the militia were kind but some of them were very bad. We were always punished when we came late to the weapons training or when we fell asleep while on guard duty. Some of them kicked me but they did not beat us. Once I saw militiamen slash a man’s throat with a machete in the market – in April 1999. They killed him because they suspected him of being a Falintil collaborator. They hate young men with long hair. If they find these people they beat them. No one threatened me but we had many bad commanders. Some of the TNI were very bad. When we got sick and went to the District Military Command (KODIM) for treatment some of the soldiers said, “Why don’t you go to Xanana Gusmão?”

I saw an Indonesian Captain beat my brother. I saw what happened when he beat my brother with a pistol in our house on 1 April. The authorities said that my brother was a political leader because he had run to the jungle, and they suspected him having made contact with Falintil. The militiamen talked about Father Hilario (one of the three priests who were killed in the Suai church massacre on 6 September 1999). They said, “As a priest, he shouldn’t meddle with the pro-independence people.” They said this at the militia post.

I went to Dili with the Laksaur militia group. We filled two trucks with militiamen from Suai, and on that day they killed many people. They killed some people at Manuel Carrascalão’s house. I don’t know who killed the people at Manuel’s house because I was sitting down at the side of the governor’s office after the ceremony in front. There were militia groups from 13 districts. I was really unhappy about that incident because I knew that the Indonesians were just paying the East Timorese money to kill each other.

Eurico Guterres ordered the militiamen to attack Manuel Carrascalão’s house. He said, “Let’s go and attack Manuel Carrascalão’s house because he is a two-headed man.” We slept one night on the floor at Taci-tolu bus terminal. We slept near policemen from Suai. They had about three trucks of men. When we came back from Dili I felt very bad because I didn’t realize that that day
we went to kill my brothers and friends. The militia killed Manuel Carrascalão’s son. They also killed the guards at the house. I cannot be sure if this is true or not because I didn’t see it happen. I heard that Eurico Guterres had said that Suai militiamen were very brave… that they were the bravest ones and the best killers.

I felt very depressed because they had beaten my friends and many people. It was exhausting. They didn’t give us alcoholic drinks, only cigarettes. I saw that the senior militia officers were drunk everyday. When I joined them I didn’t cry, but I felt sad. I got sick sometimes with headache and fever. We were guarding the outside of the house everyday. Sometimes they gave me medicine.

I went to Dili on 27 August to participate in the vote in Dili. I stayed there with “Fernando” (pseudonym), my brother. When I was staying with the militia in Suai I usually went to the checkpoint in the mornings for guard duty. Sometimes when we went home without telling them, they got angry because they thought we had gone to see our friends. When the TNI commanders came to the militia meetings we stayed outside, so I didn’t know what they were talking about.

One of my friends escaped from Suai, after saying that I was already in Dare (a suburb in the hills behind Dili where much of Dili’s population fled to following the post-ballot violence) when the militia attacked the people at the Suai Church. The Laksaur militia members were very bad. They burned many houses in Busadau village. I was at the militia post when they went there. In Busadau village when they were there they stole many clothes, tape recorders and many other things. They also killed many animals like pigs and buffaloes. Many times the Indonesian troops just asked the Laksaur militiamen to kill the animals, and then they would come and take the meat. I don’t know whether they went around to other districts and did this or not.

A friend of mine who had also been recruited by the Laksaur pretended that he felt sick and was going home, but secretly went to the church. Later he went to the jungle. I told him to wait and to go with me to the jungle. We escaped on 5 September. I escaped because I had worked with my brothers and friends and was pro–independence. If the militias wanted to capture someone, I would come to his house and tell him to escape as soon as possible. Then the militias began to suspect me for informing people of their activities and they thought I was under the influence of certain (pro–independence) people. But when they asked me, I denied knowing anything. A man told me that they had planned to kill me, and that they planned to kill him too. After I had already escaped, I found out that some militiamen came to my house and tried to find me to kill me. I have been very afraid since then.

Since that time, sometimes I feel scared when I remember the past. It’s very horrible to remember how the militia killed my friends in front of me.
### APPENDIX 1

#### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABRI</td>
<td>Angatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia – the Indonesian armed forces including the police force (on 1 April 1999, the police force officially separated from the armed forces, which reverted to its original name, Tentara Nasional Indonesia or the Indonesian National Army – TNI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aitarak</td>
<td>“Thorn” militia – Dili-based Militia group existent in 1999 under the command of Eurico Gutteres.</td>
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<tr>
<td>APODETI</td>
<td>Timorese Popular Democratic Association</td>
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<td>ARMUI</td>
<td>Atabae Rela Mati Untuk Integrasi – Atabae Would Die for Integration – militia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Besi Merah Putih</td>
<td>Red and White Iron militia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bolar Guling</td>
<td>youth members of gambling rings set up by older youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brimob</td>
<td>The mobile police brigade</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRTT</td>
<td>People’s Front for East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>CELFA</td>
<td>Conselho Executivo da Luta Força Armada – the Executive Council of the Armed Force of Falintil</td>
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<tr>
<td>CELFC</td>
<td>Conselho Executivo da Luta Força Clandestina – the executive Council of the Clandestine Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNRM</td>
<td>Conselho Nacional Resistencia Maubere – National Council of Maubere Resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Timorense – National Council of Timorense Resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSMFTT</td>
<td>Student Solidarity Council of East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dadurus Merah Putih</td>
<td>Hurricane Militia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distaciamento</td>
<td>Networking Group, also known as “zebras” because they operated between Indonesian military lines, like moving between the stripes on a zebra’s hide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delegação</td>
<td>Mesengers or couriers for the resistance movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETDF</td>
<td>The East Timorese Defence Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Falintil</td>
<td>For’s Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste – East Timorese National Liberation Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPDK</td>
<td>Forum Persatuan Demokrasi dan Keadilan – Forum for Unity, Democracy and Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fretilin</td>
<td>Frente Revolucionaria de Timor Leste Independiente – Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRAP</td>
<td>Falintil Reinsertion Assistance Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gada Paksi</td>
<td>Gerakan Penegak Pancasila dan Integrasi – Youth Guard to Defend Integration (set up in the mid 1990s by Lt. General Prabowo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halilintar</td>
<td>“Lightning” paramilitary group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hansip</td>
<td>Civil defence force</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>International Rescue Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamra</td>
<td>Public Security Civil Defence Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodim</td>
<td>Komando Disrik Militer – District Military Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kopassus</td>
<td>Komado Pasukan Khusus – Special Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koramil</td>
<td>Sub-district Military Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korem</td>
<td>Sub-regional Military Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laksaur</td>
<td>Eagle militia group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulik</td>
<td>the traditional East Timorese animist religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAHIDI</td>
<td>Mati Hidup Demi Integrasi – Live or die with Integration – militia group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ojetil</td>
<td>Organisacao Juventude Estudante Timor Leste – Organisation of Students and Youth of East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objlatil</td>
<td>Organisacao Popular Juventude Lorico Asuwain Timor Lorosa’e – Popular Organisation of Youth Martyrs of East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTI</td>
<td>USAID’s Office of Transitional Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAM Swakarsa</td>
<td>Community Volunteer Security Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polda</td>
<td>Regional Police Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPI</td>
<td>Pasukan Perjuangan Integrasi – Fighting Forces for Integration – militia umbrella group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renetil</td>
<td>Resistancia Nacional dos Estudantes de Timor Leste – a large student clandestine network operating in Indonesia and East Timor before 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratih</td>
<td>Trained Civilian Defence Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa’he</td>
<td>A local human rights and advocacy organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGI</td>
<td>Intelligence Task Force of Kopassus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNI</td>
<td>Tentara Nasional Indonesia or the Indonesian National Army – TNI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDT</td>
<td>Timorese Democratic Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMET</td>
<td>United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTAET</td>
<td>United Nations Transitional Authority of East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTIM</td>
<td>National Indonesian University of East Timor (Universitas Timor Timur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanra</td>
<td>People’s Resistance (Civil Defence unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yayasan HAK</td>
<td>An East Timorese human rights and advocacy NGO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Zebras”</td>
<td>see Distanciamento Delegação</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

GUIDELINES FOR CASE STUDIES
ON CHILDREN INVOLVED IN ARMED CONFLICT IN EAST ASIA PACIFIC

UNICEF EAPRO

I. PURPOSE:

UNICEF is producing a booklet about the situation and nature of children involved in hostilities and armed conflict in the East Asia and Pacific region as part of the DFID funded Emergency Preparedness project. The booklet will include, (1) a brief overview of the situation in the region; (2) background of the conflict in each of the selected countries where children or young people have recently been or are currently being used in either the government army or insurgent/guerrilla armies (Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, and the Philippines are proposed); and (3) in–depth interviews with a select number of these children. The children’s stories and voices will comprise a large part of the book. The objective of the booklet and of telling the experiences of young people is to illustrate the specific nature of “child soldiers” in the EAP region, to raise awareness of their situation, and to better identify ways to help reduce or end the involvement of children in these conflicts. How children and young people perceive this possibility is important.

II. GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS:

The following is a guideline and questionnaire for interviewing three or more young people under 18 years of age who are currently in an army, in any capacity (eg. armed combatant, courier, cook, etc). The guidelines and questions are based on a “child soldiers” research project conducted earlier by the Quaker Office for the United Nations. There are no limits to the length of the case studies.

The guideline and questionnaire are presented as a framework to provide some standardisation for the case study presentations. Conflicts in each country are different. The questionnaire has tried to take account of the different situations but it is recognised that not all questions may be relevant to a certain circumstance. Also, issues that are significant in your context may have been overlooked. Therefore, we encourage you to include additional information that you think is relevant or would assist in an outsider’s understanding of the situation that involves the person interviewed.

We will also need some background information on the conflict that involves each case study person as available. Examples of this information includes,

- How long the conflict has been ongoing,
- Who does it involve,
- Ideology or reasons for the conflict,
- How it ended (if it has),
- How large an area does it affect and whom within that area,
- Information about the involvement of children/young people in that particular conflict. What are the numbers in armed forces, with a breakdown of ages and sex.
The numbers in opposition or rebel forces may be unobtainable. However, the number of children in detention for offences related to armed activity can help indicate the numbers, sex and ages of those involved. Include whatever partial information is available, with an explanation. And when possible, please include comparative information for adults, such as the number of girls in the army comparing with the number of women.

- Is age a criterion used for children’s presence in an army or is there something else, such as height, religion?
- Numbers of child soldiers killed and injured and the types of injuries?

Some of the details mentioned in the objectives for the questions may not be answerable from the case studies, but through information you have from elsewhere. Please include this with reference to the information sources.

If a translator is needed for the interviewing, it should be somebody the interviewee can trust or who is not going to put him or her through torment again. Anecdotes and details are needed wherever possible, without making the interview itself disturbing.

Names and family details can be changed to protect anyone’s safety and rights. Wherever it is safe and possible to do, a photo of the children who are or were soldiers might be used. And only if the young person and his/her family give informed consent.

**IMPORTANT** – Persons being interviewed and any next of kin/parents who are present need to be fully informed about what the interview and information is for and how it will be used. Also, the interviewee’s name, family details and other details can be changed or kept confidential if necessary. Clearly determine what information needs to be protected. If possible, we would like to receive photos of the people being interviewed or drawings from the child/young person, but only if it is safe.

Not all questions in the questionnaire have to be asked – the interview should not be intimidating. Go with what feels best for the situation. Many of the questions will naturally lead to sub-questions that can be asked. Questions should be open-ended as much as possible to get the young person to speak for him/herself and reveal feelings – not just give short answers.

**III. OBJECTIVE OF CASE STUDY QUESTIONS :**

The following is meant as an explanation to the interviewer regarding the information we are seeking from the questionnaire needed for the in-depth case studies that will be presented in the regional document.

1. **Background/Context**
   - Describe the child’s situation and background in terms of family, economic, education, etc.

2. **Relationship to the Conflict**
   - What does the young person understand about the conflict, such as reasons for fighting, which side has the advantage.
What personal relationship does child have with the conflict, such as house burned, family robbed, interruption of schooling; loss of home; family or friends involved in an army; parent, sibling, friends killed in armed conflict or by soldiers, etc. (provide as many details as possible)

3. Reasons for Being In Army

- How many and which children become involved in armed forces, how they become involved, and what functions do they performed initially. Does this change over time.
- How and why did the child join the armed forces/groups.
- Do economic situation and gender relate to these issues.
- Does the person being interviewed have a history of problems with justice system, with family. Had he/she run away from home. This kind of information can’t always be asked directly and may require sensitive phrasing.

4. Methods of Recruitment

- Was recruitment compulsory, forced, voluntary, or induced?
- If voluntary, what were the reasons for volunteering. Are there situations where the armed groups are considered to be better off than the governmental armed forces,
- What categories of children are more vulnerable to recruitment than others. Are any categories (poor, less-educated, children separated from parents/family, certain age groups, refugees or displaced children, specific ethnic or indigenous or religious groups) targeted for recruitment and why.
- How do material benefits, ideology/religion/culture factor into the presence of young people in a military group.

5. Training

- Are the young people given any military training – informally or formally
- Are they given much ideology, any kind of brainwashing.

6. Duties

- Do activities performed vary according to age, sex, method of recruitment, type of armed forces, duration of service.
- Are girls expected/forced/encouraged to provide sexual services. Does this vary with their age or other functions.
- These are to help as reminders of what they might have done:
  - collecting, preparing, cooking, serving food
  - cleaning quarters, digging trenches, construction, repairing roads
  - office work, messengering information
  - portering
  - doing routine patrol trips
  - medic
  - manning checkpoints
  - acting as a bodyguard
  - fighting in the front-line
  - planting landmines
- executing suspected insurgents/spies/traitors/enemies
- capturing villagers for porter duty and other forced labour
- sentry duty and guarding of prisoners
- labour on infrastructure, such as building roads
- carrying rations
- acting as spies or informants
- scouting and reconnaissance
- sex acts

7. Treatment

- Address similarities and differences between children and adults both in treatment and in the effects of their experiences. As much as possible, can the person being interviewed give a perspective on the numbers of child soldiers killed and injured and the types of injuries.
- What is the relationship between the younger soldiers with commanding officers and other soldiers.
- How much abuse occurs. Details: frequency, nature, severity.
- What is the nature of threats and intimidation.
- Are families involved in any way – cooking, caring for the wounded.
- What punishments are given for disobedience.
- Are young people subjected to toughening up procedures.
- What affects the duration of service in the army. Do the tasks they perform and the treatment they receive vary with the duration of the service.
- How would child soldiers be treated if captured. Are they treated as prisoners of war, provided special treatment, such as education; are they returned to their families, recruited into the capturing force...

8. Basic Needs
Self explanatory, though looking for details on conditions.

9. Healthcare
Self explanatory, though again, looking for a details on conditions.

10. Mental State

- What is the incidence of suicide, depression. How much is the person troubled or living with frightening or disturbing memories, and what details are possible.
- If you know of incidents, such as human wave attacks where young soldiers attack a place as if on a suicide or kamakaze mission, perhaps you can describe and ask if the child has ever seen this, been part of it and either way, ask why he thinks those people did it.

At the end of the interview, the interviewer can ask if there is anything else that the young person wants to talk about or tell, in case there is something not covered by the questions.

Thank you.
APPENDIX 3

Questionnaire for Children involved in Armed Conflict

UNICEF EAPRO

Name, or safe pseudonym:
Group:
Battalion or unit:
Rank:

A. BACKGROUND

1. How old are you and where are you from?
2. Tell us about your family? How many brothers and sisters? What jobs do they have?
How old are your parents?
3. Does your family know where you are – do you have contact with them? (If not, where is your family?).
4. Did you go to school? What level/standard did you complete?
5. Would you describe the house you lived in as well as the your village (or neighborhood). How many people in your village or neighborhood? What do most people do to earn money? Are/were there any general problems for the community?
6. What would you like to do if you were not in the army?
7. What do you think about your future?

B. ABOUT THE CONFLICT

1. Who is your army fighting against and why? How long has it been going on?
2. What did your commanders tell you about them?
3. What does your family say about the conflict?

C. REASONS FOR BEING IN ARMY

1. When, how and why did you join the army? Did you become a soldier voluntarily?
2. How old were you when you joined?
3. Were you recruited from school? How?
4. How long have you been or were you with the army?
5. Was there ever fighting near your home? If so, can you describe it?
6. How close did the fighting ever get around where you live?
7. How did it make you feel then?
8. Did your family receive any benefits because you became a soldier?
9. Do you know other children/young people who also joined? Why?
10. Are there many orphans? Many girls? How are they treated and what kind of duties do they have?
11. If the person has been demobilised, what were for the reasons for demobilisation?
D. TRAINING
1. Have you been given any training? If yes, describe the training you received. How long was the training?
2. Will any skills you learned be useful in civilian life?
3. Did you/your continue with your schooling while in the army?
4. Did they teach you about the Geneva Conventions? Did you learn how to treat enemy soldiers?
5. Have you ever heard of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?
6. Do you know what human rights are? Explain, if possible.
7. Have you ever received any instruction about human rights? If so, explain.

E. DUTIES
1. What jobs have you done since joining the army?
2. Did you find any job too difficult? Explain.
3. Which job were you best at?
4. Did you ever have to fight during combat? How many times? Can you describe what happened?

F. TREATMENT
1. How do officers treat the soldiers?
2. How do older soldiers treat you?
3. Has there been anyone who was especially helpful or nice?
4. Has there been anyone who was especially hurtful or mean?
5. Were you ever beaten or tortured?
6. Are there some kinds of injuries that child soldiers receive more than adults?
7. Do more children die than adult soldiers?
8. How do you see other young soldiers coping when having killed someone or seen someone killed?
9. Have you ever killed anyone? Would you mind to talk about what happened?
10. Have you ever seen someone killed? Would you talk about what happened?
11. When were you scared?
12. In a day, how many hours are you working?
13. When you’re not working, what are you allowed to do?
14. If you fell asleep while on a certain job or you didn’t show up or you didn’t do something well, how would you be treated?
15. How often would that happen?
16. Are there other penalties or threats that you were told about since joining the army?
17. What would be the penalty for defecting?
18. Have you seen other officers/soldiers being unfair or abusive toward younger soldiers? Would you describe what happened.
19. Have you ever cried since being in the army?
20. What would happen if an older soldier/officer saw you crying?
G. BASIC NEEDS

1. What do they feed you? Is it enough?
2. What clothing were you given at first? Has it been sufficient?
3. What shoes were you given? If they are damaged, is it easy to get another pair?
4. Where do you sleep, bathe? What are the conditions – clean, comfortable?
5. Do they provide you with toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc?
6. Are you being paid? How much, how often?
7. What provisions or benefits are available if/when you are/were demobilized or leave the army?

H. HEALTH CARE

1. What are the usual illnesses/injuries?
2. Have you been sick?
3. How were treated?
4. Did you see a doctor?
5. What medicines were given to you?
6. If there were no medicines/doctor for free, could you have had it for a fee?
7. Are there any rules regarding the release of medicines, when available? Are there different medicines for different types of soldiers?
8. How were soldiers who were seriously injured on the battlefield treated?
9. If soldiers were only moderately injured, but couldn’t walk, how would they be treated?

I. MENTAL STATE

1. Did the other child soldiers have bad dreams or trouble sleeping?
2. Do you have bad dreams or trouble sleeping? How often and would you describe.
3. Did other child soldiers get depressed or sad when you were in the army? Why?
4. Did you get depressed or sad when you were in the army?
5. Do you know of soldiers, especially younger ones, who have killed themselves? Why did they do it?
6. Have you ever thought of doing it? When and why?
7. Have you even been offered any drugs or alcohol before fighting?
8. Are there many soldiers who use drugs or alcohol generally? Describe what you know about the use of drugs or alcohol within the army?
9. What do you think about young people as soldiers?
10. How old do you think someone should be before he joins or is forced to be in an army?

END.
APPENDIX 4: PRO-INDEPENDENCE STRUCTURE

Xanana Gusmao
President of CNRT
Commander of FALINTIL

Taur Matan Ruak
Advisory Committee

Region I
Distaciamento Delegacion “Zebra”
Estafeta
Clandestine Youth in Villages and Towns

Region II
Distaciamento Delegacion “Zebra”
Estafeta
Clandestine Youth in Villages and Towns

Region III
Distaciamento Delegacion “Zebra”
Estafeta
Clandestine Youth in Villages and Towns

Region IV
Distaciamento Delegacion “Zebra”
Estafeta
Clandestine Youth in Villages and Towns
APPENDIX 5: PRO-AUTONOMY STRUCTURE

Jakarta strategists
→
Indonesian military and intelligence units
→
Provincial administration Dili
→
Pro-integrationist political parties
→
Provincial administrations

Joao Tavares
Commander

Eurico Guterres
Vice Commander

-sector A
Joanico Belo

Paramilitary:
• Team Alpha
• Team Makikut
• Team Saka
• Team Sera

Militias:
• Team 59/75
• Mahadomi

-sector B
Eurico Guterres

Militias:
• Aitarak
• Naga Merah Putih
• Darah Merah Putih
• Besi Merah Putih

-sector C
Cancio de Carvalho

Militias:
• Mahidi
• Laksaur
• Ahi
• Ablai

-sector D
Joao Tavares

Paramilitary:
• Halilintar

Militias:
• Dadurus
• Armui
• Sakunar
• Hametin Merah Putih
• Hadomi Merah Putih
APPENDIX 6: MAP OF EAST TIMOR