

## ETAN *Action Alert*

# Bush Must Not Use Tsunami to Strengthen Indonesian Military Congress Must Keep Restrictions on U.S.-Indonesia Military Assistance

The Pentagon and the Indonesian government are using the tragic tsunami that struck Aceh to call for U.S. support – including weapons and training -- for Indonesia's brutal military. While in Jakarta recently, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said "I think we need to reconsider a bit where we are at this point in history" in military relations. Indonesia's Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono said "We look forward to improving our military to military relations in the next couple of years." Together with Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, Wolfowitz argues that links would help build democracy in Indonesia. History shows the opposite.

Please act now. **Phone or fax your Representative and Senators. Tell them to use their voice and vote in Congress to:**

- **Support** renewal and strengthening of the restrictions on International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programs for Indonesia in the annual Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. The Indonesian military (TNI) continues to strongly resist reform, evade accountability for human rights violations, and commit atrocious abuses of civilians throughout Indonesia. The tsunami has not changed this record. The TNI has manipulated aid in discriminatory ways and continued military operations -- killing more than 120 Acehnese, most of them civilians -- since the tsunami.
- **Oppose** any new U.S. programs for the Indonesian military or other attempts to bypass existing Congressional restrictions on U.S. military enaadement.

Phone calls and faxes are more effective than emails. The congressional switchboard is 202-224-3121 (ask for the office of your Senator or Representative), or check <http://www.congress.org> for direct phone numbers, fax numbers or other contact information. Ask to speak with the staff member who handles foreign affairs. *Every call makes a difference, so please contact your members of Congress today!*

Please let us know if you have contacted Congress and any response received. Send updates to [john@etan.org](mailto:john@etan.org).

For more information, see ETAN's website, [www.etan.org](http://www.etan.org), or contact ETAN, 718-596-7668; fax: 718-222-4097; [etan@etan.org](mailto:etan@etan.org).

### Sample Letter

Dear Senator or Representative,

I am writing to oppose U.S. support for the Indonesian military. I am disturbed that the administration and Indonesia are using the tragic tsunami that struck Aceh as an excuse for increased U.S. assistance to Indonesia's brutal military. Since May 2003, Indonesia's military has intensified its decades-long repression in Aceh, committing numerous human rights violations and taking hundreds of civilian lives.

I urge you to work to renew and strengthen restrictions on International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programs for Indonesia in the annual Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. The Indonesian military continues to strongly resist reform, evade accountability for past human rights violations, and commit atrocious human rights violations throughout Indonesia. The tsunami has not changed this behavior.

I also urge you to oppose any attempts by the Administration to bypass existing Congressional restrictions on U.S. engagement with the Indonesian military through new or existing programs. This would violate the spirit of the law and would hinder democracy-building, respect for human rights and reconstruction in Indonesia.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

NAME , ADDRESS, CITY, STATE ZIP

## Background on U.S. Military Assistance to Indonesia

Congress has the final word on U.S. training and weapons sales to the Indonesian military. Congress first restricted Indonesia from receiving International Military Education and Training (IMET) - which brings foreign military officers to the U.S. for training - in response to the November 12, 1991, Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor by Indonesian troops wielding U.S.-supplied M-16 rifles. All military ties with Indonesia were severed in September 1999, as the Indonesian military and its militia proxies destroyed East Timor.

Last November, Congress again banned foreign military financing (FMF) and export licenses for lethal weapons for Indonesia until certain conditions are met, including justice for human rights violations in East Timor, Aceh and elsewhere. Congress continues to bar IMET until the State Department determines that Indonesia's armed forces and government are cooperating with the FBI's investigation into the 2002 murders of Indonesian and U.S. citizens in West Papua. That investigation remains stalled.

Secretary of State Colin Powell recently offered Indonesia spare parts for C-130 military transport planes. Although Indonesia has been allowed to buy these parts since 2000 and received a license to do so in 2002, Indonesian officials have repeatedly misrepresented their availability in an effort to press the U.S. to remove all restrictions on weapons sales to Indonesia. Secretary Powell asked Indonesia 'not [to] use them in a way not intended.' However, the Indonesian military (TNI) has regularly used U.S. weapons for repressive operations in East Timor, Aceh, West Papua, and other areas where civilians were regularly targeted.

Aceh, on the northern tip of the island of Sumatra, bore the brunt of the tsunami, with more than three-quarters of the casualties worldwide. It is also the site of one of Asia's longest-running wars. For three decades, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) has fought for independence from Indonesia. Indonesia's response has been brutal repression, mainly targeting civilians. Support in Aceh for independence from Indonesia is widespread and growing, because of the brutality of Indonesian security forces. Many Acehnese also want a fair share of Aceh's natural resource wealth.

On December 2002, an internationally-brokered cease-fire was signed between Indonesia and GAM, but it collapsed on May 2003 when then Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri declared martial law in Aceh and launched Indonesia's largest military operation since their 1975 invasion of East Timor. Aceh's status was changed to "civil emergency" one year later, but the TNI remains in charge and the reality on the ground has not changed. Hercules C-130 military transports, OV-10 Broncos, F-16 fighters, and other U.S. equipment have been used during military operations in Aceh.

Even in the midst of the tsunami tragedy in Aceh, there are many reports of abuse of humanitarian assistance by the Indonesian military, including withholding food and other relief from civilians who lack proper identification or are alleged to support independence. The Indonesian military has said it will require soldiers to accompany international aid workers outside the main cities, although there is no security threat. The military and government have also brought jihadist and other militia to Aceh, a classic repressive tactic used with deadly results in East Timor in 1999.

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