

United Timorese NGOs calls for an international ad hoc tribunal

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During a seminar on justice for East Timor on 16 October 2001, all participating Timorese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) unanimously called for the establishment of an international ad hoc tribunal with the jurisdiction to try international crimes committed after the Indonesian invasion in 1975. The seminar named "Justice and Accountability in East Timor: International Tribunal and other options", gave the participants an introduction into the current developments of the East Timorese legal system, the establishment of an ad hoc human rights court in Indonesia as well as analysis of the different perspectives of an international ad hoc tribunal.

The conclusions of the working groups all highlighted the necessity of bringing the perpetrators of international criminal law to justice, and in particular to hold Indonesian military officers accountable. All NGOs emphasized the need to bring justice to the victims, to avoid further human rights violations in Indonesia and the responsibility of the international community to try crimes against humanity committed during an Indonesian occupation which was never legally recognized by the United Nations.

The organizations all confirmed their commitment to conduct a coordinated campaign for justice and accountability both on a local, national and international level. Several groups were established to draft resolutions based upon the conclusions of the seminar.

Participants from international NGOs and international support groups expressed their continued support to representative views of the East Timorese civil society. They further highlighted the responsibility of Indonesia to cooperate with international efforts of bringing the perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice.

All major Timorese NGOs working on justice related issues were present at the seminar. Similar views have earlier been expressed by the now dissolved National Council and by all political parties during the recent election campaign in East Timor.