

Women
Surviving Atrocities
in the Absence
of Justice



ENDURING
impunity



ENDURING
impunity



Women
Surviving Atrocities
in the Absence
of Justice



ENDURING IMPUNITY

Women Surviving Atrocities in the Absence of Justice

Edition

First, October 2015

Authors

Galuh Wandita, Agustina Amtaran, Ah Hkam, Angela, Angela Martin, Ani Sipa, Baihajar Tualeka, Celestina de Almeida, Christina Sumarmiyati, Hkang Seng Pan, Indah Radja, Karen Campbell-Nelson, Mai Ja, Manuela Pereira, Matheos Viktor Messakh, Mohammad Noor Romadlon, Myint Daw Thuzar Tin, Natalia de Jesus, Naw Cynthia Win, Naw Hpaw Shee Wah, Naw Khin Pyu Myint, Naw Noe Lah, Nuela Labranche, Nurjamaliah, Paoina Ngefak Bara Pa, Pipit Ambarmirah, Radhiah, Samsidar, Sorang Saragih, Sudarsini, Tati Krisnawaty, Tegan Molony, and Zandra Mambrasar

Editors

Dodi Yuniar and Matt Easton

Photography

Documentation of research team, Anne-Cécile Esteve, and Selviana Yolanda

Cover Photo

Anne-Cécile Esteve for AJAR (2014)

Design

Ellena Ekarahendy and Janu Wibowo

Infographic

John Patrick Kelleher

ISBN

978-602-72951-5-5

About Asia Justice and Rights

Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) is a non-profit organization based in Jakarta, Indonesia, working to strengthen accountability and respect for human rights in the Asia Pacific region. AJAR focuses its work in countries attempting to build a stable democratic base following prolonged conflict, dictatorships, and authoritarian regimes. AJAR believes that peace and democracy can only be sustained if impunity, corruption, and human rights violations are addressed. AJAR seeks to empower those working to end human rights violations and impunity by increasing the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to be successful. For more information, visit <http://asia-ajar.org/>.



ENDURING *impunity*



Women
Surviving Atrocities
in the Absence
of Justice



“The most authentic thing about us
is our capacity to create, to overcome,
to endure, to transform, to love and
to be greater than our suffering.”

iv

— BEN OKRI

Endure

- 1 to suffer (something painful or difficult) patiently
- 2 to remain in existence; last.

Oxford Dictionary

Foreword

As conflicts subside, governments are quick to shift their focus away from the many issues left behind, in particular demands for justice raised by victims of human rights violations. Civil society's resolve also falters, as time goes by and resources diminish. We have seen this take place in Indonesia, and in other countries in the region.

This book forges a new way to speak about our unfinished business, presenting the voices of 140 women survivors of torture and other forms of gender-based violence from Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Myanmar. Together with a handbook on participatory research, the two publications provide a long-awaited innovation. The books present a new approach and new knowledge about how women experience impunity in conflict and post-conflict settings in Southeast Asia. Through the stories of survivors, we see the vicious relationship between violence and poverty. To counter this spiral of victimization, the handbook offers a collection of activities to “unlearn” the practices together with survivors, that nurture impunity.

As a national mechanism with the double mandate to eliminate violence against women and uphold women's human rights, the Commission on the Elimination of Violence against Women (hereafter *Komnas Perempuan*) believes that this book is an important contribution that should be adopted by social movements. We must find a better way to work with women survivors, to improve how we communicate with them and, in turn, improve the way we work with government and policy makers.

In Indonesia, *Komnas Perempuan* has taken this as an opportunity to link those working with women survivors of conflict to civil society groups working to provide services to victims of violence, mainly domestic violence. We believe it is time to break out of our narrow boxes, and consolidate the movements fighting against impunity for violence against women in time of war and peace. Together we will be able to strengthen our approaches to advocate for justice, truth and healing.

Women survivors in Indonesia share many similarities with our sisters in Timor-Leste. The crimes perpetrated against them, and the impunity and neglect they endure are products of our shared past. From Myanmar, we hear the stories that remind us of our own struggles. We must work together to unravel a legacy of violence in order to build our common future, a future free from violence.

The atrocities experienced by these women provide a challenge to us and humanity. Sisters in Asia, let us rise up to this challenge.

Azriana
Chairperson
***Komnas Perempuan*, Indonesia**

Acknowledgements

A group of friends, fellow travellers in a long journey to deal with the “human collateral” of conflict, came together to forge a new approach to working with women survivors.

This group of eight women — myself (Galuh Wandita), Samsidar, Tati Krisnawaty, Manuela Pereira, Zandra Mambrasar, Bai Tualeka, Christina Sumarmiyati, and Karen Campbell-Nelson — spearheaded this project. Each of us has been shaped and scarred by our own life journeys, from Aceh to East Timor to Papua, and within Indonesia’s turbulent history from 1965 to the heady days of reformation in 1998.

Armed only with our wits and imagination to assist women affected by war, we nurtured friendships among ourselves and with survivors across war zones and political transitions, through triumphs and disappointments. In a field with many short-term projects and missions, we continued to work in these contexts long after the fray had subsided. We fostered a long-term relationship with many of the women survivors of violence. Some of them we knew when they were young, and now, almost two decades later, we know their struggles as they have grown older and as we grow older and wiser alongside them.

In a short time frame of ten years or so we moved from dodging bullets during events covered closely by the international media, (1999 was a key year for many of us) to being women activists seen as stuck in the past. Women survivors became mostly invisible, and their plight unpopular. Governments, NGOs and international aid agencies had moved on. And yet, we were still connected to the women survivors, some of them spiraling down into a cycle of poverty and discrimination.

This book, and its companion piece “Unlearning Impunity: A Guide to Understanding and Action for Women Survivors,” were born from a commitment to find a way to work together with these forgotten women. We know they are resilient, and continue to find ways to survive in the face of difficult challenges. They outlasted their perpetrators, but their society has mostly left them behind. We wanted to find a way to connect their past and our future, not to dwell on the painful stories of the past, but to acknowledge the women’s history and find new energy for change.

From the beginning, we wanted to create a participatory, life-affirming process that would produce a visual result - a book that could reach out to a diverse group of readers: grassroots women, policy makers, academics and ordinary women whose lives have not been touched by conflict. Having seen the shortcomings of many transitional justice efforts, we wanted to carry out not just documentation, but also healing, advocacy, empowerment, and solidarity building. The very act of listening to and documenting violations should be transformative, so that women survivors become active agents of change, and not simply objects of research.

As we set out to conduct our research, a younger generation and a handful of women survivors from Indonesia and Timor-Leste joined us. Six months later, women from Myanmar’s conflict zones and former political prisoners in Yangon, many recently released from prison, joined in this effort. In the end we had 38 women and 1 man as part of our research team.

A note on authorship. Although I was the main person who conceived the project, chased down the resources to support this work, and shamelessly recruited people to help during the many phases of the project, it was a collective effort to carry out the work. The field researchers took on difficult terrain, bad weather, indifference and denial. The team in Kachin State, Myanmar, had to deal with the resurgence of fighting. Some women political prisoners experienced new violence during the time



Members of the research team from Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Myanmar.

of this research. In Timor-Leste, many of the women survivors who facilitated the research were initially mocked by their peers, though they slowly gained confidence. In Indonesia, one elderly survivor rode on the back of motorcycle taxis with crutches dangling by her side to attend our meetings.

Our participatory research challenged the notion of ownership of knowledge. Who has claim to this knowledge? The person who lived and shared her experience, the person who facilitated the process to share that information, or the person who wrote the final product? We took the view that it took a village to write this book, therefore the authorship of this book is a collective one. However, the mistakes and shortcomings are mine alone.

Our *collective authorship* was derived from our various tasks, adjusted to each phase of the research. **Lead researchers:** Galuh Wandita, Samsidar, Tati Krisnawaty, Manuela Pereira, Zandra Mambrasar, Bai Tualeka, Christina Sumarmiyati, Laetitia Bonnet and Sorang Saragih. Our **field research teams** on the front line, faced and overcame many challenges:

Indonesia: Radhiah, Nurjamaliah (Aceh); Pipit Ambarmirah, Mohamad Noor Romadlon (Yogyakarta); Paoina Ngefak Bara Pa, Agustina Amtaran, Indah Radja (Kupang); Sudarsini (Buru); Ani Sipa (Papua). Atikah Nuraini helped strengthen the participatory tools.

Timor-Leste: Celestina de Almeida, Natalia de Jesus, Felismina dos Santos da Conceição, Maria de Fatima, Maria Imaculada, Ana Paula Soares Ximenes, Alda Baptista Barros, Margarida Pereira, Teresinha Soares Cardoso.

Myanmar: Hkawng Seng Pan (AJAR), Naw Khin Pyu, Myint Daw Thuzar Tin (WON); Mai Ja, Angela, Ah Hkam (KWAT); Naw Cynthia Win, Naw Hpaw Shee Wah, Naw Noe Lah (KWEK).

Lead writers: Galuh Wandita, Karen Campbell-Nelson, Tegan Molony, Laetitia Bonnet, Angela Martin (English version); Samsidar, Tati Krisnawaty, Manuela Pereira, Zandra Mambrasar, Bai Tualeka, Mohamad Noor Romadlon, and Sorang Saragih (Indonesian version).

We need to thank many people who supported us on this journey. A big thanks to Rosalia Sciortino (formerly IDRC) and Navsharan Singh (IDRC) who put faith in this project and our capacity to deliver! Indonesia's *Komnas Perempuan* backed our work in Indonesia, providing a bridge to government agencies and service providers for women victims of violence. We brought in other women who shared their expertise and passion. Ria Papermoon helped create a process for survivors to tell their stories through puppet theater. Anne-Cecile Esteve captured the research process in photos and film. Emily Harwell fine-tuned the tools for understanding the social and economic impact of conflict, and produced some early findings on those issues. Alex Scrivner helped piece together stories into early drafts. Matheos Messakh provided inputs on the historical context of the conflicts in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The Petitenget Support Group helped organize events to launch the film and book, providing sustenance when the spirit was weak. And finally, Matt Easton and Dodi Yuniar helped pull the book into shape, with their editorial skills, endurance and encouraging words.

AJAR would like to thank the British Embassy in Jakarta, the European Union, IDRC, and Ford Foundation for the support for this initiative. Without their contributions, we could not reach out to the 140 women whose lives and struggles continue to inspire us. However, our deepest heartfelt gratitude is to the women survivors. Without their courage and generosity, there would only be silence.

Galuh Wandita

Asia Justice and Rights

Table of Contents

Foreword	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Acronyms	xi
Chapter 1 — Our Starting Point	1
Chapter 2 — Unlearning Impunity	8
Chapter 3 — Indonesia: An Unaccounted History of Violence	21
Chapter 4 — Grandmothers in Yogyakarta Stand Up for Truth and Truth and Justice	28
Chapter 5 — Buru: From Prison Island to Religious Conflict	55
Chapter 6 — Kupang: A Secret Violence	75
Chapter 7 — Papua: A Constant Fear	87
Chapter 8 — Aceh: An Unsettled Peace	105
Chapter 9 — Women Lost in Time and Space	135
Chapter 10 — Timor-Leste: Vanishing Women Victims	159
Chapter 11 — Marabia: Three Decades of Pain and Loss	167
Chapter 12 — Baucau: Torture Centers All Around Us	184
Chapter 13 — Ainaro: Ferocious Mountains Resilient Spirit	203
Chapter 14 — Bobonaro: On the Border of Grief and Hope	234
Chapter 15 — Myanmar: In Between Change and Stagnancy	263
Chapter 16 — Kachin Women: Surviving Conflict and Violence	267
Chapter 17 — Karen Women: The Impact of Forty Years of Displacement	290
Chapter 18 — Imprisoned for Their Belief in Social Justice	307
Chapter 19 — Key Findings and Recommendations	334



Acronyms

ACBIT

Asosiasaun Chega Ba Ita

ACWC

ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children

AICHR

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights

AJAR

Asia Justice and Rights

APODETI

Timor People's Democratic Association (*Associação Popular Democrática Timorese*)

ASEAN

Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Babinsa

Village Guidance *Non-Commissioned Military Officer* (*Bintara Pembina Desa*)

BTI

Indonesian Farmer's Front (*Barisan Tani Indonesia*)

CAVR

Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation (*Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste*)

CGMI

Unified Movement of Students of Indonesia (*Consentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia*)

CPM

Military Police (*Corps Polisi Militer*)

DOM

Military Operation Area (*Daerah Operasi Militer*)

ELSHAM PAPUA

Institute of Human Rights Studies and Advocacy in Papua (*Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi HAM Papua*)

FOKUPERS

Women's Communication Forum (*Forum Komunikasi Perempuan*)

FRETILIN

Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente*)

G30S

30 September Movement (*Gerakan 30 September 1965*)

GAM

Aceh Freedom Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*)

GERWANI

Indonesian Women's Movement (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*)

HANSIP

Civil Defense Force (*Organisasi Pertahanan Sipil*)

ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

IDP

Internally Displaced Person

IDRC

International Development Research Centre

INREHAB

Installation and Rehabilitation (*Instalasi dan Rehabilitasi*)

INTERFET

International Force for East Timor

JPIT

Eastern Indonesia Women's Network
(*Jaringan Perempuan Indonesia Timur*)

KIA

Kachin Independence Army

KIO

Kachin Independence Organization

KIPPER

Women in Action (*Kiprah Perempuan*)

KKPK

Coalition for Justice and Truth:
Indonesia (*Koalisi Keadilan dan
Pengungkapan Kebenaran*)

KNPI

Indonesian National Youth Council
(*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia*)

KNU

Karen National Union

KODIM

District Military Command (Komando
Distrik Militer)

KOMNAS PEREMPUAN

National Commission on Violence
Against Women (*Komisi Nasional Anti
Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan*)

KORAMIL

Sub-district Military Command
(*Komando Rayon Militer*)

KOREM

Sub-regional Military Command
(*Komando Resort Militer*)

KPTKA

Presidential Commission for the
Investigation of Violence in Aceh
(*Komisi Independen Pengusutan Tindak
Kekerasan di Aceh*)

KTP

National identity Card (*Kartu Tanda
Penduduk*)

KWAT

Kachin Women Association Thailand

KWEG

Karen Women Empowerment Group

LAPPAN

Circle for Empowerment of Women and
Children (*Lingkar Pemberdayaan
Perempuan dan Anak*)

LBH APIK

APIK Women's Legal Aid (*Lembaga
Bantuan Hukum APIK*)

LEKRA

Institute of People's Culture (*Lembaga
Kebudayaan Rakyat*)

MAHIDI

Dead or Alive with Indonesia (*Mati
Hidup dengan Indonesia*)

MRP

Papuan People's Council (*Majelis
Rakyat Papua*)

MSS

Ministry of Social Solidarity

NGO

Non-Governmental Organization

NLD

National League for Democracy

NTT

East Nusa Tenggara (*Nusa Tenggara
Timur*)

OPM

Papua Freedom Organization
(*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*)

PEPERA

The Act of 'Free Choice' (*Penentuan
Pendapat Rakyat*)

PJKA

National Railway Company (*Perusahaan
Jawatan Kereta Api*)

PKI

Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai
Komunis Indonesia*)

PKK

Government's Family Welfare Organization (*Program Kesejahteraan Keluarga*)

RESPEK

Community Development Fund (*Rencana Strategis Pembangunan Kampung*)

SGI

Joint Intelligence Task Force (*Satuan Gabungan Intelijen*)

SOBSI

All-Indonesia Central Workers' Organization (*Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia*)

SRPIT

Chinese Indonesia People's School for Change (*Sekolah Rakyat Perubahan Indonesia Tionghoa*)

STP CAVR

The Post-CAVR Technical Secretariat (*Secretariado Técnico Pos-CAVR*)

OPMT

Timorese Women's Populist Organization (*Organização Popular de Mulheres Timor*)

TAPOL

Political Prisoner (*Tahanan Politik*)

TBO

Operations Assistant (*Tenaga Bantuan Operasi*)

TNI

Indonesian National Army (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*)

UDT

Timorese Democratic Union (*União Democrática Timorese*)

UN

United Nations

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

UNPAZ

Universidade Da Paz

UNSCR

United Nations Security Council Resolution

UNTAET

United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

USDP

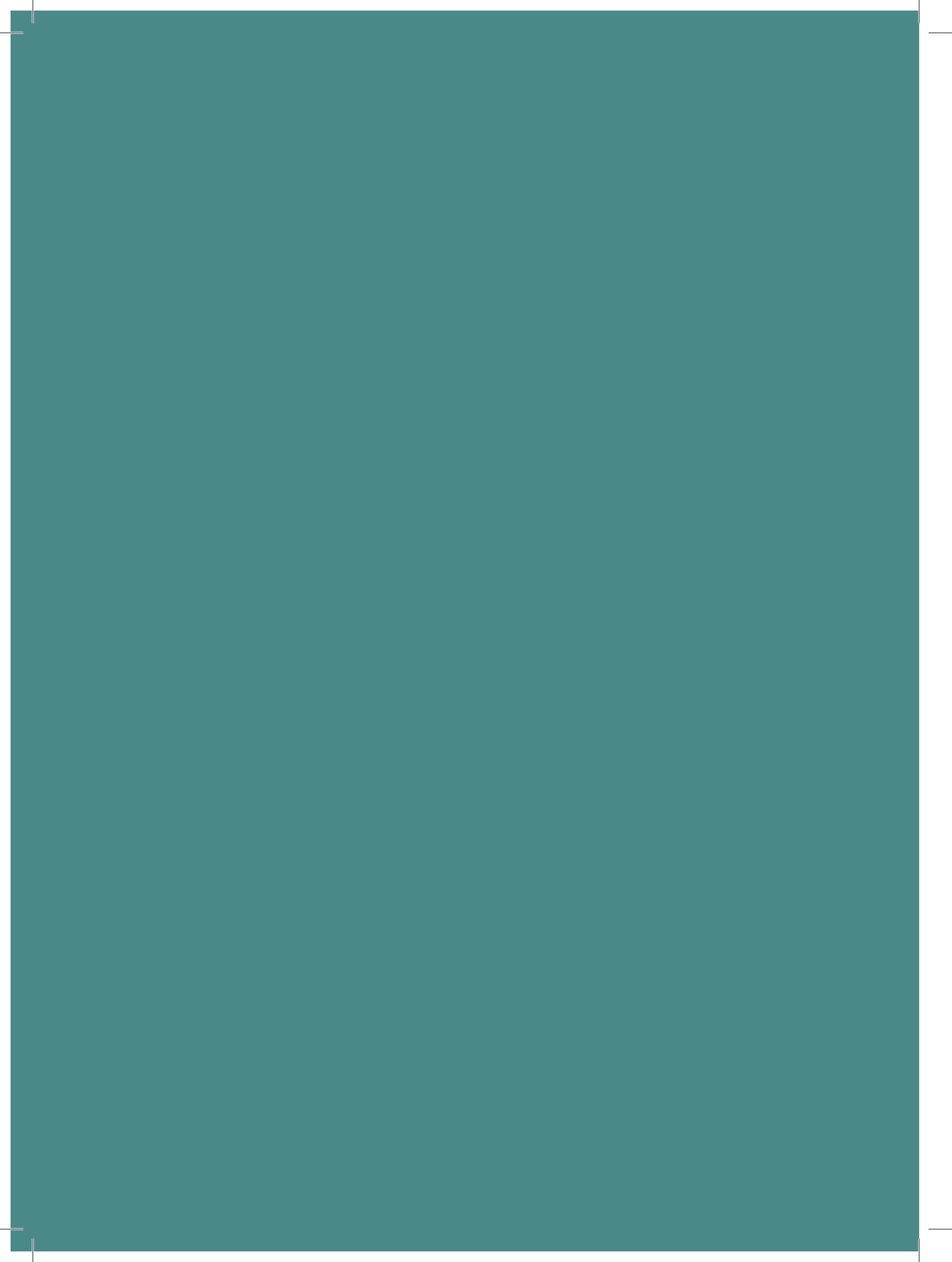
Union Solidarity and Development Party

WON

Women's Organizations Network of Myanmar

WPDN

Women Peace and Democracy Network



Chapter 1

Our Starting Point



Angela, a Timorese woman whose courage and determination led to a conviction of rape as crimes against humanity in the UN serious crimes court in 2003.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, Angela was a confident young woman of 24 whose eyes flickered with passion and resolve despite her trauma. She had broken the silence about her abduction and rape at the hands of a militia under the control of Indonesia's military. Months after the arrival of peacekeepers, her courage led to a UN investigation, and later a groundbreaking conviction of rape as a crime against humanity in a court established by the UN and the Timorese government.

But this victory has been bittersweet for her. In the end, scrutiny and ridicule shaped her life more than the 2003 verdict. She was not even informed of the court's decision for two years, and when the perpetrator Johni Marques was pardoned in 2008, she was resigned.

Now 40, Angela looks tired, her sunburned skin stretched across a thin frame. An undiagnosed illness has caused her to lose weight. She was bedridden for months, and now has just enough strength to get on the back of a motorbike taxi for a three-hour ride to the nearest town. She has aged beyond her years, but carries herself with dignity. When she smiles, her natural beauty reemerges.

As a survivor of rape, her chances of marrying well were not good. In 2004 she married a man who already had a wife. She remembers, "A lot of people hated me when I married him. His wife reported me to the police." But her husband is kind to her. She says he consoles her, urging her not to think about what took place, and she has built a modest life with him:

Now, I live from working in our garden with my husband. We trade our corn for rice to cook for the children... We encourage our children to go to school. When there is a government labour project that pays three dollars [a day] we work to buy food. Whether the state cares [for me] or not, makes no difference to me. I am only patient.

Angela's story should have been celebrated as a rare success story, the only successful conviction of rape as a crime against humanity in the last decade.¹ But even in this rare positive example, the conviction did not benefit her, while the judgment of neighbors and community members has overshadowed her life. Impunity often takes on a cultural mantle that punishes and silences those who speak out, while their social and economic needs are overlooked.

We began our research cognizant of three issues that needed attention. We realized: 1) that women's experience of specific forms of violations suppresses their voice and limits their resources; 2) that efforts around justice often do not consider local power structures that entrench impunity; and 3) that the violations of social economic rights that accompany acts of violence ensnare women in poverty that nurtures impunity.

Nu Tawng woman victim from Kachin State, Myanmar, holding a picture of her daughter who was allegedly captured, brutally gang-raped and killed by Burmese soldiers.



SILENCED BY CULTURE, TIED DOWN BY POVERTY

The types of violations that women experience are often shrouded by shame, further silencing them and contributing to the chokehold of impunity. Two violations stand out for their long-term impact: sexual violence and displacement.

From the outset, we knew that sexual violence is a common weapon of control and dehumanization, especially against women who show strength. When conflict subsides, there is little space for women to speak out about their experiences of violence. The societal value attached to women's sexuality has also inextricably linked a common ideal of men's honor to women's sexual purity. When women speak out about their experiences of sexual violence, they face the risk of discrimination and exclusion, told to remain silent rather than shame the family. When they do speak out, in judicial proceedings or truth commissions, there is little long-term support to help them deal with the consequences.

In the conflict zones of Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Myanmar, the state has also used displacement to cut support for insurgents. Women languished in camps across these three countries in different periods of history, carrying out forced labor in harsh conditions lacking shelter, food, and health care. Women also face local or unofficial forms of displacement. They may lose their homes and land when they become widows, when they return home after years of imprisonment, or when they are thrown out of a marriage because they were victims of sexual violence.

The impact of displacement and the loss of economic resources are still felt decades later, as our research showed again and again. Even thick-skinned activists like ourselves were surprised at the level of poverty we were witnessing. One survivor of rape in Ainaro, Timor-Leste lived in a rickety bamboo hut that she called a "pig pen," after being kicked out of her home by her husband decades ago. Another woman in Yogyakarta survived fourteen years of torture and illegal detention to find her home had been taken by strangers.

Women seldom benefit from post-conflict development projects and services. At the local level, politically and socially connected men often monopolize such projects. At national-level, aid projects no longer focus on the impact of conflict, moving quickly to development projects that are blind to the vulnerabilities of victims, particularly women. Women survivors of violence become invisible.

IMPUNITY ENTRENCHED, AN ATROPHY OF JUSTICE

In 2005, the United Nations Human Rights Commission updated its Impunity Principles, which define impunity as "the impossibility, *de jure* or *de facto*, of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account."² Although they focus on failures to deliver justice, the Impunity Principles also provide a model for what justice could look like:

Impunity arises from a failure by States to meet their obligations to investigate violations; to take appropriate measures in respect of the perpetrators, particularly in the area of justice, by ensuring that those suspected of criminal responsibility are prosecuted, tried and duly punished; to provide victims with effective remedies and to ensure that they receive reparation for the injuries suffered; to ensure the inalienable right to know the truth about violations; and to take other necessary steps to prevent a recurrence of violations.³



Under normal conditions, a violation of a person's rights triggers an expectation that justice will eventually reach the victim. It may take years or decades, but the promise of justice persists as a comfort. There are two assumptions in this model. First, it is assumed that at the end of conflict, the power structure that enabled violence will be dismantled, allowing the oppressed to speak out about the violations they have experienced. Second, if victims can speak out about the crime, others will assist them in punishing the perpetrators and overcoming the suffering caused by the violation. They will be comforted by those who love them the most, helping them to overcome the harm they have endured.

Maria Imaculada shows a tattoo she inscribed on her right arm with the date of her arrest. She used battery dust and a needle to etch the date herself while in prison to mark her body, in case she was disappeared.

In the case of violence against women, these assumptions are often proved wrong.⁴ During a conflict, those holding a gun often seek the complicity of local power holders, such as traditional elders or religious leaders, to extend their influence and control. These local leaders often continue to wield power even after the conflict has ceased. They may have transformed themselves at the 11th hour into supporters of the victorious side, or the new power structure may consider them indispensable.

Instead of receiving justice, victims often find themselves abandoned and blamed. As we began this research, we saw women victims experiencing an *atrophy of justice*. When they or a family member became a victim of violations, the dream of peace and justice became great motivators for survival. However, for many women, the urge and capacity to fight for justice weakened as time passed and impunity set in. Many of the women involved in this research relegated justice to the afterlife. Like a wasted muscle, their capacity to access justice diminished over time. Our research was designed to engage them in some kind of action, harnessing their creativity and grit to push for change.

THE BLIND SPOT: LONG-LASTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF VIOLENCE

A court provided Angela with a modicum of justice. But she could not shake the poverty that ensnared her life, and she is not alone in this predicament.

While male victims living in poverty suffer from deprivations and lack of opportunity as well, women and girls are especially vulnerable. In the cases we collected, women's leadership and contributions, intellectual achievement, creative expression, and career or other aspirations frequently took a back seat to those of their fathers, husbands, brothers, and male children. Women and girls were forced to sacrifice their education or desire for a career, pushed into unhappy marriages, or even sacrificed to the men with guns, for the protection of their families.



Sri Wahyuni sitting in her nephew's living room. When she was released from detention in 1970, she found that her house had been taken by another family.

Where women have limited land rights, female heads of household find food, security and housing in serious jeopardy, especially where there are limited opportunities beyond agriculture. Employment options are further limited by women's lack of education. As a result, many of these vulnerable women turn to farm wage labor, migration to seek employment (which often separates them from their children and exposes them to further risks), or small market activities with meager and uncertain incomes.

Women learn to endure impunity, occupying themselves with the daily struggle to survive. Although the end of conflict may bring drastic political change, women victims often remain voiceless, with limited access to economic opportunities, education, and health services. Their experiences of violence are clouded by

shame and rarely considered to be important, unlike male veterans or other victims from a conflict that has ended.

Despite efforts to include women, truth commissions, criminal trials, or development projects often fail to appreciate the depth and breadth of women's suffering. Faced with widespread criminality and suffering over many decades, human rights advocates frequently focus on violations of civil and political rights. The suffering of victims of arbitrary and prolonged detention, torture, forced disappearance and extrajudicial killing are grimly familiar in accounts of tyranny and armed conflict.



Barbed wire outside Rumah Geudong, a house used as a torture center in Aceh between 1989-1998.

In contrast, widespread abuses of social and economic rights are largely missing from accounts of conflict and oppression. These abuses include the loss of land and livelihoods, destruction of homes and possessions, forced displacement to squalid camps, and exclusion from education and health care services. These violations are frequently not prioritized for research, as they often appear less severe. The very widespread and entrenched nature of social and economic violations often numbs us to their essential character as *rights*. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights drew attention to this problem at the Vienna World Conference in 1993:

...the shocking reality that States and the international community as a whole continue to tolerate all too often breaches of economic, social and cultural rights, which if they occurred in relation to civil and political rights, would provoke expression of horror and outrage...Statistical indicators of the extent of deprivation, or breaches of economic, social and cultural rights have been cited so often that they have tended to lose their impact. The magnitude, severity and constancy of that deprivation have evoked attitudes of resignation, feelings of hopelessness, and compassion fatigue.⁵

Further, the less people have, the more severe the impact resulting from the loss of homes, property, and livestock. These losses are even more devastating when compounded with other abuses and traumas, and make recovery and healing all the more difficult.

As we designed tools for research, we not only focused on gender-specific aspects of conflict and impunity, but also tried to bridge the divide between civil-political and social-economic violations. We paid special attention to social and economic violations that shaped the conflict, as well as the social and economic impact of human rights violations that persist long after it ends.

ORGANIZING OUR FINDINGS

After some consideration about a thematic or case study approach, we decided that it was important to preserve the integrity of the stories entrusted to us. Women survivors expected their stories to be preserved and communicated to the outside world. At the same time, we had a bird's-eye view that showed patterns and particularities across the experiences in three countries.

This chapter provides the motivation for our research, describing our starting point based on a more a long-term engagement and friendship with women survivors of violence. In **Chapter 2**, we describe who we are, and why and how we set out to do what we did. **Chapters 3 to 18** present the stories of women's experiences of violence and their efforts to rebuild their lives in the aftermath. We chose to focus on each country, providing a backdrop to the stories. In **Chapter 19**, we formulate our key findings, using infographics, based on the patterns that emerged in the three countries. We also make recommendations for the way forward. In this report, we use the words "victim" and "survivor" interchangeably. We use the term "victim" to capture the legal definition used in human rights conventions and treaties. We also use the word survivor to show the strength of victims and their ability to recover and to help other victims. We believe that victims and survivors should have the freedom to identify themselves as victims, as survivors, or in any way that they choose.

Women survivors from Bobonaro, Timor-Leste, discussing their economic resources before and after the conflict.



Chapter 2

Unlearning Impunity



“I cannot forget.
Maybe I will
always remember”

8

THE PROJECT

This research project grew out of a long-felt unease with how women like Angela have fared in efforts to obtain justice in post-conflict societies. Despite global commitments to end violence against women in conflict and promises to punish those who commit crimes against women during war, there has been little progress in Asia.⁶

AJAR’s research project included 140 women from a total 12 diverse geographical locations across Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Myanmar. The oldest participant was 78 years old and the youngest was 15. Some of the women, such as the grandmothers from Indonesia, had been freed from detention without trial as long as 45 years ago. Others, such as the political prisoners in Myanmar, were released only recently.

This book is about how these women experienced conflict, and how they struggle to survive in its aftermath where impunity is the norm. Despite resources and rhetoric committed to eliminate violence against women, the majority of women survivors must endure impunity. In most cases, they must do so alone, abandoned by their governments and society.

Each woman who took part in this research has a compelling story. Woven together, these stories provide a stark picture of the failure to pave a way for their

Juariah, a daughter of a political prisoner now living in Buru Island, formerly a prison island where 10,000-12,000 male political prisoners were interred between 1968-1978. Hundreds of their wives and children were forcibly moved there in the 1970s.

transformation from victim to holder of rights and justice. We see how they largely have helped themselves, using their strength and tenacity to fight for survival in grim situations. In the three countries, governments and international actors have failed to see the link between violence during conflict and violence in times of peace, providing resources to eliminate domestic violence while ignoring those victimized during conflict.

Because the topic is traumatic and sensitive, we designed our research using life-affirming participatory tools that were both enjoyable and serious, facilitating learning and action with the women. We tried, with some successes and failures, to bring about a little change in the lives of the women who agreed to share their time and their stories.

“HIT AND RUN” TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE



Memories from their early days in Buru Island.

After some years of spouting a mantra about the benefits of transitional justice—defined as “the set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses”⁷—we were beginning to feel like a broken record. Many of us had worked inside or interacted with official truth commissions or other ad hoc inquiries. We had become increasingly suspect of an approach that focused so much on a prescribed roster of short-term mechanisms.

Across Asia, the better future presented by transitional justice advocates remains a distant goal. Only a few transitional justice mechanisms have been established, notably Timor-Leste’s truth commission, CAVR, the hybrid UN serious crimes court, and later, a bi-lateral “truth and friendship” commission established by Timor-Leste and Indonesia. A decade after the CAVR completed its work, most of its recommendations have yet to be implemented, leaving victims disappointed. Those convicted by the serious crimes court have all been pardoned and released, while many of their victims languish in poverty. In Indonesia, promises for a national truth commission, and local truth commissions for Aceh and Papua remain unfulfilled, seventeen years since the fall of the Suharto regime.⁸ A human rights court with jurisdiction for crimes against humanity and genocide exists on paper only. In Myanmar, any mention of accountability is brushed-off as an unrealistic demand in the high-stakes game for change that is still unfolding.

Mechanisms that do get established reflect the weakness of imperfect transitions and the power struggle between old and new forces for change. In the meantime, the field is dominated by experts who fly in and out without long-term engagement with victims and their society. For some victims, the relatively short time frame of transitional justice mechanisms (typically 2-3 years) is more like a “hit and run” accident, than a means for long-term recovery from deep trauma. In Timor-Leste, some victims felt betrayed and abandoned after confiding their experiences to the CAVR. Any progress achieved by the transitional justice mechanisms established during the early years of Timor-Leste’s transition seems to have drifted back to a culture of impunity.

Despite these failures, we were not prepared to throw in the towel. We strongly believe that the legacy of mass violations continue to shape our present and future, in the lives of victims and in our society in general. Impunity for atrocities and abuse of power allow state institutions to continue to practice unaccountable governance that, results in the worst kinds of excess, such as torture, corruption, and violence against women. We wanted to find a way to challenge impunity where there are no official mechanisms for accountability (or where those mechanisms are no longer in place) in a way that engaged women survivors and compelled them to take action.

Inspired by the idea of unleashing the transformative potential of reparations for women and girls, we designed our research to dislodge apathy and celebrate action.⁹ From our work with women survivors, we knew that women identified both practical needs (livelihood, accessing basic needs and services such as housing, health care) and strategic needs (acknowledgement of suffering, equal legal rights, transforming sites of violence into spaces for education).¹⁰ Transitional justice approaches that only focus on participation in mechanisms to deliver justice without paying heed to the practical and strategic needs of victims fall short of their transformative potential.

In our experience, the most powerful forms of impunity are social and cultural, leading victims to self-censor and deny themselves any hope for justice. Simply documenting victim testimonies cannot address this problem, and we have developed a healthy skepticism towards processes that only rely on statement-taking and documenting violations through formal interviews, forms, or coding systems designed by outsiders. Instead, we looked to participatory tools, adapting and inventing new ways to get women survivors to speak out about their experiences and issues to each other, providing space for self-reflection and mutual support for action.

Lastly, in all three countries we found that governments often created a false distinction, providing services for victims of domestic violence but not for victims of conflict. At the outset, we were aware that gender-based violence¹¹ by state actors shares the same root causes as domestic violence, and that some survivors were victims of both. Our research was a way to challenge this ahistorical approach to working on gender-based violence.

With these challenges and shortcomings in mind, we wanted to adapt and integrate participatory action research, trauma healing and feminist methods into our efforts to document, understand and challenge impunity together with victims. The very act of listening to and documenting violations should be transformative in some way for those who suffer violations. While the information can still be coded and entered into a database, we sought an approach where women survivors become active agents of change, not simply objects of research.



Women survivors from Marabia, Timor-Leste place their hands on a map of their community.

LEARNING CIRCLES, SAFE SPACES

Although our starting point was to better understand women's experiences, our process was also designed to "unlearn" an acceptance of impunity. For a while, anger and a sense of injustice can serve as a motivation for survival. But after years of neglect and inaction from courts or police many victims learn to accept impunity. We needed to find a safe way for women to reflect on their lives and tell their stories, and then to articulate their needs and develop strategies for change.

Because talking about violence, neglect and failed attempts to access justice can be frustrating, we devised ways to make the process engaging and life-affirming. In July 2013, we gathered survivors and activists from Indonesia and Timor-Leste to develop a new and participatory methodology to encourage women survivors to share their stories and their strategies for survival. The methods were designed to include not just documentation, but also healing, advocacy, empowerment, and solidarity building.

The research team itself was composed of not just NGO workers, but also survivors and their family members. We designed seven tools to empower women survivors, facilitate collective healing, and strengthen networking. Some facilitators then returned to their homes and conducted workshops over consecutive days, while in contexts where the participants lived near each other, the tools were used during half-day weekly meetings.¹² The grassroots tools included:

STONE AND FLOWER:

We developed a tool to better understand how localized social, economic, and cultural forces nurture and reinforce impunity, particularly for gender-based crimes. Participants chose a stone (negative) or a flower (positive) to describe whether the rights to truth, justice, healing and a life free from violence were fulfilled in their personal, family and community life. Reasons for choosing a stone or a flower were discussed in the group.



Researchers from Myanmar learning to facilitate the “stone and flower.”

TIMELINE:

By constructing a time line of the violence experienced by women before, during and after conflict, we built a collective history with a broader perspective than one an individual alone could achieve.



A woman victim drawing her community map

COMMUNITY MAPPING:

Participants drew a map that showed their homes, where violations took place and other important locations from their story.

RESOURCE MAPPING:

Women described their sources of livelihood, before, during and after conflict. This process deepened our knowledge of the cycle of poverty experienced by women victims in post-conflict situations.



BODY MAPPING:

Borrowing from the women’s health movement, we used body mapping as an opportunity for women victims to speak about the impact on their bodies of violations they had experienced. Apart from sites of pain, we urged them to mark the sites of happiness.

A Timorese refugee in Tuapukan camp showing a photograph of her husband.



For a full description of this methodology, please refer to our manual: “Unlearning Impunity: A Guide to Understanding and Action for Women Survivors”.

TAKING PHOTOS, TELLING STORIES:

The researchers visited women's homes to create a photo story about their lives that included locations and objects with particular meanings.



Memory box from a survivor of the 1965 atrocities from Yogyakarta

MEMORY BOXES:

Victims were asked to fill a box with objects that connect to sweet or bitter memories, and to write a story about their life experience on postcards. In the last session, each participant opened her box and described the contents to the group.

After six months of fieldwork we conducted another workshop in January 2014 in advance of a second phase of research on accessing services. Six researchers from Myanmar joined the workshop to learn from and adapt our process to their own research, also visiting other researchers in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. In addition to conducting research in Myanmar, they held workshops to assist survivors with self-care and digital security, to discuss their findings and to write their field reports.



Women survivors at a self-care workshop in Myanmar.

WHO WE ARE

The research team was made up of 38 women and 1 man. With our varied backgrounds, we could be grouped into three main categories: women activists who have spent more than a decade working with women victims in conflict settings; young researchers who were new to these issues, but had a close personal connection to survivors; and women survivors.

In Indonesia, this research was carried out together with five local organizations: Jaringan Perempuan Indonesia Timur (JPIT), Kiprah Perempuan (KIPPER), Lingkar Pemberdayaan Perempuan (LAPPAN), Women's Legal Aid (LBH Apik) Aceh, and Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi HAM (ELSHAM-Papua), working closely with *Komnas Perempuan*. In Timor-Leste, AJAR's sister organization, Assosiasaun Chega Ba Ita (ACbit), focused research on the districts of Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro and Dili. In Myanmar, Women's Organizations Network (WON) conducted activities with ex-political prisoners in Yangon, while the Kachin Women Association - Thailand (KWAT) and Karen Women Empowerment Group (KWEG) worked with displaced women in the Kachin and Karen communities, respectively.

The large number of researchers with a wide variety of research, facilitation and writing skills posed challenges. Many women survivors were not strong writers, but were exceptional in facilitating other survivors to participate. Some young researchers brought new energy and critical questions to work pioneered by the more experienced human rights workers. The new tools facilitated the more active participation of survivors, while teaching researchers to use digital cameras brought interesting insights into the lives of victims. The visual aspects of the research were further strengthened when we engaged a female photographer/videographer to work with us.

Children and grandchildren of survivors from Yogyakarta took part as researchers. They provided critical insight and unfailing commitment to our efforts to understand and support the elderly survivors.



INVOLVING THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Of course, they have changed. Before they only [told their story to] to their peers, but now these stories have been handed down to me, the younger generation. So, they have support. Now when they meet they can laugh. Before they only cried. But now they have a special happiness.

—Viranda, researcher (and political prisoner's daughter), Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Women victims find different ways to cope with their stories of pain, especially when it comes to their children. Some have shared their experiences with their children, while others felt they had to protect their children from pain and shame. In some places, our research facilitated an inter-generational exchange that needed to happen. In Aceh, a survivor asked the help of her daughter to write her life postcards to be placed inside her memory box. This exercise opened an opportunity for her to share experiences her daughter never knew about. The woman felt closer to her daughter, who began to better understand and respect her mother.

Where impunity has taken hold for decades, engaging the young generation is critical. The human life span may not be long enough to witness the political shifts needed to uphold justice. The fight for truth and justice may have to be handed down to the next generation. A strong inter-generational relationship, and a shared history and identity, can empower survivors and their family members. As Christina Sumarmiyati, a survivor from Yogyakarta (and core member of the research team) described, her children were shaped by her experience. Her strength for survival and fierce independence became a trait she nurtured in her children.

They faced their life challenges with much struggle. Just like me. I nurtured an attitude of independence... So that they are not limited by the stigma and baggage, which we must dismantle ourselves. We cannot wait for the government to dissolve the stigma. We have to fight for this ourselves. Since they were small, I introduced [questions] to them: Who is their father? Who is their mother? Why is our life like this? And how we have to reach for the future. Thank God, our faith strengthened me and my children.

We were enriched by the participation of younger members in our research team.

ETHICAL GROUND RULES

Because many victims still suffer from trauma and are vulnerable in different ways, we developed a set of ethical ground rules:

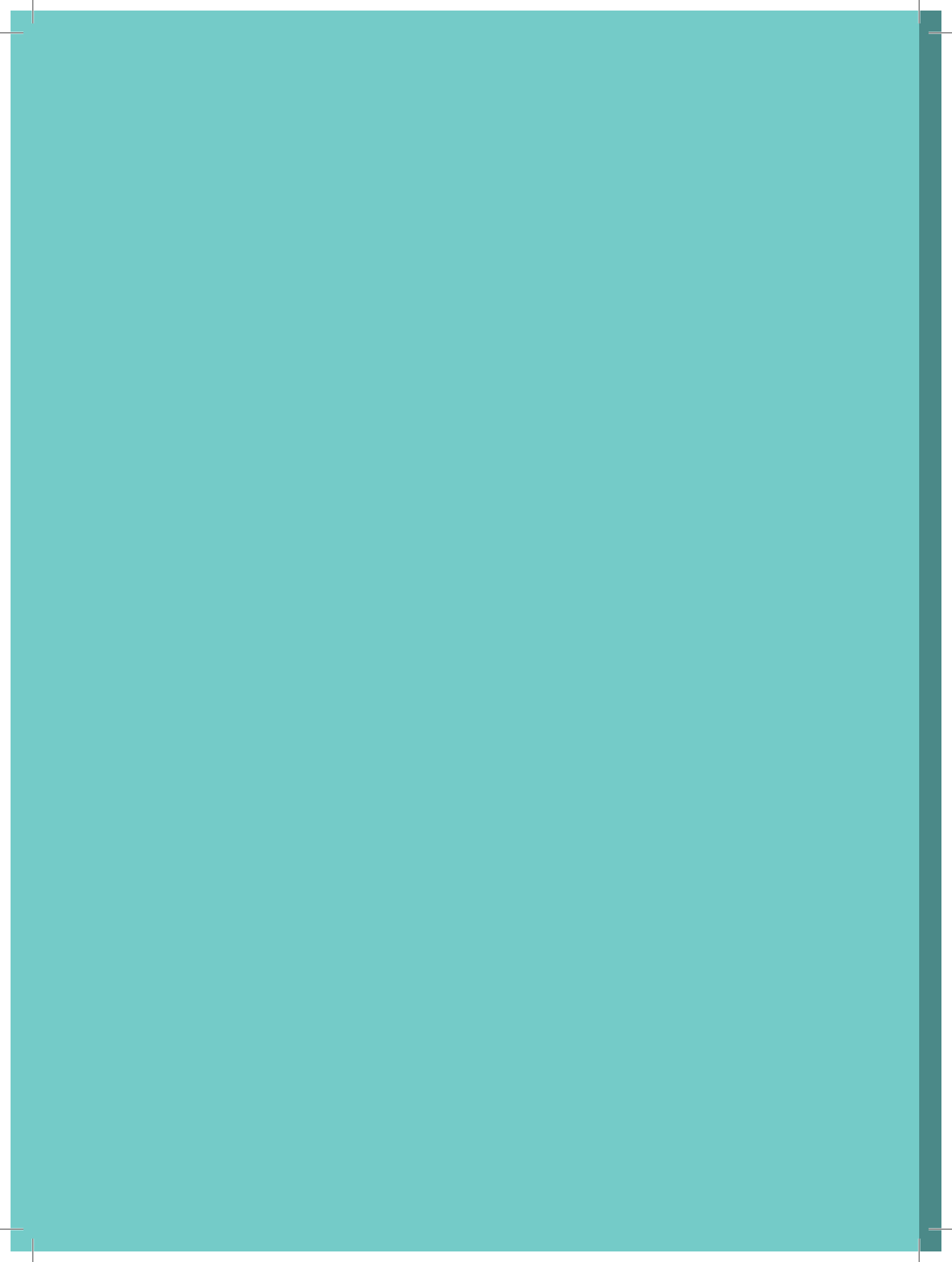
- 1. Do No Harm:** The most important ethical consideration was to do no harm to the subjects. This means if there were issues of safety, re-traumatization, or any other forms of risk, threats, or other negative impact at any time, then the research should not proceed without addressing these issues.
- 2. Informed Consent:** All efforts were made to obtain informed consent from those interviewed or participating in focus group discussions or any other data-gathering activities. Researchers explained the background, goals, and

process for the research project in a way that could be understood by the subjects. Subjects were given the opportunity to decline to participate, and the opportunity to qualify their participation or the information that they agreed to share. Where possible, subjects signed an informed consent sheet, and an oral agreement was recorded before interviews in communities with limited literacy skills.

3. **Mutual Benefit:** As far as possible, our research agenda aimed to be beneficial to the participants and their local advocates. The research process was designed to increase the capacity of local and national civil society groups, recognize the ownership of local knowledge, and produce research products in languages that are accessible.
4. **Accountability:** Researchers were accountable to individuals, families, and communities involved in the research, and appropriately monitored and supervised, ensuring compliance to these ethical guidelines and the agreed methodology.
5. **Participation and Dissemination:** We endeavored to develop and implement research methods that increased the participation of communities, requiring different types of reports, including using multi-media, methods for disseminating the research findings and recommendations.
6. **Cultural Sensitivity and Vulnerable Groups:** Research questions were sensitive to cultural norms and allowed subjects to be interviewed in a language of their choice. We were committed to ensuring the participation of the most vulnerable individuals and groups relevant to the issues being researched. This meant developing a research methodology that enabled their voices to be heard, facilitating their meaningful participation, and dealing with any issues of protection or support through cooperation with the appropriate agencies.



7. **Confidentiality:** We ensured that identifying information was not available outside the research circle, and not used in any publication except when the subject clearly agreed to be mentioned by name.
8. **Data Storage and Use:** Data was kept safely in a secure server owned by AJAR. We worked with experts to ensure data safety. If there is a need for data to be used for a different purpose than the original research, we will endeavor to gain subjects' consent.
9. **Rehabilitative Value:** We were keenly aware of the situation of victims who continue to struggle in their daily lives. As much as possible, the research methodology contributed to victim's rehabilitation.



Indonesia



Chapter 3

Indonesia: An Unaccounted History of Violence





The story of Indonesia is a remarkable one. Founded in 1945 on the dream of equality and diversity after four centuries of foreign domination and plunder, Indonesia became a leader of the post-war Asia-Africa coalition of new nations. Amid tension and violence between the Eastern and Western blocs, Indonesia and the non-aligned countries forged a middle way in an effort to create prosperity for Indonesia's people. The charismatic first President Soekarno moved away from the democracy established by Indonesia's founders, while attempting to balance three competing power blocs: the military, the world's third largest communist party, and Muslim religious groups. A power struggle between Indonesia's political elites, influenced and fueled by the Cold War, reached a crisis point with the mysterious kidnapping and killing of seven senior military officials on September 30, 1965.

Known as the 30 September Movement (G30S, or Gestapu in the Indonesian acronym), this incident opened the door to a nation-wide retaliatory killing spree and a wave of mass arrests against the left, led by a vengeful military intent on destroying its political enemies. In 1965 and 1966, the military and civilian armed groups killed between 500,000 and one million persons. Hundreds of thousands were detained without trial, many languishing in prisons for more than a decade. Members of left-leaning organizations made up of trade unionists, farmers, artists, teachers, and women were especially targeted.

General Soeharto was sworn in as president in 1966, and his *Orde Baru* (New Order) regime faced dissent with force, most brutally in its far-reaching provinces of Papua and Aceh and the Indonesian-occupied Portuguese colony of Timor-Leste, as well as against those defending their rights across Indonesia. Soeharto stayed in

Sanleko Beach, Buru Island, where the wives and children of political prisoners landed after a long journey by ship in the early 1970s.

Lasinem with her husband, Senen, and their grandchild at home on Buru Island. Senen was detained in East Java in 1965 and moved to Buru Island in 1969. Three years later, Lasinem and their children were also brought to Buru. Most detainees were released in 1979 but Lasinem and her family were among those who chose to remain and make the prison island their home.



power until 1998, when the Asian economic crisis, civil unrest and student protests compelled him to resign.

In the first flush of reform of 1999-2000, new laws opened a path for the search for truth and justice. A human rights court with jurisdiction over genocide and crimes against humanity was established in 2000, as well as a mechanism to create ad hoc tribunals for serious crimes from the past. However, these courts have had a virtually 100% acquittal rate, and are all but defunct. No gender-based crimes have ever been brought to trial. In 2006, a law establishing a national truth commission

Survivors visiting a former torture center, the Jefferson Building, in Yogyakarta.



was overturned, also effectively blocking local commissions in Aceh and Papua mandated under special autonomy laws for those provinces. Civil society groups have recently concluded a truth-seeking process and launched a report concluding that systematic and widespread gender violence took place in conflict zones between 1965-2005.¹³

Although there were peace processes in Aceh, Maluku and Central Sulawesi, women were not able to significantly participate. One exception was the Aceh peace talks, where the rebel group included one woman as part of their negotiating team. In Papua, civil society groups are campaigning for a peace dialog with the central government, with indigenous women involved, but Jakarta is not yet responding positively.¹⁴

1965 AND AFTER



From the start, the violence that engulfed Indonesia targeted women. Those orchestrating the violence fueled hate by spreading false rumors that women, specifically members of the women's group Gerwani, participated in the killings of the generals. Similar allegations were repeated later in the conflict zones of Papua and Aceh.

Established in 1950, a period of revolutionary zeal, Gerwani (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia*, or Indonesian Women's Movement) aimed to achieve "equal labour rights for women and ... equal responsibilities with men in the struggle for full national independence and socialism."¹⁵ It aligned with Indonesia's communist party, PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*), in 1954, a period of intense organizing and literacy training among women in urban and rural areas. By the 1960s, Gerwani was one of the largest women's organizations in the world, claiming a membership of a million women¹⁶ campaigning for women's political leadership and land reform, including "unilateral actions" in which landless peasants took over land.

Then, in a period of six months, more than 500,000 men, women and children accused of communist or leftist ties were killed.¹⁷ Members of Gerwani and those associated with them became the target of killings, illegal detention and sexual violence. They were also victims of a defamation campaign depicting them as sexual torturers. Despite autopsy reports that showed that the seven generals killed on September 30 died, their bodies intact, from gunshot wounds and blunt instruments, newspapers reported that their eyes had been gouged out and genitals mutilated. One article claimed that members of Gerwani “touched the genitals of the Generals and exhibited their own ... [then] danced in front of their victims naked.”¹⁸ These unsubstantiated reports fed the flames of violence, including rape and sexual violence, directed at women.

Komnas Perempuan conducted an inquiry in 2007, and “found overwhelming evidence in the 122 statements it studied that gender-based crimes against humanity were committed against women in the context of the massive wave of attacks against civilians.” The commission presented this report, along with a list of comprehensive recommendations, to Indonesia’s President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. However, there has been no significant action from the government.¹⁹

PAPUA



Indonesia’s eastern-most provinces of Papua and West Papua are culturally and historically distinct from the rest of the country, and contain valuable natural resources such as gold, timber and oil. These provinces (colloquially referred to in this book as Papua) are the site of continuing conflict and discontent.

Indigenous women have experienced violence in the context of this on-going political and military conflict, often becoming victims of rape, abuse, and other human rights violations. *Enough is Enough*, a groundbreaking 2010 report by the Women’s Working Group of the Indigenous People’s Council, working with *Komnas Perempuan* and civil society, documented hundreds of cases of state violence since

Papua became part of Indonesia in 1969. The report found women to be victims of killings, torture, displacement and rape.

Although Papua's separation in 1998 into two provinces, followed by its special autonomy status issued in 2001, initially brought hope for change. However, the pattern of human rights violations continues, including rape by the military. The influx of special autonomy funds seems to have increased alcoholism, incidents of domestic violence, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

ACEH



Another resource-rich province scarred by war sits at the other end of the archipelago. The conflict in Aceh began in 1976, when Acehnese leaders declared independence as a reaction to brutal repression. In 1989 the military intensified operations, declaring Aceh a Military Operations Area (DOM). Human rights monitors reported that thousands of civilians were killed, disappeared, and held in camps where torture and rape became a daily occurrence.²⁰ The guerilla force known as *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, or GAM, reportedly also committed atrocities against informers and Javanese migrant workers.²¹ Soeharto's fall provided an opportunity for peace negotiations, but when these efforts failed the military heightened operations. In 2003, President Megawati's government declared martial law, further isolating the territory and plunging it into more violence. The massive destruction of the 2004 tsunami brought international attention and funding, opening the door to a peace agreement in 2005.

Women in Aceh have suffered from the long-term impacts of war. Not only did they suffer when the men in their families were killed, disappeared, or had to flee to the mountains or forests, but also as victims of proxy violence, detained, tortured and raped as substitutes for the absent men.²²

EAST TIMORESE WOMEN IN WEST TIMOR



Women in Timor-Leste also suffered at the hands of Indonesian soldiers, with similar patterns and many of the same institutions and individuals as perpetrators, over a 24-year occupation. We learn about the lives of the survivors more than a decade since their independence. In West Timor (Indonesia), we meet with refugee women who fled during the 1999 violence in Timor-Leste. Sixteen years later, they are still living in the refugee camps, forgotten and vulnerable.

Although Yogyakarta, Buru Island, Aceh, Papua, and West Timor are not the only places where violence against women took place in Indonesia, we chose these sites to highlight the impact of conflict, and because we believe there is an opportunity to address the continuing lack of justice there.

However change will not come easily. As we concluded our research, four mothers in Paniai, Papua, were demanding justice for the summary killing of their teenage sons.²³ As women, as mothers, as sisters, we dedicate our thoughts and efforts to them. The violence must stop, and we must begin our journey to build peace and heal the wounds of conflict.

Chapter 4: Grandmothers in Yogyakarta Stand Up for Truth and Justice



“Enough. It is enough that we experienced this bitterness.
But innocent children, the next generation ...
the atrocities of a ruler with an unquenchable thirst for everything
should never happen again.”

—CHRISTINA SUMARMIYATI, KIPPER

Yogyakarta is the geographical and cultural center of Indonesia’s main island of Java, home to respected universities and a still revered sultanate. In 1965 the small city experienced a sequence of events that echoed the violence in Jakarta.²⁴ On October 1, leftist soldiers kidnapped their commanding officer and a lieutenant who happened to be at his house. The two were brought to a small town to the north and later killed. The next day PKI members and their affiliates demonstrated in front of the military headquarters, while other groups surrounded the Sultan’s palace and took control of the radio station, airing statements in support of the movement.²⁵

The military took swift action, establishing the Merapi Operation Command, named for a local volcano and led by Colonel Sarwo Edhi Wibowo, to focus on Central Java and surrounding areas, where PKI had strong support.

Yogyakarta, a university town, was prone to fierce competition among student organizations, both for and against the PKI. At Gajah Mada University, one of Indonesia's oldest campuses, classes were stopped. Students and teachers were detained on allegations they supported the 30 September Movement. Tensions rose as the dead bodies of the two officers were discovered, and the people of Yogyakarta braced for the worst as violent incidents unfolded all around them. Everyday there were stories of people disappeared, arrested and killed, about village wells made into makeshift mass graves.²⁶

The headquarters of CPM (military police) became a place to detain and investigate those arrested.²⁷ Typically, interrogations took place for five to seven days. Detainees were then moved from one makeshift detention center to another: prisons, the Jefferson Building (formerly a library managed by the US Embassy), Fort Vrendenburg, and other buildings around the city were commandeered by the military.

Thousands were detained in Yogyakarta and across Central Java, with countless taken from detention sites never to be seen again. Those who survived were moved between prisons, with some male detainees sent to Ambarawa, and later the prison islands of Nusakambangan and Buru far to the east. Women detainees were sent to Bulu, Ambarawa and Plantungan Prisons. Even once released, their status as former prisoners was marked on their identity cards, and they and their children were subject to decades of discrimination, such as being barred from many forms of education and employment.

The numbers of victims of killings, disappearances, arbitrary detention, and torture from Central Java remains unknown. Although human rights institutions have conducted inquiries, both the 2007 Women's Commission report and the 2014 National Human Rights Commission's report investigated a limited number of testimonies, 122 and 349 persons respectively.

Despite the state's consistent refusal to come to terms with its bloody past, victims and survivors have begun speaking out about what they experienced. After the fall of Soeharto, survivors worked with human rights advocates to publish their stories.²⁸

Christina Sumarmiyati, a former political detainee from Yogyakarta, took part in a research project examining reconciliation.²⁹ In 2005, Sumarmiyati (also known as Mamik), working with researchers and activists, convened a meeting of women former political prisoners from Yogyakarta and its surrounding area.³⁰ It was the first time they had met since they were released three decades earlier. They vowed to support each other, and Kiprah Perempuan (Women in Action, known by the acronym KIPPER) was born. The group remains vibrant, holding monthly meetings and maintaining a self-funded micro-credit group. Each member brings a small gift that is awarded through a lottery. One member, a former medical student imprisoned for four years, takes blood pressure and provides basic medical advice. They have a little library of books and magazines. Their monthly meeting provides a space for mutual support, and to discuss political and social issues. They also organize home visits to sick members.



KIPPER members showing off their gifts, books and photos, shared during a meeting in 2013.

When we approached Mamik to invite her to the core group on this research, she immediately agreed. It had been many years since there was any outside interest in KIPPER, she said. Mamik, a spritely and energetic seventy years old with a pixy smile, is the backbone of her organization. She moves in quick bursts of energy, bringing complete focus to the task at hand.

Mamik agreed to lead the research and to find some young people who would be interested in facilitating this process. In June 2013, Mamik and a daughter of a political prisoner participated in our workshop to design the action research. Later, a young university lecturer, whose grandfather was a political prisoner, joined the team. They reached out to 10 members of KIPPER who met seven times over six months, finding new energy and a sense of purpose in sharing their stories. They participated in a public hearing in Jakarta in November 2013, as part of a civil society effort to seek the truth about violations between 1965-2005.³¹ These are their stories.



Sri Wahyuningsih singing a song she composed in prison at a public hearing in Jakarta, 2013.

My Grandchild

“A grandmother caring for her grandchild
In the midst of Gestapu32
Running here and there
Escaping danger
Night and day the child cries
“My father, my mother, where are they?”
With sadness, she answers
“Your father, your mother, are in prison”

—SONG COMPOSED BY SRI WAHYUNINGSIH,
DURING HER TIME IN PRISON (1965-1969).

MAMIK: A TEACHER DENIED HER CALLING



Mamik at her kiosk

The violence in Yogyakarta found an easy target in teachers and students. Mamik had just completed her teacher’s training in Yogyakarta in 1965. As a 20-year-old, she wanted to dedicate her life to teaching, empowering women and eradicating poverty through education. Her father had introduced her to the story of Kartini, a pioneer of women’s rights. She dreamed of joining the national effort to promote adult literacy. She was active in student organizations, and enjoyed dancing.

Mamik was arrested in December 1965. Along with hundreds of others, she was held without a warrant for four months. When she was released without explanation in April 1966, she went back to her studies and teaching, but in 1968 she was

arrested again. This time she was accused of joining Gerwani. She recounted what happened:

What I experienced was an extraordinary catastrophe. My father was detained, and I was too. My siblings were so young, and my mother had to raise them by herself. What made me so helpless was that I was arrested twice. I experienced torture that was so cruel. I can understand if this was an occupation, but it was done by my own people...What they did to me...was outside the realm of humanity.

During the investigation I was stripped naked on a table, and they burned my pubic hair and the hair on my head. I passed out and when I woke up I was herded to the Military Police jail in Yogyakarta at four in the morning. I was put in a cell and handcuffed to a man who was in there. On the second day we were interrogated together. They said whether we confessed or not we were political agitators and we would be forced to admit that we were PKI. They stripped us both. I was ordered to sit on his lap naked, or confess. Then they picked me up and put me on his lap in a sexual position. They laughed in satisfaction.

Mamik was moved to Wirogunan jail where she was detained without trial for three years. She experienced torture during frequent interrogations:

One time when I was called back, I was forced to confess that I participated in underground political activities. In that interrogation, I faced a great inhumanity. I was stripped naked and my head was forced down. They ordered me to kiss their genitals one by one, all eight men in the room. My spirit was broken and I couldn't walk, but they forced me to. Then they lay me down in the middle of the room and shaved my head. I couldn't do anything but beg the Lord for strength.

In 1971 I was moved to Plantungan camp that held 500 women from Java. In Plantungan there was no more physical torture, but rather psychological terror. We were seen as immoral human beings, insurgents. We didn't like the supervisor of mental health at Plantungan; he got one of the prisoners pregnant and she had two children. How could we trust a supervisor like that? There were so many intolerable things. Eventually we were thrown into Bulu Jail in Semarang, because they said that we couldn't be instructed.

She was released on September 27, 1978. Two months after her release Mamik married a fellow political prisoner named Edi. His family had also been targeted in 1965, with both parents and all siblings detained. Mamik and her husband had two children in 1980 and 1982, a boy and a girl.

As a former political prisoner, Mamik was banned from resuming her career as a teacher: "Being an ex-political prisoner comes with stigma and limits the space you have to make your life." She started a kiosk selling household goods, and her

husband opened a small car repair business, but the new family struggled to make ends meet:

I sold my jewelry, even my wedding ring. That was the only way. In my heart, I knew that a wedding ring was a sacred thing. But God's blessing poured through that wedding ring.

They managed to send their children to college and build a house. Her husband passed away a few years ago, and now both children have left home. Mamik reflected on what she sees as her calling “to fill life with a collective passion to demand our rights that have been disappeared by the state. We demand that our good names be restored, and that we receive some security in our old age from the State.”

When asked to reflect on justice, she said, *“I cannot speak of justice because I never experienced justice in my life. All my rights were taken. How can I speak of justice?”*

KADMIYATI: CYCLING FOR SURVIVAL



Kadmiyati makes a living by sewing

“My motto is ... to deplore the excesses of the government towards victims. But rather than hoping for what was uncertain, I chose to work to support my younger siblings and my parents.”

Another young teacher whose life was derailed by the violence of 1965 was Kadmiyati. She was studying at the Taman Siswa Teacher's College in Mergangsan and was about to start her teaching practice. She liked the cultural activities organized by *Lekra* (Institute of People's Culture), and taught children at a kindergarten organized by Gerwani.

On October 10, 1965, Kadmi with ten neighbors were taken from their homes to the village office. They were then moved to the subdistrict office, and finally to a camp in Bantul. Detained there for more than a year, they never had enough to eat, just some cabbage leaves and dried cassava. Her father and older brother were also arrested and held in the Wirogunan Prison in Yogyakarta.

Kadmi was released in 1966. With her father still in prison, she had to help her mother raise her seven younger brothers and sisters, the youngest only born in 1966. Without her father's income they faced great economic hardship. When they were arrested their house had been ransacked.

Miserably, everything that we had was stolen by those who ransacked our house. They took everything they wanted, including a keris [a traditional dagger] with a golden sheath. They also took our money and a gamelan set.

In 1967 she was called again to Camp Bantul, this time she was tortured by the camp commander.

The people interrogating me were from the prosecutor's office and the district military post. We were stripped naked, and ... you know what I mean. I am too ashamed to speak about it. What happened was the same as what other women prisoners experienced. ...They did that only to fulfill their desires. We could only pray... "Oh God, why are they like that? Please forgive them.

No one visited her, and when she was released she was isolated by her community. Kadmi became the breadwinner for her family. She left home every morning at three and walked ten kilometers to the market to sell *grontol*, a type of sweet corn meal. She remembers this time sadly but knew she had to do it for her family's economic survival: "It fell on my shoulders to pay for all the bills."

In 1972 Kadmiyati married and the couple worked hard to support their family. She made *tepung ketan* (sticky rice flour) and worked with her husband selling vegetables in the market. Life was difficult and they could never make enough money. She was also still helping her parents to sell onions and chilies in the market. After a while, she was able to purchase a bicycle that she still uses 40 years later. Kadmi started sewing bags to supplement their income, while her husband began working in a bread shop. They had two daughters, and the family moved around for some years. Her bags began selling well and Kadmi was able to support her family as well as paying high school fees for her youngest sister.

Kadmiyati's husband died a few years ago. She still leads a productive and active life, sewing and raising chickens and helping out with her grandchildren. She attends activities at her church, a ten-minute bicycle ride from her home.

Kadmiyati is 71 years old now. She lives in a small wooden house with two rooms. The front room is her workshop, where she sews bags, dresses, hats, and belts. It is



Kadmiyati
in front of her
wooden house

filled to the brim with swaths of cloth, spools of thread, and her foot-powered sewing machine. The back room is dark and damp, with a small single bed, a table and shelves full of books. Kadmi often reads deep into the night by the light of a flickering bulb. Adjacent to her house is a modern concrete duplex, where her two daughters and grandchildren live. She dedicates her life to her children, putting aside her own needs, as she has all her life.

She is still haunted by what happened to her and her family. “I am still worried because I am still monitored.” Asked to envision what justice may look like, she said, “A bit of justice would be if the government revealed the truth.” Asked to further explain, she reflected:

I also demand and hope for justice for the violence against the victims of 1965. For the sadistic torture and killing of millions of people and those detained up to 14 years. When will the law be upheld? ... Who is sadistic and cruel? The communists? Or the perpetrators of the killings? Find out the truth.

Kadmiyati draws strength from family, sewing, friends at church, her faith, and involvement with KIPPER. She reflected on her participation in this action research,

Now I feel so much more powerful, and not so lonely anymore, because of the struggle that we must fight to dismantle violence, to get justice.³³

SUJIRAH: BROKEN DREAMS OF A DUTIFUL SISTER



Sujirah
with her brothers

The events of 1965 crushed Sujirah's dreams of pursuing her studies. Tall and gaunt, she carries a great sadness over her hunched shoulders about the missed opportunities in her life. In 1965 she was a student at Yogyakarta's leading state university, Gadjah Mada University (UGM), studying social science. She was excited about taking her final exams. She says she was a member of two youth organizations linked to the communist party, CGMI³⁴ and Pemuda Rakyat,³⁵ but explains, "We didn't understand anything about the politics. We just liked to dance."

In November 1965 she received a letter ordering her to report to the administrative office of Wirobrajan subdistrict. When she arrived, she was made to board a military truck that brought her and many others to Fort Vredenburg, an old Dutch building. They rode through the advancing dusk, a trip that would lead to four years of incarceration. Sujirah went from Vredenburg to Wirogunan Prison and then to Bulu Prison, and finally, in March 1966, to Ambarawa Prison.

Sujirah was interrogated and tortured. She was beaten, and soldiers in heavy boots trampled on her hands and feet. On her release in 1969 she had to report to the district military command every week. She was stigmatized, people whispered about her being involved in the coup: "This is one of the ones that came back from Lubang Buaya."³⁶

Sujirah had to find work immediately to support her six younger siblings: "I had to hide my identity as a former political prisoner. If anyone knew I would be fired from my job." In 1970, Sujirah moved to Jakarta where she still had to report to authorities once a week. She helped her siblings sell snacks at the market and later found



Sujirah's memory box and its contents

work as a nanny. In 1975, her luck turned when her employer took her to Japan as a nanny. But not long after, she was called back home to Yogyakarta because her mother was sick. As the oldest child and only daughter, she was responsible for caring for her mother and siblings.

As the backbone of the family, Sujirah opened a small kiosk. However, in 2013 she ran out of money to replenish stock, and now she and two brothers depend on renting out two houses they inherited from their parents. Because she owns property, she is categorized as middle-class and has never received the government assistance she needs. She hopes to get capital to reopen her kiosk to support herself and her family. Sujirah never married because she has focused on looking after her mother and younger siblings. She still feels angry about her missed opportunities:

I'm not yet able to recover. I remember the time when I was arrested, just before the final stage of my studies. If people talk about the past I still get angry... Basically, only I can heal myself.

ENDANG LESTARI: "MY GOOD NAME SHOULD BE RESTORED"

Endang Lestari was a 20-year-old science student in 1965. She was involved with CGMI, a student organization affiliated with the PKI. On November 27, 1965, she was taken from her home in the middle of the night by soldiers from the subdistrict military command and taken to their headquarters for interrogation. Like many others, she was stripped naked to search for a supposed Gerwani tattoo. "I told them already, I was not Gerwani. They said we all had to be examined for this brand. They took everything off, but they did not touch us. Just stripped naked."

She was moved to Fort Vredenburg where thousands were held. One day, she was taken to the Jefferson Building, a United States Information Service library until it was seized by the military and used as a torture center:



Endang Lestari
in her kiosk

“When they questioned me, the prosecutor asked, “Did you plan to overthrow the Soekarno government?”

I said, “I don’t know ... I didn’t know there was a coup.”

Then he took my hand, “Did you hold a gun?”

“Never.”

This line of questioning gave her a clue about the severity of the accusations. She was held at the fort until the end of April then transferred to Wirogunan Prison for one month, to Ambarawa prison for two years, to Bulu Prison in Semarang for three years, and finally to Plantungan Camp. Endang still does not understand why she was detained.

The most difficult thing about life in prison was the constant hunger. Prisoners supplemented their diet with a little food brought by their families. They also wove hairnets from their own hair to be sold. She joined the sewing unit and was able to make and sell handicrafts.

Endang prepared for her release, building up the skills to survive. As her parents would already be old, she didn’t want to be a burden, and she realized she could be self-sufficient through her sewing. “Inside, some of my friends were expert seamstresses. My parents sewed, so I knew how to sew. But to add to my experience, I asked the sewing teachers.”

When she was released she wasn't comfortable at home: "Every time I moved I felt like I was being followed. so I wanted to get out of the village." She found work sewing in Jakarta but was hindered by the requirement to report every month in Yogyakarta. One time the authorities sought her out but she was not in her house, and so she had to report to the subdistrict military command every day for a month, even though she had a travel permit and a letter of good behavior.

In 1981, she returned to Yogyakarta and married a fellow survivor named Wahyudi. Her husband worked at a hospital community development unit, and Endang continued her work as a seamstress. They had a child in 1985.

Endang and her family were rebuilding their lives, but in 2000 she experienced a kind of mental breakdown. "When my son was about to enter senior high school I got sick with stress. I was scared of being alone." She didn't have the means to seek professional help. "I just prayed. 'Oh Lord, help me Lord to be able to bounce back and be independent again like before.'"

She slowly got better, but things took a turn for the worse when her husband and son were in a motorbike accident. Her husband spent a month in hospital with a partial stroke but her son escaped with minor scrapes. The situation made her family finances worsen and Endang plunged into depression.

Her husband died in 2007. Endang's eyesight was failing so she opened a kiosk. Her husband's last wish was that their child finish the last year of school, but this hasn't yet been possible.

Endang still worries about recognition and the truth. She wants her name to be cleared and the truth to be told. "My good name should be restored... The public needs to know a straight version of history, for the sake of our future generations."

Endang's memory box. On the right is the dress she wore when she was taken by the military in the middle of the night on November 27, 1965.



NIK: FOR THE LOVE OF DANCE

Sri Wayhuni was a member of a *ketoprak* troupe, performing traditional Javanese theatre to the accompaniment of *gamelan* music. Known as Nik, she was dancer, singer, actor and member of *Lekra*, a cultural organization associated with the PKI. One night in September 1965, around 11 p.m., a group of soldiers surrounded her home in Gowongan, Yogyakarta. They broke down the door, dragged her outside, and ordered her to climb onto a waiting truck. The truck took her to the Jefferson Building where she was questioned briefly and taken to the military police post. If she fell asleep, an officer would beat her. At eight the next morning she was brought to Vredenburg Fort and held for a week with hundreds of others.

After a week she was taken back to the Jefferson Building, She was accused of being at the infamous Lubang Buaya and of participating in the torture of the generals before murdering them:

“Were you at that well, what was it called, the Lubang Buaya?” I was just quiet, because I did not know. I was hit with the butt of a gun. They hounded me, “How many people did you put inside Lubang Buaya?” I was just quiet.



Nik showing her release papers. Behind her is a map of the detention centers in Yogyakarta drawn by the group.

She was taken three times to the Jefferson Building and tortured each time. Her face and head were beaten, she was kicked by soldiers in army boots, electrocuted, and burned with cigarettes. She was stripped and told to turn around so they could look for the hammer and sickle tattoo the officials claimed Gerwani members were marked with. Her back and waist were beaten with a rifle butt so many times she still has difficulty walking. Her husband never came to visit her and eventually he left her.

She was sent back to Vredeburg Fort for three months, and then to Wirogunan Prison for one month, Ambarawa Prison for about eight months, and lastly to Bulu Prison in Semarang, on the north coast of Central Java, for five years.

In Wirogunan, I cried and cried... When I was beaten I didn't cry, but in Wirogunan I cried. Why did I cry? Outside the door where we all slept, there was a can and a gutter, but the gutter was full of excrement... So, when we went out, you know, the filth was just unbearable. The stench. That's what made me cry.

Food was so scarce they counted the boiled corn they ate every day: 115 kernels. They were also given old cabbage, and Nik was so hungry that she washed it, wrung it out, and then ate it. She also cooked in the kitchen at Bulu Prison, where over 1000 women were held.

Over 30 women slept on each of two bare wooden platforms in the room.

So, for example if you were asleep at night, and you were tired [of lying on one side]... you would say to your friends 'Come on, turn over! Count 1,2,3, then turn to the left' Later, if you were tired again, you all turned to the right. You had to turn in coordination.

In 1970 she was released and returned to her house in Gowongan. "I keep my release letter even though it is already ragged."

She experienced stigma and discrimination, such as being forbidden from moving around or gathering with more than two people. People excluded her from the activities of the village. She also learned the devastating news that the house she had bought through her hard work had been seized and given to someone else:

Left: Nik in front of her nephew's house where she lives now. Right: Nik on the back of the motorbike of a researcher, revisiting one of the sites of torture in her story.



"My house, with all my possessions in it, was all gone. I lived as a vagrant, sleeping on porches of other people's homes."

Even her family didn't dare protest due to the political environment at the time. When Nik began to join social activities it made people feel uncomfortable. The village head told her to find another place to live. In 1971 she met a Catholic priest and asked him to help her find a place to live. She ended up as a cook for the parish, moving from one town to another.

She returned to Yogyakarta in 1976 and began to sell fried food for a living. She had to stop selling in 2011 when she broke her leg in a motorbike accident; she now uses a crutch to walk. She lives with her nephew's family and still makes small snacks that she sells to friends and neighbors. She is also skilled in burial rites and is often requested to help with them. "I feel good when I work. If I don't, my thoughts go everywhere."

SUJILAH: TORTURED WHILE PREGNANT



Sujilah in front of her house

In 1965, Sujilah was an 18-year-old education student who had just finished high school. In her free time, she liked to dance *Genjer-genjer*, a folkdance and song about the harvesting of rice, made popular by TV and radio artists. Sujilah also participated in cultural activities organized by Lekra. She was arrested early one morning in November 1965 with a few neighbors in her village of Nitipuran. She was eventually taken to Camp Bantul and held without trial for one year. Sujilah's father was also detained from 1965 until 1967.

She was interrogated and tortured, the beatings permanently affecting her eyesight and hearing:

I was bombarded with questions: “Were you involved in the killings of the Generals?” I kept answering that I didn’t know, because I didn’t know about it all. Then, I was beaten, burned with cigarettes. My hand was burned with a cigarette, then I was hit with a knob, and was stripped naked to search for a Gerwani stamp.

The prisoners performed forced labor, with Sujilah assigned to cut zeroes off of paper money³⁷ and bring water to the male political prisoners building a dam near Parangtritis beach. When she was released in 1966, she returned to Nitipuran and later married her neighbor. She had her first child and found piece-work, sewing fabrics for clothing. Later, she started trading fabrics around Yogyakarta. She was frequently monitored by Indonesian intelligence.

In 1969 she had a two-year old and was three months pregnant. She had been visiting a sick friend, and arrived home after a military curfew. She was accused of being a PKI member and ordered to report to an official’s house in Bantul district. Pretending to interrogate her, the official grabbed at her but she screamed and cried until he stopped. She was then taken to Bantul district military command where she experienced further sexual harassment, and was beaten and burned with a cigarette.

They told me to take off my clothes, and began to shout out instructions. They shouted, “Sideways, on your back, on your stomach.” [Then they] touched me everywhere, stripped me, while I was three months pregnant.

Sujilah was held at Camp Bantul for two months then moved to Wirogunan Prison in Yogyakarta. She had very bad morning sickness, vomiting constantly. She was detained for two more months, then let go without any release papers and ordered to report to the subdistrict office for a month. In 1972 she was not permitted to vote in an election, and faced difficulties obtaining the paperwork for her children’s education.

When she gave birth to another child in 1973, she then had three young mouths to feed. Sujilah’s husband worked as a driver while she sewed and made snacks to sell at food stalls near her home. In 1995 she tried to open a kiosk, but this effort soon failed. In 2006 an earthquake destroyed their house. Now, Sujilah sells bamboo fans, clay stoves, brooms and firewood from her home in Nitipuran with a small amount of capital. She depends on her children who now work and have their own families.

Almost five decades after she was released, Sujilah at last feels accepted by her community. She was elected to be a member of a committee of the government’s Family Welfare Organization (PKK). She is happy to have so many children and grandchildren, and they are her source of strength. However she says she hasn’t yet been able to fully heal from the events of 1965: “In general, things are fine in the community. But, I still remember the unfair treatment because my father had ET (ex-political prisoner) marked in his ID card.” She also feels that there is no justice from the government. She can’t access the government health insurance scheme (Jamkesmas), without any clear reason, and there have been no official efforts to

clear the names of victims like herself: “I have not recovered yet because the government has not said that the PKI is not guilty.”

ONI: A TEENAGER DETAINED FOR 14 YEARS



Oni Ponirah with
her husband.

When Oni Ponirah was approached by Mamik to join this research project, she welcomed the offer. At 67, she lives in a little house in a close community in the middle of Yogyakarta. The small yard and living room is filled with paintings, sketches and sculptures made by her husband, another survivor of 1965. Her daughter was also a member of our research team.

Like other young women in 1965, Oni loved to dance to the song *Genjer-genjer*. She was seventeen, a first year senior high school student, when on November 25 a military police official came to her house in Dukuh village and took her to the military police post to be questioned overnight. When she couldn't answer questions they pulled her hair. She smiles bitterly, explaining, “I was told I was only being taken in for questioning. It turns out I was held for 14 years, from 1965 until the end of December 1979.”

She was taken to the Jefferson Building for further interrogation, and was ordered to strip. However, a prosecutor who was passing by took pity and stopped it from happening. From the Jefferson Building she was taken to Vredeberg Fort, then four other prisons: Wirogunan, Ambarawa, and Bulu Semarang, and finally to Plantungan in Central Java. She was never charged with a crime, and she was moved from one

prison to another without notice. “All the time I was in Ambarawa, my heart was never calm. Where else could I be moved?”

On December 8, 1979 she was released and sent home. “I was so happy even though my parents looked very old, because I had left them for 14 years.” Oni got a job as a babysitter, and a few months later, met Leo Mulyono, a painter who had also just returned from internment in Buru Island. They met at church, after a friend introduced them. They soon married and she had her first child the following year. The young family moved to another suburb in Yogyakarta, but had to routinely report to the old village head, far from the new house. This was burdensome, especially as their family grew to four children and she was still required to report regularly.

The stigma of being former prisoners also had an impact on their economic and career opportunities. In 1985 her husband, a batik painter, opened a gallery and the visitors from all over Indonesia and abroad raised the suspicions of local officials. They were ordered to shut the gallery and her husband started working for someone else.

As the years passed Oni and her family moved back to her parents’ village in Dukuh. They opened a fried food stall to supply local kiosks, while her husband continued working as an artist. They now rely on selling mobile phone credit as well as support from their children.

Their children have been affected by their parents’ history. The neighborhood kids teased them, but Oni and her husband encouraged them to focus on their studies. All graduated from college without any government assistance, and two of her children are married.

Oni feels they never got justice and thinks that the government should apologize to the victims. However she is philosophical about the bad experiences in her life: “It’s easier to be wise when your life experience is long.”

SUMILAH: A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY?

In 1965 Sumilah was a fourteen year-old girl, living in a village near the famous Prambanan temple. She helped her family sell food at a market stall when she was not in school. On November 19, Sumilah was picked up from her house and ordered to gather at a place in the village called Bokoharjo.

At 11 a.m. a truck arrived, it wasn't carrying anything, we were told to get on. In my heart I thought, if this truck heads east towards Wedi River then I'm definitely going to die. But it didn't. So I was thankful to God.

All the people in the truck were taken to Wirogunan and then checked one by one. In short, everything we owned was taken away, including money. They demanded everything, even earrings... Until the moment we entered they groped us, like this....

She was put into Block F4 with about 48 other women. The cell was crowded and human waste flooded the floor, streaming onto the mat where she slept. A few days



Sumilah in front of her satay stall

later, she was taken to the Jefferson Building to be interrogated. Sumilah was ordered to strip and turn around so they could look for a Gerwani tattoo. She was beaten on her head and face until she fainted. When she woke up and wiped her face with a handkerchief it was full of blood.

The CPM officers asked me, “Are you Gerwani?”

I answered, “No, I’m not.”

“Are you?” they asked again.

“No, Sir,” I answered again. I was hit right and left, “Sorry Sir, I only dance, Sir, I’m not involved in Gerwani, nor know about it.”

They asked me again, “Are you the one who loads and unloads the guns?”

“No, Sir, I don’t know anything about it.

Back in Wirogunan, Sumilah fell seriously ill and almost died, as many others did. Luckily, another prisoner who was a medical doctor gave her some medicine. After six months she was moved to Bulu Prison in Semarang and finally to Plantungan Prison in 1971. In Plantungan, Sumilah joined the agriculture group and she got better food: *gereh remuk* (crumbled salted fish), kale and broccoli, corn, and crisp crackers.

In Plantungan Sumilah learned that she had been detained by mistake. “Someone from Jakarta was looking for a woman who had run away from Jakarta, and the woman’s name was also Sumilah.” Recounting this twist of fate, she shook her head in disbelief.

Sumilah inside
her house



After 14 years, on April 27, 1979 she was released and went home to her family in Prambanan. Her parents held a ceremony called *larungan* to celebrate her release. “They took *bulus* (an eel), and put my clothes on it, and set it free. They said, ‘my child died, but now is alive again.’”

She married Dulrachmen, a trader, a few years later and gave birth to children in 1983 and 1986. Her children are a source of strength for her. Her village, Bokoharjo, had been a PKI base of support and she feels safe there: her neighbors are kind and never ask her questions.

In 1990 Sumilah and her husband opened a food stall selling soup and fried food, and began raising chickens. Their business was badly affected by the 1998 economic crisis when prices of everyday goods soared, costing them most of their capital. Her husband died in 2012, and now Sumilah sells satay, curry and goat stew at the Prambanan market, making just enough to make ends meet.

ENDANG BATARI: A FATHER DISAPPEARED

Tri Endang Batari’s childhood changed dramatically when her father, a civil servant, was arrested and their house ransacked.

I didn’t know my father had been taken. I was only in fifth grade. We were devastated by this incident. I fled to my grandparents’ place with my mother and my three siblings.

One month later, they returned home so that Endang and her siblings could go back to school. Their father’s arrest profoundly changed their lives. “We began a life full of insults and taunts from neighbors, friends and teachers.” Children made up songs about her and teased her for being a child of PKI. Even her teachers made cutting remarks about her parents, saying her mother was Gerwani or that her parents were rebels.

Endang’s family also suffered the financial impact of losing their sole source of income. Her mother had to sell part of their land, using the profits to buy a few goats that Endang and her siblings had to look after. Her mother tried selling spices



(*bumbon*) but lacked capital. Endang and her mother gathered stones in the Serang River, and her mother worked as a laborer in rice fields.

At that time I was just 11 years old and should have been playing, but I had to work looking for river stones to sell. At the edge of the river we gathered the stones then broke them into little pieces, called split stone.

Endang got the highest marks in her junior high school, but her family could not support her education. She decided to get married, and went to visit her father:

When I wanted to get married, I searched for my father in the Wates District Military Command, to be my guardian. But there was no information. It was said my father had been moved—that's all... On my marriage certificate was written, "legal guardian because her parent was caught in military raid.

Her father was never found, his fate remains unknown. In 1973 Endang and her husband moved to Jakarta to look for work. They had two children before they divorced in 1991. As a single mother Endang faced a new type of discrimination, but learned to ignore gossip, involving herself in activities at her mosque. The stigma attached to a child of an atheist PKI member began to fade, allowing Endang to become even more involved in her community. She began to win people's trust, becoming treasurer in the *arisan*, a lending circle and social gathering, and an organizer in the local women's group and community health initiative.

Endang opened a beauty salon specializing in weddings. Her business, which she runs with her eldest daughter, has been quite successful. She also acts in traditional Javanese theater and teaches art at the local primary school. Endang hopes that history will be corrected and rights restored to those who have been deprived. She was interviewed on a national television show,³⁸ and in 2005, she spoke at a session of parliament demanding rehabilitation and compensation for victims.

SRI LESTARI: FADING MEMORIES



Sri Lestari in front of her laundry shop

It is difficult for Sri Lestari to remember things, especially about 1965. She still keeps her release letter. Although she walks slowly and haltingly, when she stands she gathers herself straight and tall. With her long flowing black hair and painted eyes, she looks younger than her 73 years. Perhaps her fading memory is an antidote to unresolved trauma.

Prior to 1965, Sri's family had lived a comfortable life. Her father was a successful batik trader. Sri's parents were both PKI leaders at the subdistrict level. When they were arrested in September 1965, Sri sought refuge at her grandmother's house in the same village.

Not long after that, she was taken to the military police post in Yogyakarta. Like many others, she was then transferred to Wirogunan Prison until 1968. She is unable to recall much, especially about the torture she experienced. She was released and obliged to report once a week.

About ten years later, in November 1978, she married a neighbor, who was also a former political prisoner. In May 1980 she had a son, and opened a few businesses with her husband, including a food stall, a small kiosk, a rental car, a boarding house, and laundry service. Their boarding house closed after the 2006 earthquake, and now they rely on their laundry service to make ends meet.

Sri has found happiness through her marriage, her children and grandchildren. She likes being involved in women's activities in the village and in the church. Of the events of 1965 and her subsequent detention Sri says, "I want to forget and not discuss what happened before."

HARTITI: IN SEARCH OF A MISSING HUSBAND

On September 1965, Hartiti arrived by train at Tugu Station, Yogyakarta, having come from South Sumatra with her husband and four children. Her husband, Hartanto Simin, had just been promoted to a new position with the national railway company, PJKA. The young family arrived with hopes for a fresh start. On October 26, 1965 her husband went to work:

One afternoon before he went to work at PJKA, my husband said, "Probably there will be a commotion, PKI or union members might or might not be arrested." Hearing this, I felt as if I were a monkey, I felt so uncertain.

He never came home. She still does not know what happened to him or his body. Hartiti had only recently given birth and she began bleeding heavily due to the stress of thinking about the fate of her husband and of her four young children.

A few weeks after he disappeared she heard that he was at the military police office in Yogyakarta, only a kilometer away. Hartiti rushed to the office with some supplies for her husband. An official yelled insults at her, and Hartiti knew then that her husband, a labour activist, had been arrested because of his suspected involvement with the PKI.

A few months later, in January 1966, Hartiti was also arrested. She was not surprised, as she was a member of Gerwani. She was held for a few months at the police station, released, and a week later was arrested again. For four years she was moved to different detention centers: Vredeberg Fort, Wirogunan, Ambarawa and Bulu. Her parents looked after her children in Purworejo until Hartiti was released in 1970. But she felt that she was never truly free. She was often mocked by the village head, obliged to report regularly, and monitored at night. She stayed with her relatives but they were nervous about housing Hartiti and did not always treat her well.

While she did not suffer physical torture in detention, losing her husband and being separated from her children was difficult. One of her children died just a few days after her release. Hartiti believes his death is related to the violations the family had to endure.



Hartiti's husband

My child was old enough to understand his mother's suffering. He thought about it until he died. He also often heard news about me. He died from the insults that hurt him.

Three years after her release, Hartiti remarried. She lives with her second husband, children and grandchildren. She had largely supported her children through sewing. In 1979 she started making *lumpia* (spring rolls), selling them through the canteen at a nearby university. However in 2012 her house burned down and destroyed all her equipment, putting an end to her small business. The following year she began making and selling embroidered pillowcases, and sometimes helped students find boarding house accommodations.

Hartiti feels there has been ongoing injustice. She wants to know what happened to her husband:

I really want to know where my husband is. If he is dead, where is he buried? My children also ask, "If father is still alive, where is he now? If he's already dead, where is his body?"

The stigma of being a former political prisoner has affected her relationship with relatives and the community:

I once visited a sick neighbor, but it turned out that she didn't want to shake hands with me. People involved in 1965 were not allowed to participate in the PKK. My relative also said about me, "You don't need to care about Ms. Har. She joined PKI, now she converts to Christianity, and will be a pig when she dies."

The constant monitoring and the burden of having to regularly report to authorities have taken a toll on her economic and social life. She also thinks her arrest and detention prevented her from receiving her first husband's pension. Her health is deteriorating, she has high blood pressure and knees that hurt when she squats down. Hartiti draws strength from her surviving children. They have been successful and are very close to Hartiti. She also is sustained by her work, her community activities and her church.



Hartiti in the Jefferson Building, a site of torture in Yogyakarta. This was where she last saw her husband in 1965.

GRANDMOTHERS SPEAKING OUT



KIPPER at a public hearing in Jakarta, November 2013.

In November 2013, the 50 member organizations of the national Coalition for Justice and Truth conducted a truth-seeking process for violations committed between 1965-2005. The women involved in this research project were invited to testify and perform some of the songs they sang in prison. Mamik, Endang Batari, Endang Lestari, Nik and Kadmi enthusiastically prepared for this five-day event. Mamik testified during the session on the impact of conflict on women.

The group performed both sad and funny songs, the audience embraced them warmly. Almost each day the group was asked to perform, and on the closing night, they prepared a short skit about the family life of a political prisoner. In the audience was Ratu Hemas, Deputy Head of the local parliament and wife of the Sultan of Yogyakarta. Her presence was important for the women, and the public hearing was an opportunity to proclaim their existence and concerns. More recently, they met again with Ratu Hemas, securing a promise to provide assistance to members who need urgent attention.

This song was written by Nik when she was in Ambarawa Prison:

Ambarawa, Rawa Pening

<i>Ambarawa city of memories</i>	<i>Ambarawa kota kenangan</i>
<i>The unforgettable town</i>	<i>Kota tak kan terlupakan</i>
<i>Its breezing wind at night</i>	<i>Silirnya angin di malam hari</i>
<i>Seep into and touch my soul</i>	<i>Meresap menyentuh jiwa</i>
<i>Ambarawa city of memories</i>	<i>Ambarawa kota kenangan</i>
<i>The unforgettable town</i>	<i>Kota tak kan terlupakan</i>
<i>The sparkling water of Pening Marsh</i>	<i>Kilau air Rawa Pening gemerlap</i>
<i>Shines upon Ambarawa</i>	<i>Menyinari Ambarawa</i>
<i>But I can't regret</i>	<i>Tetapi tak dapat kusesali</i>
<i>I will return eventually</i>	<i>Akhirnya kan kembali</i>
<i>I still believe in you</i>	<i>Aku tetap percaya padamu</i>
<i>Ambarawa city of memories</i>	<i>Ambarawa kota kenangan</i>
<i>The unforgettable town</i>	<i>Kota tak kan terlupakan</i>
<i>The sparkling water of Pening Marsh</i>	<i>Kilau air Rawa Pening gemerlap</i>
<i>Shines upon Ambarawa</i>	<i>Menyinari Ambarawa</i>

Our research led to other opportunities to speak to local and national officials. In June 2014, KIPPER and AJAR held a meeting with city officials at Sunan Kalijaga Islamic State University discussing services for elderly victims. Nik, Endang and Kadmiyati spoke about lack of health services, while Mamik spoke about the research findings: many women survivors lack information about basic services and are unable to meet their health needs. Of the 12 participants in the study, none have government medical insurance and only three have a steady source of income, while the rest rely on family members or odd jobs.

The group made a plea, on the basis of the new Presidential Decree No. 18 of 2014 on the Protection and Empowerment of Women Victims of Conflict,³⁹ that they must no longer be invisible. They demanded the rehabilitation of their reputation, compensation, and a guarantee that during the last years of their lives they will receive care.

There has been no follow-up from the government side. On December 9, 2014, newly elected President Joko Widodo (known as Jokowi) spoke for the first time on the plight of victims of human rights violations at an event organized by the National Human Rights Commission in Yogyakarta. There were high expectations as Jokowi reiterated his commitment to human rights, but in the end he did not apologize to victims or mention accountability for serious crimes.

When the speech ended there appeared to be no chance for a dialogue as his bodyguards rushed him out of the room. However, as Jokowi exited, Mamik and Kadmiyati moved confidently across the room toward him. Hastily, they expressed their resolve to fight for their rights, and demanded that the president pay attention to poor and elderly. The President asked his minders to take note, before the moment passed as he was mobbed by the participants.



Mamik stood
beside Jokowi

This was a memorable moment for the women involved in our research. Having been invisible for a long time, they are now beginning to speak out. Mamik reflected:

With this study, together with AJAR, we believe that we will continue this fight until we find a true victory, that is the liberation of women from violence and crime from all governments, so that there will be no event or tragedy of 1965 or other forms of violence throughout Indonesia, and an awareness of women who are treated unfairly.

In my opinion, I've found what I dreamed about, what I desired during my imprisonment, in this process: the gathering of women from throughout Indonesia, from Aceh to Papua. All have a great spirit, which was missing from Indonesian women's movement since it's destruction by the New Order regime, and I am very satisfied now. I am proud. I have found again the ideal Indonesian women, who want to liberate women from all violence, crime, and hypocrisy.

Chapter 5

Buru: From Prison Island to Religious Conflict



A typical former political prisoner's house on Buru Island.

The New Order proposed internment on Buru Island, in the eastern province of Maluku (also known as the Moluccas Islands), as a way to “employ and rehabilitate” political prisoners of 1965 while solving Indonesia’s population problem in one fell swoop. The military regime popularized the term *inrehab*, an abbreviation for “installation and rehabilitation” from 1969 until 1979. These three excerpts from Amnesty International’s annual reports, spanning a decade, show the systematic and widespread nature of arbitrary detention, and the evolution of government plans that brought at least ten thousand prisoners to Buru Island:

There are probably about 150,000 political prisoners in Indonesia at the present time. The figure has remained fairly constant for the last eighteen months. Many have been released during that period, but the army has continued to round up communist suspects and there have been many purges of government departments and sections of the armed forces. Most of the prisoners were arrested for alleged communist associations and about half of them have now been in prison for over three years—since the period following the abortive communist coup of 30th September 1965. Only about 100 have been brought to trial.

Reports of overcrowding, undernourishment and even brutal mistreatment of prisoners are still current. The Indonesian government has frequently voiced its intention of releasing the majority of the prisoners—either than those accused of direct involvement in the coup—and announced in February a plan for the transfer of 60,000 prisoners from Java to less densely populated areas in Kalimantan and the Moluccas where they would be employed and gradually rehabilitated.⁴⁰

By 1969, the first group of 2500 male prisoners had been brought to the prison island:

In October 1969, the Indonesian government made its first major policy statement on the future of the 116,000 individuals in prison, detention camps and under house arrest. Category C detainees, against whom no evidence of Communists' activities exists, would be released, as soon as possible. These numbered at least 20,000. Category B, believed to have communist connections, will not be released but will be sent to resettlement areas in remote parts of the archipelago where they will undertake agricultural work and will live in continued restriction. They number between 10,000 and 30,000. The first group of 2,500 has been taken to the island of Buru.⁴¹

A decade later, Amnesty International reported on the condition of the first batch of 1501 released prisoners:

It is clear that the chief criteria for releasing prisoners—certainly the 1,501 released from the island prison of Buru—were old age and chronic ill-health. Of those released from Buru, some had to be carried on stretchers to boats taking them to Java and two died on the journey to Surabaya; 12 of the prisoners had to be taken from the quayside straight to hospital; 196 of them were suffering from tuberculosis, while among 300 others there were cases of asthma, high blood pressure, hernia, jaundice and other illnesses.⁴²

Buru Island encapsulates the challenges faced by Indonesia as a nation. It was a prison island from 1969-1979. In 1999 it was a site of religious violence, with fundamentalist Islamic groups attacking Christians in a number of villages, burning down two churches and non-Muslim houses in Savanajaya. In 2011, gold was discovered in Mount Botak, bringing thousands of migrants to the island.

WIVES AND CHILDREN OF POLITICAL PRISONERS TO BURU ISLAND

Between 1969-1979, 10,000-12,000 male political prisoners were interned on Buru Island. Many were already in poor health due to chronic lack of food and medication, and when they arrived on naval ships they found the island had little capacity to sustain life. Memoirs written by "Buru Island alumni"⁴³ describe the early years on Buru: many prisoners died from hard labour, lack of food and medicine, and severe punishment. In his account of his years on Buru Island, the novelist



Women and children arriving in Savanajaya, Buru Island (circa 1974). Reproduction from Hartini's private collection.

Pramodya Ananta Toer listed 320 people who perished, a haunting memorial to hardship.⁴⁴

Gradually, the prisoners were able to plant and harvest food, build barracks, an irrigation system, roads, and other facilities. In 1972, the government rounded up the wives and children, by force and persuasion, to be relocated to the island. This family reunion policy driven by the military was intended to compel former political prisoners to join an official transmigration program to move people from heavily populated areas to the outer islands.⁴⁵

Recalling the plight of detainees/prisoners, overcrowding, limited work opportunities, and other social circumstances in Java, in principle the use of detainees/prisoners will be implemented by transmigration program outside Java... The use of detainees/prisoners in projects will take into account with the possibility of involving the families while continuing to address their security, supervision, and guidance.⁴⁶

According to a witness who testified before the National Commission on Violence against Women, 632 women and children were shipped to Buru Island between 1972-1974 to join their husbands and fathers.⁴⁷ Approximately 200 families were coerced to remain on the island when they were released, particularly those who received land to build homes and plant crops. Many were daughters who married their fathers' fellow prisoners in a mass wedding organized by the military. The newlyweds were made to swear an oath never to leave Buru Island.⁴⁸

The transmigration program came to the village of Savanajaya in the 1980s, as those who remained on the island were integrated into the national program. Each received two hectares of agricultural land and the land their homes were on, as well as food aid and agricultural support. Savanajaya slowly evolved into a lively village. Paths were cleared, the elementary schools filled with students, and a public hall was used for performances. Parents encouraged their children to continue their education to a higher level. Residents worked hard in the fields, sold their goods in the market, created home industries of *tempeh*, herbs, crackers, and bread. Research participants remembered this as a happy and prosperous time when neighbors would celebrate each other's religious holidays. Among former political prisoners who lived in Savanajaya in 1999, 60 families or one third of the total residents were Christian, while the rest were Muslim.⁴⁹

However, this changed in 1999 when religious strife overtook the province of Maluku. A group of armed men attacked Savanajaya, burning down two churches. The ashen buildings remain there, a reminder of this traumatic period. The attack compelled the Christian families to leave Savanajaya, and the remaining women to don headscarves. In a discussion about their vision for Savanajaya, the women said, "We long to live together again". They are unhappy about persistent efforts by some people in their community to block plans to rebuild the church.

In 2013, when we began this research together with LAPPAN, we discovered that about 48 former political prisoners and their family members live on Buru Island. Another four moved to nearby Ambon, after the religious violence that took place in Maluku between 1999-2001.⁵⁰ In Savanajaya former political prisoners and their family members are often referred to as *eks-warga* (literally, former citizens.) An explanation offered was this was shorthand for "warga eks-tapol" i.e. citizens who are former political prisoners. Many live in miserable conditions in the wooden houses built by fellow prisoners in 1972, with little access to public assistance and services.

NGABINEM: CROSSING THE OCEAN FOR A PLOT OF LAND

Ngabinem was a young mother, with daughters aged 7 and 6, and a 5-year old son, when her husband, Rabimin, and her younger brother Sugito were arrested in Mt. Kidul, Yogyakarta, in 1965. The task of feeding her husband and brother fell on Ngabinem's shoulders, as their jailors ordered her to provide 10 kilograms of rice for each of them per month.

Ngabinem regularly visited her husband in jail for four years, giving birth to their fourth child in 1967 and their fifth child in 1969. Some prisoners were released, but Rabimin and Sugito were categorized as class B and PKI prisoners and exiled to Buru. This was a very difficult time for Ngabinem, who had to raise five children who were ostracized as members of a PKI family. Suhartini, the oldest, quit school because she couldn't stand being humiliated by schoolmates and neighbors.



Ngabinem and her three children, Hartini, Darsini and Suhartoyo. This photo was taken in 1972 to be sent to their father in Buru Island. A few months later they boarded a ship to join him there.

Ngabinem moved to her parents' house in Ponjong with three of her children while two others lived with her in-laws in Prambanan to continue school. In Ponjong, Ngabinem worked hard as a farm laborer, but was unable to send her oldest child to school. When her fourth child was five, the local military encouraged Ngabinem to participate in the migration program to Buru Island to "follow her husband".

At first, it was difficult for her to go to Buru Island because of her children.

I often couldn't sleep at night. I thought about my children at their grandmother's house in Prambanan. My heart was anxious, my thoughts uncertain... Are they doing what their grandmother says? Are they eating? Are they being naughty? I could only pray to God to provide a way out. I wanted to live together with my husband and children...in one house again...that was my constant prayer.



Ngabinem
and her son

Her husband's letters convinced her to join him in Buru, where he promised the children would go to school again, and they would have house and a plot of land. Ngabinem boarded a navy ship along with her elderly mother and three children, that took them on a six-day journey to Buru. She had to leave two of her children with her mother-in-law:

When I arrived at Buru Island, I felt sad, but also happy because I could be together with my husband and children. I was also happy to see my husband was still alive because I knew that some had died... When I first saw him at Sanleko Beach, I cried suddenly... I was grateful we could be together, and it was lucky we have a plot of land, there were fields, and spare tools. My husband's hands were injured because there wasn't enough tools for working... [I thought] just be patient, the important thing was we could be with my husband.

Surviving in Buru Island was not easy, one reason that only a small percentage of the political prisoners were convinced to bring their families to join them.

Ngabinem and their children helped her husband work in the fields. They depended on the food rations they received, and her husband instilled discipline and self-reliance in their children. They were not allowed to ask anything from fellow political prisoners. If caught giving out food outside of what was prescribed by the wardens, prisoners could be punished.

Darsini, Ngabinem
and Hartini
in Savanajaya, circa
1978 and in 2014.



Ngabinem's husband was freed in 1977 with all the other prisoners. They were given two options, either return to Java or stay at Savanajaya as transmigrants. Ngabinem and her husband decided to stay with about 200 other families. While life in Buru was not easy, they had nothing in Java. In Savanajaya they had some capital and had already built a life. Under the transmigration program they were given two hectares of land, one for rice farming (*sawah*) and one for dry-land gardening (*ladang*), as well as a year of food rations and the house they lived in.

Her husband died in 2007 due to old age. All her children are married, with two still living in Prambanan, and three in Savanajaya. Ngabinem is still active in her community, including Quranic recitation and a community health initiative, but was afraid to join others due to past repression:

I didn't participate in other activities because I didn't dare, I would be accused as Gerwani again. I joined this [participatory research] activity ... I won't be arrested later, will I?

HARTINI: A VOW OF LOVE, A VOW TO STAY

Hartini is Ngabinem's eldest daughter. She recalls the time her father was arrested.

I was six years old when my father was arrested. They said he was involved in G30S/PKI. I didn't know what that was, and after that our lives were turned upside down.

When her father was sent to Buru, her mother cried and cried because she didn't know what he had done wrong, when he would come back, and how they would meet again. Many neighbors and family members distanced themselves out of fear: "Since that time, we were isolated, we were like garbage, like a contagious disease... even though my father was a school teacher, the respect that people in the village previously had for him vanished."



Hartini quit school in the third grade because she could no longer stand being humiliated. When she was 15, she boarded a navy ship to Buru Island.

Hartini and her husband, Markis, at their home, 2014.

At first, I refused to come with mother to Buru Island because I was afraid of boarding a ship... Father then wrote a letter to me... I became so passionate... because father said that I would go to school again... Apparently father knew that I really wanted to go to school after I had to quit in the third grade when we lived in Prambanan...

...We were on the ship for six days until we arrived at Sanleko Beach. After arriving at Sanleko Beach, we walked about 30 minutes to Savanajaya... I could smell the marshes. Wild weeds grew tall everywhere, even inside the house. My house was very simple, a dirt floor, without any furniture. I told my mother right away that I didn't want to stay here. Strangely, my brothers, grandmother, and mother looked happy; in the end I gave up on going home...

...Although we were disappointed at first with the condition of our house in Savanajaya that was very ... damp and full of weeds, I finally felt happy because I was sent to school. I was very happy because there were no longer any differences among us because we all were children of political prisoners. We filled our days by going to school and working to help father and mother at field. We were always taught manners to our parents and others... also to political prisoners. We should not ask anything and should not refuse what they gave us... I grew into a teenager and I fell in love with a political prisoner, but I was still in elementary school because I entered the school late. We married after I finished sixth grade.



Hartini sharing her photos from her memory box.

Hartini has many happy pictures from her youth—from the time when many of the prisoners organized sports and cultural activities for the children—to include in her memory box. One picture shows her wedding. At the age of 18, Hartini was one of a dozen young women who agreed to marry the younger prisoners in 1977 at a mass wedding organized by the military. The newly weds were also made to promise not to leave the island, as rumors of the pending release of prisoners began to circulate.

One lingering and painful reminder of all the discrimination and stigma that Hartini has faced is her marriage certificate:

There is one thing that still sticks in my heart, namely my husband's occupation and mine was written as 'Prisoner G30S/PKI' in our marriage certificate although it was only him who was the prisoner. These words are a lasting PKI stamp in our lives.

She feels this inscription on her marriage certificate is discriminatory and unfair.

I feel sorry for my husband...He was just a civil servant in Surabaya who didn't know anything...He was arrested, tortured, jailed and exiled to Buru Island because he allegedly was involved in the G30S/PKI events in Jakarta. The description of his occupation as a PKI political prisoner reminds me of all the days of teasing, suffering and unanswered questions. I still do not understand why my father, who worked as a teacher, and my husband, who was a civil servant, were arrested, tortured and thrown into jail.

Group marriage organized by the military between prisoners and daughters' of fellow prisoners, circa 1977. Reproduction from Hartini.



Together with the NGO, LAPPAN, Hartini and three other wives of political prisoners asked the local Religious Affairs Office to re-issue their marriage certificates without *G30S/PKI Prisoner* as their occupation. On October 7, 2014 a local official handed them four new marriage certificates during a ceremony. Remarkably, the official apologized and shed a tear. This was an unprecedented act of acknowledgment from a local government official. Another small yet significant step that resulted from this research was the enrollment of 17 group members and their husbands in a new government medical insurance scheme (BPJS.).

LASINEM: GROWING OLD WITHOUT SECURITY



Lasinem was born in the district of Ngawi, East Java. She does not know her date of birth. Her parents were illiterate and lived in the middle of a teak plantation in a tiny village of about ten houses. Lasinem never went to school or worked for wages. She helped her parents collect wood to sell so they could buy other food.

She was married in 1960 to a young farmer named Senen. They had a daughter in 1963 and a son in 1969. After her son was born her husband was accused of being involved in the attempted 1965 coup. Lasinem remembered that moment with tears in her eyes, recalling in a quiet voice:

He was picked up by a soldier, his own friend, and taken to the village office. He was beaten upright in a chair, beaten, and was ordered to lie down, then his back was trampled on until he was injured all over.

For a couple of weeks, Lasinem had no news of her husband, until one day a uniformed official told her that her husband was not allowed to go home, and had been taken to the port city of Surabaya instead. Lasinem was hopeless and didn't know what to do. Frightened neighbors closed their door on her. A few days later, Lasinem received news that her husband had been moved from Surabaya Prison to Nusakambangan Prison. She didn't know where that was. Later, she was finally informed that had been moved to Buru Island:

My suffering was complete. At first I was confused and scared, terrified, and I realized I had lost my protector, and my source of financial support. What about my young children? They need to eat!

...There was no other choice; from that moment, I became the primary breadwinner. At first, I was confused about how I would do it. I could not do anything... my children were still small, one was three years old, just able to walk outside the house... and needing supervision. The other one was still a baby, still breastfeeding. But I had to look for food.

Lasinem tried to work harder, collecting more wood in the forest so she and her family could survive. She left her children with her mother while she worked in the forest and went to market. For three years Lasinem worked to support her family without any news about her husband. There were rumors that many people had been killed in the river, but Lasinem tried to stay positive and believe that her husband would return. The money Lasinem earned was far from enough to buy the minimal necessities such as rice and cooking oil. Her daughter Sumini often accompanied her mother to the forest to help her collect wood or harvest vegetables. Sumini wasn't enrolled in school because the school was far from their house, and Lasinem was still traumatized by the arrest of her husband.

In 1972, Lasinem finally got news. She was told to take her family and join her husband in Buru. Lasinem took her son but left her daughter with her older brother in Java. Reuniting their son with her father was one of the most beautiful moments in Lasinem's life on Buru Island. On this island Lasinem gave birth to two more children in 1973 and 1975.

Life in Buru Island was as hard in her home village. "I always try to meet my children's needs although I have to sacrifice my body and soul." Even though Lasinem and her husband had been given land they had to hand over their harvest to the government:

... The field cultivated by my husband and his friends was spacious. It yielded a lot. I usually helped harvest it, but the result was not brought home. It was taken to a warehouse, given to the officer, to the government. All was collected in the barn across the road. All crops also sent to the warehouse: vegetables, corn, cassava, all went there. We waited for the distribution. In the morning, vegetables, five peas, one slice of eggplant, and cassava were given, but only to my husband.

Lasinem continued to work hard and supported her family any way she could. "I kept trying to meet the needs of my family as best as possible. I made *tempeh*, bean sprouts, salty eggs and sold them to supplement the family income."

After they had lived for seven years in Savanajaya, Lasinem's husband was finally freed together with all other political prisoners. While most returned to Java, Lasinem and Senen chose to stay and go into the transmigration program. They received one hectare of rice fields, a plot of land for their garden, and a house. Lasinem and her husband worked hard to send their children to school.



Lasinem washing beans sprouts she cultivated in her garden.

Lasinem is now about 70 years old, living in the same house as when she arrived on Buru Island. She is in good physical health, not as strong as before. She still has to work hard to sustain her family. They rent their rice field to others, and she plants and sells bean sprouts. They also raise poultry and livestock and Lasinem occasionally sells her chickens and rice.

66

In 2012 and 2014, Lasinem's husband, Senen, received some cash assistance from the local government. Lasinem feels that her hard work has led to good results. "I am happy that my children already have their own families and are independent. My happiness is complete because I have 13 grandchildren now."

While she is content in her elderly age, she is still affected by the past. "I still feel upset if I remember what happened before, I can't forget." She also longs for her daughter that she left in Java and has never seen again. "For years I have been living in Savanajaya, I didn't get any news about my daughter who lived with her uncle... until finally one day, I heard that my daughter was a transmigrant to Kalimantan."

RODIAH: A DUTIFUL DAUGHTER

Rodiah from Cimahi, West Java, and the two sisters Juariah and Subi from Batang, Central Java, boarded a navy boat with their mothers in 1972, with the promise they would be reunited with their fathers. Rodiah's father had worked as a paramedic and their life had been quite comfortable. When he was arrested their lives changed dramatically. Her mother was nine months pregnant, sickly, and had five little children. Rodiah remembers being hungry all the time:

I always ate tips of Leucaena leaves, at midday when I was hungry. I wanted to eat but my mother was sick, my father wasn't there and my brother still didn't understand it. I'd take tips and eat them, raw. I'd eat them; I took it from other people's front porches. I was afraid my mother would get angry because I might get a stomach ache.



She also stopped going to school. "We didn't have the money and I was the child of PKI."

Rodiah was 13 when she arrived in Buru with the first wave of families sent to live there. "I was happy to see my father again but also sad when I saw the situation here..." Rodiah had imagined a much more comfortable life but the reality was different.

Before I arrived I thought I would live a nice life, I had already imagined a comfortable life. It turned out I was coming to a jungle...the first time we came to the house there was tall reed grass growing inside.

Rodiah was able to return to school in Buru, but only for a year before having to leave to help look after her siblings. Before she married, her family's economic situation was so bad that she experienced hunger and stole food. "I was so hungry that I dared to steal fruit. If I hadn't been so hungry I would never have been so brazen." Rodiah also remembers the fear many women and girls in Buru felt.

At night we were frightened of the guards. They looked at the young girls so we got scared. Even [of] the male prisoners. Because the majority here was male, so we the female was scared to go out at night. Of course, they were not all bad, but some were.

Rodiah says there were cases of rape but no one spoke about them because people were scared. There were also girls who became pregnant, including one friend of Rodiah, and some who had children with different men. "If they refused they could be punished... so pregnant girls stayed quiet, what else could they do, because they were impregnated by army officers."

Rodiah experienced much hardship and is only now beginning to feel brave enough to talk about what has happened to her: "All this time I have been closed, not brave enough to be open. Now I dare to share all that has been in my heart for the last decades. I am even scared to speak about this to my family, let alone to strangers."

Rodiah's health has not been good for the past five years. She is weak, and complains of headaches and breaks out in cold sweats. She had a successful business selling yellow rice, a traditional breakfast dish. She used to wake up at two a.m. to cook then sell food at the market at daybreak. However, she started feeling pain in her hands and then in her feet, making it impossible for her to continue. Her family's financial condition has suffered.

Even though she was sick, Rodiah always tried to attend the meetings for this research. If she found it difficult to walk, her husband accompanied her.

The religious violence of 1999 that swept her village left a deep trauma. She described the December 1999 riots:

It happened during the fasting month...I was cooking food for our last meal (before fasting)... Suddenly, I heard a fuss outside, I peeped through the window... Oh my God, so many white-robed people were milling around, their heads wrapped in turbans. They shouted... Then, I saw their hands holding a long sword, pointy spears.... and I saw they threw something to the neighbors' houses, and burning them down ... I saw the fire quickly got bigger... oh my God.... I become limp when I remember it.... my neighbor's house was burned, the fire raged ... I woke up her husband and children, I was scared ... I have never seen that much fire and flashing machetes and spears ... Apparently, many houses were burned, not just my neighbor's in front of my house, but in some places as well; all houses of Christian Savanajaya residents. I don't know what the problem was, what the mistake was, why their homes and places of worship were burned by the robed people. I was scared... until I became sick, I couldn't eat, lost weight, my heart beat irregularly. Since the event, my husband and son did not sleep at home at night for a week. They slept under a bougainvillea tree because they didn't feel safe at home; afraid of the robed people who burned down our neighbors' houses that night.

The remains of a church burnt out during the December 1999 religious riots.



When asked about her hopes for the future Rodiah focused on two things. One was to clear the name of ex-political prisoners and their families. Second was her hope to improve the economy for people on Buru by keeping prices low and supporting the local rice trade.

69

JUARIAH & SUBIYANTI: TWO SISTERS SURVIVING TOGETHER

When Juariah and Subi were five and three years old their father K. Darto, a plantation employee, was arrested. First, he was detained in Nusakambangan Prison, another prison island off the south coast of Java. Later, he was exiled to Buru Island. Juariah remembers, "I felt the loss of a father figure because my family's life became very miserable. We had to work hard even though we were still under age." They quit school to help their parents and to avoid mockery.

In 1974, Juariah, Subi, their two brothers, and mother followed their father to Buru Island. Juariah remembers how their brother was surprised to see their father because he looked so old. He had to endure an environment of violence, doing hard labour without sufficient, food or rest. Juariah and Subi knew this from the stories of political prisoners they met, though their father did not tell them everything. However, his physical appearance spoke volumes:

I feel sad and painful when I remember my father's stories. He said he was asked to bring bamboo. But, he just brought one while the officer had ordered each political prisoner to bring two bamboo poles at once. Maybe he was not physically strong, and would bring more bamboo later. All prisoners were required to bring the same amount of bamboo; maybe it was considered a mistake. Finally, the officer hit my father's arm with a weapon. It left a bruise on his arm and took a long time to recover.

Because of their father's condition, Juariah and Subi had to stop going to school. At 14 and 12 years old, they worked in the fields to help their father. They were the only females working in the field; the other girls were busy studying or doing domestic work. But there was no other choice; their father was physically weak. After being reunited for only four years, he passed away in 1978. However, he lived long enough to give his blessing at Juariah's wedding in 1977. Juariah married a fellow political prisoner from Surabaya. They were married in a mass wedding ceremony organized at the eve of the release of all prisoners. Sixteen couples, including Hartini and Markis, Sri and Percoyo, and Rodiah and Anim, took their vows together. They were also obliged to promise to the military commanders that they would not leave the island.

For Juariah married life was full of happiness and struggle. She was 20 years younger than her husband. She gave birth to two daughters who made their life complete despite living in a simple house with no electricity and a dirt floor. With her husband, Juariah worked hard in the field and garden. She also made and sold coconut oil. They tried hard to pay for their children's school, even selling their house to pay for their tuition fees. Both daughters continued their studies in Java and one of them graduated as an architect. "I sold everything in order to support my first child to complete her degree in architecture." Now Juariah lives in a new house bought for her by her daughters.

In 2014, Juariah's husband passed away due to sudden sickness, just three weeks after their first daughter married. A few years later, Juariah married again to a soldier from Makassar, encouraged by her children. The marriage only lasted two years. He was aggressive, and though he never hit her, "he was always making fun of the PKI." Juariah feels that stigma towards those labeled PKI is very hurtful. "If we go to certain places, there is talk of the past, we feel like we have been stabbed. If I hear talk about G30S/PKI, I become very emotional... I can not forget, maybe I will always remember."

Juariah's sister Subi has also remained on Buru. Without any hesitation, Subi says her source of joy is her son. After years of failing to get pregnant, Juariah agreed to have another baby to be adopted and raised by Subi. Her husband was working as



Juariah's siblings
Right to left:
Juariah, Subiayanti,
and their brother

a migrant laborer when her son was born. Later, they separated when her husband decided to return to Java. “Adopting this child was the happiest day of my life, more than getting married.”

Now Subi supports herself with income from her hair salon. Business is usually good if the gold mine in Gunung Botak is busy. She hopes to open a salon near the main road if she obtains credit from the government. Subi has remarried and feels that over time things have improved for the descendants of political prisoners. “Maybe because (my son) is a grandchild, not a child, of a political prisoner like us. Also, my current husband is not a former political prisoner. The mocking about being a ‘child of PKI’ is lessening.”



Subi in front of her salon

SRI: CAUGHT IN A CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Sri Kuswanturi was part of the first wave of political prisoners’ families who came to Buru Island in 1972, together with her mother and her three siblings. Her youngest sibling was born in Savanajaya in 1973. All her siblings are now living in different places; one in Papua and another is a teacher in Makassar. Similar to the other women, Sri’s family was often harassed by soldiers.

After my father was arrested, our house was searched a number of times, even above the ceiling, I don’t know what they were looking for. The cupboards were emptied of their contents. We were very disturbed, annoyed, angry, confused and eventually frightened. Our house was not peaceful again. We were scared to be at home when they kept coming.

As the oldest child of three, Sri became responsible for helping her mother to support the family. After arriving in Savanajaya, she had to work hard to feed her family. She used to ask for cassava and corn from former prisoners when they were in the fields. She would secretly bring kilos of cassava and corn to her house. If a soldier passed by, she would hide cassava or corn in the ditches, and take them home later. Harvesting food without permission from the soldiers could lead to punishment. Sri was only 15 years old.



Sri and husband

The years of hard work have taken their toll on Sri. She suffers from untreated scoliosis and is in frequent pain.

Since my father was arrested, I had to help my mother and became the backbone of the family. Now my spine is crooked and I am in great pain. I do not know how to heal it. I have already taken medicine but my spine can't be straightened again. I have gone for medical treatment to many places, but my spine was already bent. I am not able to recover again. This is my sacrifice as the oldest child because my father was arrested and detained and we had to live here...

In 1977, together with the other 15 couples, Sri married a political prisoner. She feels that she has a good marriage, blessed with three children. One has graduated from college, and another from senior high school. However, like other poor families in her village, they had to sell their land to pay for their children's education. Sri now makes soybean cakes, *tempeh*, and bakes bread at home. She sold it at the market and used her profits to buy food and daily items for her children and grandchildren. But the situation changed after the 1999 violence.



The violence damaged her house, and they also reactivated fear and trauma from her past. Sri sold her land soon after the 1999 riots because she was scared. "I have felt scared since (my father) became a political prisoner up until the 1999 riot, so I

sold my rice fields and went back to Java. But I wasn't long there; I was like a confused person because I couldn't find work. So, I came back to Buru to live here.”

The trauma she experienced has taken a great toll on her health. When she thinks too much or has a lot of problems she feels worse. She hasn't received any kind of assistance from the government to repair her house.

MADA: LOVE ACROSS CREED

Mada, the second of four siblings, was born in Buru in Kayeli village in 1955. Her family's financial situation prevented her from attending school. She stayed at home to help her family. In 1965, her village was flooded leaving her family's house completely destroyed. The local government gave her family a plot of heavily forested land in Namlea (Nametek) to clear and build a new house.

Around 1975, a nun asked Mada to work as a cook in a church school in Savanajaya. The school took in many of the children of political prisoners. Here she met Diro Utomo, a political prisoner who often came to bring goods to their kitchen. Diro was a dashing young man, a jack-of-all-trades who had a way with words. They fell in love, but soon found that getting married proved to be a difficult task. Their differing status as a local resident and political prisoner meant that a special permit had to be requested from the military headquarters in Jakarta. As Diro was a Muslim and Mada a Christian, they faced cultural and social barriers as well. With persistent effort, they eventually obtained a permission letter from the Regional Military Command but had to contend with obligatory reporting (*wajib lapor*) for six months.



Mada and Diro

Their wedding, on July 25, 1978, was an inter-faith marriage as Mada and Diro kept to their own religions. Mada was 23, and Diro was 36. When Diro was finally released, he worked on their field, a plot provided to those who chose to stay on the island. Mada sold tofu and *tempeh* (soybean cake) at the local market. The couple had four daughters, filling their 20 years of marriage with happiness. Mada's family also lived with them in Savanajaya.

Her happy life with her family was torn apart two days before Christmas in 1999. Mada shared her memory of the event with a trembling voice:

It was when my family gathered; both of my parents were here because we wanted to celebrate Christmas together. We were preparing food as usual... Suddenly, I was disturbed by a riot outside the house... There was a group of unknown persons with machetes and wooden bat... They shouted... it was frightening, making people panic. They burnt two churches in Savanajaya... they also burnt non-Muslim residents' house. They didn't burn ours, maybe because my husband is Muslim... It was a very frightening day, causing my parents, children, and me trembled in fear.

I remembered, we, the Christian residents, were gathered in Mako by a priest for safety. We were advised to evacuate. Many Christian families fled to Ambon and never returned; they sold their land in Savanajaya, they didn't want to live here anymore. Actually, I also wanted to go away with my parents and children, as well as with the neighbors I already knew well. However, Doro didn't permit me because my eldest daughter just delivered her baby, only 2 months old. So, from our family, only my parents and my two daughters fled... My parents were in their 80s when it happened... It was very sad they had to experience that in their old age. They fled and lived in Ambon. They don't want to return to Savanajaya because they are still traumatized... because there is still a feeling of terrified and fear that could not be disappeared from their mind... When I remembered the past, I feel sad because my family was torn apart after the riot.

Life in Savanajaya gradually returned to normal, but the violence left pain and trauma for Mada. Her family was separated while the local government didn't give any attention or explanation about what had happened, or compensation for Mada's burned house. She continues selling things at the market once a week and has a small kiosk in front of her house as well as looking after her small grandchildren. Her first grandchild is in senior high school, while her youngest child is still in college in Yogyakarta. She says, "I wish there will be no more violence... so that my children and grandchildren can live better than our difficult times."



Mada inside her house

Chapter 6

Kupang: A Secret Violence

In West Timor, within the small island chain of East Nusa Tenggara province, the atrocities of 1965 have always been a public secret. Survivors and family members of those killed or disappeared have only recently begun to speak about their experiences.⁵¹

Until the 1950s, there was little Communist activity in West Timor. However, by 1960, the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) had expanded significantly.⁵² The influence of the PKI, especially among the educated class, was due, in part, to the fact that the province was a largely Christian enclave in a Muslim country. Christians saw Soekarno obstructing efforts to make Indonesia an Islamic state, especially through his promotion of the Nasakom concept (Nationalism, Religion, Communism) and the national philosophy of Pancasila that guaranteed freedom of religion.⁵³



I must set things straight by sharing my story so
they don't write a false history for us ...
My task is to tell the truth so that this bitter
history will not be repeated.

—MIGELINA A. MARCUS

In 1965, Migelina Marcus's parents and some of her siblings were detained, and her father and younger brother disappeared and are presumed dead. Migelina had worked in radio but her salary was terminated.

She managed to send her children to school, though the family struggled economically and did not always have enough food. Today, Oma Net, as she is known, survives on a small income from sewing and from selling snacks, supplemented by 10 kg of rice from her church each month. Her main source of strength is prayer.

In early 1961, the head of PKI for Timor and its surrounding islands, Thobias (As) Paulus Rissi, was chosen as one of three representatives in the national legislature (MPR), and by 1965, 15 members of the PKI were in the local parliament as well.⁵⁴ Members of the PKI were also found in the army, sitting in senior government positions, and many others were teachers or pastors. The party's affiliate organizations drew in many members in Timor, including the workers' organization SOBSI, the farmers' organization BTI, and particularly relevant to this project, an independent women's organization (Gerwani).

Many village pastors were also drawn to PKI's demands for land reform and social justice because of the great rural poverty that the church's social welfare program was too weak to effectively address.⁵⁵ A drought and subsequent crop failure in 1964 and 1965 resulted in widespread famine, earning the PKI's aid to poor farmers in the form of farm implements, seeds, money, and food, gained it more support.⁵⁶ Many uneducated farmers were also ordered to join PKI by the pastor or teachers in their village.⁵⁷ In 1963 it was reported that BTI already had more than 16,000 members in the province.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, PKI membership in Timor did not always reflect a total commitment to Communist ideology. Many joined PKI because of promised aid or confusion with the similarly named Indonesian Christian Party (Partai Kristen Indonesia or Parkindo).⁵⁹

In Kupang, the military and civilian militias began chasing PKI and Gerwani members from about December 1965 to the end of 1966.⁶⁰ Many pastors, teachers and other well-educated Timorese were among the hundreds of PKI members and suspected sympathizers killed or disappeared in West Timor, although an exact number is not known.⁶¹

The military and heads of neighborhoods conducted sweeping operations and when people were caught they would sometimes be tortured in public as a lesson to others.⁶² Most of those killed or in many cases "disappeared" were men, while women, especially the wives and sisters of those killed, were more likely to be among the many who were arbitrarily arrested, detained, and tortured. Women who were detained were separated from their families, including their young children, sometimes for a long time.⁶³ Actual, as well as suspected members of Gerwani, who in general worked as teachers and civil servants, were fired without explanation. Those who were detained were required on their release to report regularly to authorities or even recaptured several years later.

Once the immediate violence had passed many women faced new problems. They were ensnared in economic difficulties of forced unemployment and the need to raise families without support from husbands or male family members. They also experienced lingering trauma as the result of the violence, intimidation, and social ostracism they faced, as well as state-sanctioned discrimination.⁶⁴



I didn't know that my father and younger brother had been detained, where they had been killed. Even where they had been buried, I didn't know.

—SUSANA THERFENA BULI TAKA

MARSA: ANOTHER TEACHER DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL

Marsa was born in 1936 in Semarang, Central Java. Her parents returned to Kupang in 1950 and she continued her schooling there. She graduated from a teachers' college in 1956 teaching first and second grade at *Sekolah Rakyat Perubahan Indonesia Tionghoa (Chinese Indonesia People's School for Change)* in the neighborhood of Kuanino, until 1957. She was also active in the church, she taught orphans to sew and sang in the choir. She married in 1960 and within six years had three sons and a daughter.

She joined Gerwani in 1962 and became head of the local chapter in 1963. In 1966 she was suddenly fired from her job as a primary school teacher with no pension.

When I was fired, I asked the school principal: "What is my mistake that I've been fired as a teacher?" The principal said it was an order from above.

In 1966 she was arbitrarily arrested and taken to the District Military Command to be interrogated. She was not given drink or food for a day and was then sent home. Not long afterwards she was taken by two soldiers to Freedom Stadium and held for two weeks without food. Her children organised to bring food to her. Marsa was taken to the Wirasakti Military Hospital where she was stripped and examined by a male doctor to check whether she had a hammer and sickle tattoo on her body. No tattoo was found and she was eventually allowed to go home, but had to report to authorities on a regular basis. This experience saddened her for years.



One of the rooms in Freedom Stadium where Marsa was detained in 1966.

In 1975 she was arrested again and this time taken to Denpasar, Bali. Her youngest child was eight months old and still nursing, but the soldiers would not let her bring the baby. Marsa's husband and the other children had to care for the baby during the years Marsa was detained in Bali.

A friend of mine in the church choir cried when I was taken. They took me at eight in the morning. I didn't have a chance to bring anything—only the clothes I was wearing—and I had to leave my small child with her older sister who was 14. I don't know what they gave her to drink because at the time . . . I was still nursing her. What I do know is that two soldiers came to take me and when we were detained we were tightly guarded by soldiers until we reached Denpasar. They thought that leaders of Gerwani carried bombs or were dangerous criminals.... We were just detained, but I really suffered because I thought about my child who I was still nursing. So the women in Bali, helped me when I was sore because when it was time for me to nurse I couldn't.

She was detained in Pekambangan Prison in Denpasar, Bali for three years until December 1977 when she and two others were sent back to Kupang where she remained under house arrest. Because she had lost her job and benefits, she started to sew and make snacks to sell in order to support her children. She had also managed to earn some money in Bali selling embroidery she made with fellow prisoners, which enabled her to get back on her feet and start up a small business once released.⁶⁵ From 1977 until 1996 Marsa worked hard to support her children. She was never reinstated to the civil service.

I was not reinstated to work again; I was never called back once I was dismissed. . . My family really felt sorry for me. Why was I fired when I was not guilty?

Marsa's health had deteriorated: she had cataracts, problems with her heart, rheumatism in her knees, and stomach pain. Her children took care of her, however, her experiences related to the violence of 1965 psychologically traumatised her for her whole life.



Marsa holding her written life post card.

My experiences of violence in 1965 continuously haunt me. I am still traumatised and feel scared and have no self-confidence.

Her fear was evident when she refused to keep *Forbidden Memories*, a book published by JPIT on violations against women in 1965,⁶⁶ in her house.

If suddenly people searched my house and found that book, what would happen?

Marsa passed away in her sleep at her daughter's house on 14 October 2014. She died never having fully shared her experiences with her children. They never understood their mother's trauma.

FERDELINA BESSY SINLAE: ACCUSED OF BEING PKI



From the time I was small I have never felt happy. My mother, as a widow, raised us with violence. I moved to my brother's home and also experienced violence. I had to work hard selling snacks, fetching water, and in the rice paddies. I was forced to elope. It's too heavy to relate, but in short I was never happy.

Ferdelina Bessy Sinlae and her husband were accused of being PKI members in 1965. They were called to the office of the village head for public humiliation, made to run with a board hanging from their neck:

My child was not yet 40 days old. I was called to the village head's office to do "lari papan." PKI was written on a board before it was hung from the neck. But I didn't run because I had just given birth.

Even today she has not had restored relations with family members who accused her and her husband of being members of PKI. Bessy often suffers from earaches, sore hands and feet, and has problems with her stomach. She also carries emotional pain, saying “I am heartsick if I remember the past.” But this research, and earlier efforts to record the stories, have given Bessy new friends and opportunities. She appreciates the work of JPIT, a women’s network that documented her story. “We feel we’ve been acknowledged, that we are human.”

ANTONETHA KITU MIRA: A TEACHER DISAPPEARED

Antonetha was born on the island of Sabu in 1940, the tenth of eleven children. Her parents were farmers, and her father died when she was nine years old. She married when she was 19 years old and enjoyed years of happiness. Then in 1965, she was accused of being a member of Gerwani and her husband of being a member of PKI. He was dismissed from his teaching job:

Suddenly there was news that my husband had been fired from his job as a teacher—who knows what he had done wrong, I don’t know—and no longer received a salary. My children were six years old, four years old, 20 months, and my youngest had just been born.

In November 1965 Antonetha’s husband was detained at the house of the head of PKI and a few months later she was detained as well.



In January 1966 I was called to come before an interrogation team of people in the Sabu community like the church minister, head of the sub-district office, heads of political parties, police, and the school principal, who were seeking clarity about the 30 September 1965 Movement . . . I was punched in the nose. Why I don’t know. In fact, I truly hated that movement because it really destroyed my life and that of my husband and children.

In March 1966 the military from Kupang arrived in Sabu, and Antonetha’s husband and other detainees were moved to a jail. Then one night they were executed and buried.

In the morning I heard from a member of the interrogation team and from the police chief that my husband was gone. On hearing the news I was so heart-broken. I wanted to cry, but couldn't. I could only surrender to God.

She was called to the hospital to have her hair shorn as a customary punishment for adultery. This insult wounded her deeply.

I still remember that the person who cut my hair was one of my husband's students. He was also the one who took my husband to his execution site. My husband left the traditional woven cloth he might have worn to the grave with this former student, and asked him to give it to me with the words: "Give this cloth to my wife so she can get some money from it, because there's no point in my taking this cloth.

After her hair was shorn, Antonetha was marched with others to the office of the interrogation team where men were waiting for them. They mocked and ridiculed the women, calling them "Gerwani dogs," while the sub-district head of West Sabu taunted them: "Wow! How pretty they are. Choose one! They no longer have husbands!"

Antonetha's four children, the youngest just ten days old, were detained with her for ten days. Once released, Antonetha was ordered to report regularly to the authorities. She was devastated and faced great hardship even after she was released. She had no pension and supported herself by tie dying thread to be woven by other women, and working in the garden and in the rice fields.

Oh, I really suffered. I no longer had my husband, we had no one to depend on. We were made to live like animals.

Antonetha with
her grandchildren



She was unable to support her children to finish their education. Her first child only completed primary school, another finished Technical High School, and her fourth child stopped his university studies after four semesters. However, they have married and now support her. She moved from Sabu in 1997 and lives in a house built by her children, in Kupang, receiving some assistance from her church.

Antonetha is 73 now and suffers from stomach pains. She also has trouble walking because of bad knees. This leaves her feeling sick and dizzy. However she draws great strength and happiness from her children and grandchildren:

I already have 23 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Now I give thanks to God because God has truly answered my prayers. God has helped and looked out for me through my children and grandchildren. Praise God, God always blesses all my paths in life. These are my impressions of my life at the age of 73.

FRANKINA HOTAN BOBOY: A PLOT OF LAND STOLEN

Frankina Boboy (known to her family as Kina) grew up in a family plagued by violence:

My father beat my mother, and mother finally left the house so that we were left with dad. I was the one to watch my younger sisters... I had to drop out of [Grade 5] because no one could take me to school, while my father had to work. At that time people were being killed so I was scared . . . At night we couldn't sleep because people were creeping around the house, so we were very scared.

Kina's father was suspected of being involved with the PKI and was arrested and detained in October 1965. Her father was allowed to return home after a week, along with her mother.:

[My father] was not allowed to work outside the house. If they saw him, they could beat him to death. Mama was nursing the baby. I was 15 years old. That's why I had to be the father: I worked in the rice paddies and broke land. Just imagine a tall sugar palm [gewang]. I had to connect two pieces of bamboo [and lash them to the trunk] so I could climb to the top.

I had to earn a living, working like an adult . . . I took bananas and firewood to sell in Kupang . . . I went by boat [across Kupang Bay] Pariti. Because I worked like that I usually wore shorts like a young boy . . . At the time there was an exceptionally harsh famine, but I tried, so I could provide enough food. We were always considered PKI. I felt like we were powerless.

. . . We were forbidden from church. I approached the pastor . . . "What is the reason we are forbidden to attend church?" He started crying and answered, "It is a matter of the state." [When I continued] to go to church, people said, "What is the PKI child going to church for?" Once I asked my father, "What have we done wrong? What is the PKI?"

For Kina, marriage at 18 was an escape from her harsh reality. However, she could not escape the discrimination of being *anak PKI*, the child of a suspected Communist. In 1973 her husband fell ill for three months and they experienced tough economic times:

We experienced a shortage in our household, but I didn't complain to anyone, only depended on God. We were always hated; I don't know what we did wrong. People always scoffed at us, our lives, our income, even the education of our children. But I remained staunch and calm because I know that when you lean on God there is always a way out. When I became old in the 1980s, my husband and I still faced this burden. But we do not feel deprived even though we were hated.

The PKI label also affected her rights to her father's land decades after 1965:

My father had land in Lasiana—a house and rice fields—but because he was accused of being PKI, his family took it. We had nothing, and had to squat on land that was actually owned by my parents . . . When my father wanted to report them, they said, “To hell with the PKI!” . . . When people accused my father, he was just quiet and submissive.



Kina reading her life post cards.

Kina is resigned to the loss of her father’s land and the way her male relatives have asserted their patrilineal rights:

Distant relatives from the same clan as my father assume their entitlement as men. [My sisters and I] are all only women. In fact, they just came from Rote Island to this place. They have already sold the land.

I feel that since dad and mama died there is no longer violence, but we don’t have rights to anything that we owned. We are no longer called PKI, but everything we owned has been taken . . . But not to worry, I still have legs and arms to work.

Kina, who is a traditional midwife, continues to face challenges. Since 2010 the government has forbidden traditional midwives to practice. She now works as a farm labourer, and relies on support from her two sons who send her a bit of rice, some soap, and money every month.



Her participation in the action research has become a turning point for her:

When I shared the story about my bitter experience of the past, what took place in 1965, Ina [a researcher] said, “You should get involved.” To do what? She explained that we wanted to embrace all those who were oppressed, who faced difficulties in 1965. We want to embrace each other in order to find the truth . . . I was touched and I thought that’s what I need to do. I wanted to join. I wanted to be free from the grip of the past. And I am happy I can join and have many friends.

As we call it in Kupang, we have a space for elderly women to meet. Even though we are far apart we feel happy we have many friends. We can open our hearts to talk about the darkness in the past. I feel relieved. What happened to me in the past I can now treat as a storm that has passed. I feel comforted by many friends and our efforts to heal ourselves . . . Whatever happens, our healing must continue.

Kina standing in front of the land that was her father’s, taken from her by her relatives. It has now been sold and is fenced-off.



I cried when I became a widow at the age of 24.

Sarlotha Kopi Lede and her husband were primary school teachers on Sabu Island, when he was picked up in 1965. Before being taken away, a policeman allowed him to see Sarlotha. Her husband told her to not be afraid and to take care of their three young children, including a newborn. She never saw him again.

Sarlotha herself was accused of being a member of Gerwani. She was detained for about four months with her baby. Her head was shaved. She lost her job. After being released, she had to attend a flag-raising ceremony at the police station every Monday morning for many years. In 1977 Sarlotha was allowed to return to work as a teacher. Even then, it was difficult to support her family on her meager salary. Every day she came home from work and went straight to the fields: "I worked too hard, soaked my body in rice paddies until the middle of the night to plant rice. That's probably why I have rheumatism."

Educating her children was very important to Sarlotha. She has also taught them about forgiveness: "My children have been taught to not be angry and vengeful towards the family members who were horrible to us, but to help them... Do not keep bitterness in your heart." She lives in Kupang with her children and is happy they have graduated and have families of their own. "Now God has replaced my tears with precious gems. Black clouds have been changed into shining stars."

HENNY LEBA DETHAN: STIGMA FELT BY CHILDREN

Henny was born in Oesao, a fertile hamlet of rice paddies located outside of Kupang, in 1965. She was the youngest of four children. When she was three months old her father died and her mother married someone who was later accused of being a member of PKI.

When Henny's stepfather was arrested and disappeared, the children were separated from their mother. Henny was raised by her aunt, whereas her older brother and two sisters were moved to an orphanage in Kupang. Until now, Henny's siblings feel estranged from their mother. They feel their mother threw them away.

Since the 1965 incident, Henny and her siblings have greatly suffered from stigma and discrimination as "PKI children" because of their stepfather.

I'm always weighted down when someone quips that I am a descendant of PKI. I didn't know anything. My head was filled with difficult thoughts. Life was difficult. My hands were sore because I worked so hard. [Since] . . . I was small I have always had a heavy workload.

Henny married when she was 16 years old, legally still a child. She and her husband have three sons and now have a kiosk at their house. Even her husband has used the PKI label when angry at Henny.

Henny holding the book "Reclaiming Indonesia".

It hurts when my own husband uses harsh words. Sometimes when he gets too emotional he says, "You descendant from PKI!" I don't want to drown in thoughts that burden me. I try to just think of positive things. When I am heartsick, I pray to God and then I feel relieved. I don't carry any grudge towards anyone.

Henny hopes that this feeling of relief can be enjoyed by her siblings and her mother who are still very closed about their traumatic experiences in 1965. This is Henny's hope.

Now Henny is comforted by members of JPIT who counsel her to overcome the trauma she still feels. She is actively involved in a prayer group for the elderly, organized by JPIT and other survivors. She also had the opportunity to participate in the launching of *Reclaiming Indonesia: Understanding 40 Years of Violence to Break the Chains of Impunity* in Jakarta in October 2014. She hopes that JPIT will be able to facilitate a process of support and healing that will benefit not only herself, but also the church and the wider community.



Chapter 7

Papua: A Constant Fear



Irene Sroyer's noken (Papua traditional bag), taken in her house.

When the Netherlands recognized Indonesia's independence in 1949, the western half of the island of New Guinea remained under dispute.⁶⁷ Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, envisioned a nation stretching from west to east, from Sabang (in Aceh) to Merauke (in Papua), encompassing a vast archipelago that was the former Dutch colony of East Indies. The Dutch government, however, argued that Papua had distinct ethnic, geographical and cultural traits, proposing a period of preparation, before becoming independent. Indonesia pursued diplomatic channels, as well as military action.

The Cold War provided the backdrop for a political tussle between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Fearing the Soviet Union's increased influence over Indonesia, the US agreed to put pressure on the Netherlands. In 1962, the New York Agreement was signed between Indonesia and the Netherlands. The agreement stipulated for the territory to be transferred to a UN transitional authority and then to Indonesia on 1 May 1963.⁶⁸ It also required for an "Act of Free Choice," a vote on self determination for all adults to be held by 1969.⁶⁹ However, this plebiscite (known in Indonesian as *Penentuan Pendapat Rakyat* or Pepera) was conducted with the participation of only 1,026 traditional leaders. Weeks prior to the vote, political activities were suppressed. Many Papuan leaders and youth were arrested,

imprisoned or exiled.⁷⁰ The few selected to participate in Pepera unanimously voted to be part of Indonesia.⁷¹

Since the early 1960's, Indonesian military action in Papua gave rise to the formation of an armed resistance group known as OPM (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*). Armed conflict in the territory continued to flare, fueled by the presence of transmigrants from other parts of Indonesia, natural resource extraction from mining to logging, and the persistent use of violence by state security forces in the face of dissent.

On 1 July 1998, just over a month after the fall of Indonesia's President Soeharto, Papuans expressed their discontent with Jakarta, commemorating the 27th anniversary of the Declaration of Papua's Independence in the cities of Sorong, Jayapura, Wamena and on Biak Island. In Biak, approximately 200 demonstrators occupied the harbor and were guarding a Morning Star Flag they had raised on a water tower.⁷² Indonesian security forces surrounded the protesters and began firing on the crowd, with a death toll estimated widely from five to 100, and many reports of arbitrary arrests, torture, rape and disappearances.⁷³ A year later, a group of Papuan leaders met with President B.J. Habibie to inform him of their continued desire for independence.

In response to this, the Indonesian government allowed for the name of the province to be changed to Papua, a name formerly banned, and passed a Special Autonomy Bill in October 2001. Recognizing the need to address separatist sentiment to maintain territorial integrity, the law promotes and protects Papuan interests by proposing that 80% of provincial revenue remain in the province, Papuan culture be preserved and a Papuan People's Council be established (*Majelis Rakyat Papua*, MRP) as a statutory body to protect the interests of indigenous Papuans.⁷⁴ The Special Autonomy Bill also prescribed the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission, a human rights court, and special measures to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. The law provided for a song and a flag as "a cultural symbol...not to be positioned as a symbol of sovereignty." However, to date, a truth commission and human rights court are yet to be established in Papua. There has been no accounting for the past. Papuans continue to feel that their existence, their way of life, and their traditional connection to land are under threat. Many Papuans believe the promises for reform presented under Papua's Special Autonomy have been broken.

For Papuan women, on-going conflict continues to impact their daily lives. Women have experienced detention without trial, interrogation and horrific torture, including sexual violence. Women have had to flee from military operations abandoning their crops and homes to seek safety in the forest. This compromises the health of their families and disrupts their livelihoods. Those who returned after detention or periods in the forest have faced discrimination and stigma for their suspected association with the resistance movement.

As this research was being completed in December 2014, four Papuan youths were killed in Paniai district when Indonesian soldiers opened fire on unarmed civilians protesting a disturbance between young people and military personnel the night before. Their mothers held vigil next to their sons' fallen bodies, refusing to move until there was accountability for what took place. After four days, they buried their sons' bodies in the field where they had been shot, in front of the military headquarters. The quest for recognition and justice remains at the forefront for many women survivors of violence.

**NAOMI MASA:
GANG-RAPED THEN ABANDONED**



In 1983 Naomi Masa's husband was hiding in the forest after being arrested, interrogated and tortured at the military post in Besum for suspected affiliation with OPM. Soldiers surrounded Naomi's house and forced her onto a truck to guide them to her husband. Naomi's two-month-old daughter was taken with her.

In the truck, Naomi was tortured, and her daughter fell from the safety of her sarong into the muddy waters of a sago swamp as Naomi lost consciousness. She was brought to an army post and detained for 10 hours where she was beaten, electrocuted, tied up and raped by five soldiers causing injuries. Throughout her ordeal she was not fully conscious and did not remember where her daughter was. She worried for her child, unaware that a relative had found her and brought her home to safety.

At 5 a.m. the next morning she was sent home, but found it difficult to walk and fainted. Her injuries required urgent medical treatment. After treatment she and her husband were taken to Jayapura, where they were interrogated and tortured again by the Special Forces.



Naomi showing the location where her daughter fell from her sarong when she was taken by the military to search for her husband.

Once released, Naomi and her husband fled again to the forest, hiding there until 1986 when a group of church workers helped them return to their village. The years in the forest were very difficult, especially with young children, who, she explained, “had to drink boiled water with chocolate leaves and coffee instead of milk.”

The violence she experienced had a dramatic effect on every aspect of her life. A few years ago Naomi’s daughter, a young adult, died from a lung disease. Naomi believes that her daughter’s illness was caused by the violence and deprivation she experienced together with Naomi. In 2005 her husband left her and married another woman.

I feel sad that this happened to me. I experienced violence to save my husband, but then he left me and married another woman because of what I had been through.

She is stigmatised by her community and feels no recognition of her need for justice.

They think what I experienced was just a risk of joining OPM. I wonder why human rights are not paid attention to. I’ve already shown that the military is responsible for what happened to me. I’ve lost my dignity.



Naomi beside her daughter's grave.

Naomi continues to carry the shame of what happened to her. Naomi has not received assistance from the community development fund (RESPEK) which is allocated by village officials. She thinks it is because she is the victim of military violence. This stigma and discrimination is compounded because Naomi does not feel a sense of justice – she does not know whether the five soldiers who raped her have been prosecuted.

Naomi is now 58 years old and finds it a challenge to work in her garden to support herself and contribute to her family. She'd like to sell kerosene or open a small kiosk so she can send her grandchildren to school. She lives in the Catholic Church compound with her two granddaughters and works as a caretaker. She finds solace in her faith and says she has found calmness and peace.

For me, NGOs help me to forget all the events of the past. Apart from that, the church helps me because through the church, I always pray and involve myself in church activities. With prayer I can speak to God. I pray "God, I don't demand anything."

HANA BANO: ACTIVE ROLE IN THE CHURCH IS THE KEY TO RECOVERY

From 1981 to 1982 Hana was arrested, detained, and tortured seven times. The military were extremely suspicious of anyone traveling in the forest. People needed a travel permit (*surat jalan*) and identity card (KTP) even to go to their own garden plots. Hana was captured after she was discovered to have gone into the forest making her a potential source of information on the OPM's movements and activities. The fifth time she was arrested she was horribly tortured.

After I woke up I was given electric shocks before they started their questioning every day. I was held for two weeks. I was electrocuted with a rifle in my mouth.



Hana is still pained by her suffering.

I am hurt because I suffered a lot, from the forest to the village and to the time I was detained. Even when I was released I was called again to look for people who were in the forest.

Hana feels a sense of injustice, as violations committed against her have not been dealt with under the law and the perpetrators have not been punished. There has been blatant denial about the human rights violations perpetrated by the military against Hana's son. Although the family believes that he was abducted and killed by a bayonet through his stomach, the Indonesian security forces maintain he was killed in a traffic accident.

The church is a source of strength and recovery for Hana:

I was elected to the assembly. I was trusted to lead a congregation...I organised all programs, for example the choir, skills activities. With these activities, the thoughts I had only of hate and revenge towards those who used me began to disappear.

NGOs have also supported Hana to tell her story and share the pain in her heart:

They came and encouraged me to share or tell my problems. They heard my story, accompanied me in trainings. NGOs have paid attention to me, but the government has never helped me.

Hana feels the government owes something to victims of state violence. She wishes to start a small business as she gets older and finds work in her garden tiresome.



MARTINCE: STILL SCARRED

During the Body Mapping exercise Martince shared the lingering impact of violence suffered as a child. She explained her choice of colors in her body map:

My hands and feet are colored blue because I often feel pain.
My heart is also blue because it is not yet healed from the violence I experienced. I don't know when it will heal.

In 1968 Martince was ten years old when her village was burned down and she was arrested with her younger brother and her parents. The siblings witnessed horrific violence towards their parents and Martince is still traumatized. Her father, Leonard Anes, was later shot dead by Indonesian soldiers between Wari and Yopdi villages. Martince married a kind man and they have five children together. Her faith in God and love for her family give strength and happiness.

Hana in front of her house



TR: SOLIDARITY HELPS TO HEAL THE TRAUMA

TR is a witness to, and a victim of, sexual violence by Indonesian military and police following the Morning Star flag raising protest in Biak, July 1998. She has only recently overcome her embarrassment and fear to speak truthfully about her experiences.

On July 5th at 6:00 a.m. TR walked with a friend to the flag raising, carrying cake and coffee for the protestors. More than 10 soldiers wearing camouflage with red scarves around their necks, caps topped with leaves and faces covered in black charcoal ambushed the two friends.

One soldier grabbed her coffee pot and poured hot coffee over her head. They dragged her onto the road where she was beaten with a rifle butt from behind, fell to the ground and was kicked in the stomach. Then she was dragged across the rough asphalt.

One soldier who was pulling me punched me in the neck and said, "I will shoot and you run so you are safe. We're the same religion. I ran and my friend NB ran, too, and we hid in a latrine, which had just been dug out and was still empty at 7:00 a.m. that morning.

They found some clothes hanging out to dry and changed out of their ripped clothes and headed towards Bouw Village. As they approached their destination a yellow truck appeared and TR was captured.

I was blindfolded and thrown onto the truck. I felt like I landed on top of people, people were screaming.

They were all taken into a room, stripped naked, handcuffed and tortured. TR could hear lots of people screaming and asking for help.

I was beaten with a rifle butt. It felt like my head was leaking and there was blood coming out.

Someone threw a liquid that smelled like alcohol all over her body.

I screamed and pulled at my handcuffs to get away, every time I pulled I was burned with a flame, then the soldier said, "Oh, so you don't want to be raped? Ok, later I'll cut the rope so you can move freely."

Instead of cutting the rope, the soldier cut her arms with a knife and doused the wound with an unknown substance. She felt dizzy and fainted. TR still has the scars.

When she woke up her blindfold was taken off. She saw others around her who were dead or had been tortured. She recalls seeing eight women and 12 men. The room was dark but she could see corpses stacked on top of each other. She felt like she was sitting in water, but it was blood. She saw someone she knew with a bayonet in their chest. She saw a woman with her breasts mutilated and male victims standing around naked. Soldiers began talking about killing and raping her.

I felt scared, I thought in my heart, “Oh my God, keep me safe so I can tell that they were killed, rather than no one ever know.”

The soldiers lit candles and tortured the prisoners with them. Their hands and feet were tied so they couldn't get away. During those moments TR felt she wanted to die. The soldiers told her:

“Open your eyes and see your friends already dead. Soon you will be dead too.”

Then TR heard the sounds of footsteps, of things being packed up, and vehicles departing. A soldier came and gave them water and told them to go and bear witness. When at last they all left, TR ran into the forest to hide. That night, she tried to go home but was so terrified she hid in the forest for almost three months. She returned home in September and was told to report to the police station. When she got there she was questioned but not detained because she was so physically unwell.

TR has lasting physical problems and has had extensive medical treatment. Whenever she sees a police or military officer, TR is overcome with emotions of rage and hatred, explaining, “My feelings of fear have turned to feelings of anger and hate.”

The violence also affected her relationship with her husband. Her abusive husband, who had beaten her before leaving her with six stitches, has stigmatized TR for the torture she has experienced.

He didn't like me anymore, because according to people in Biak, these sorts of things make husbands lose their self-respect and make them embarrassed with their family. He left for another woman. He hit me. But I tried to get out of the suffering that I experienced.

TR fled to a safe area in Jayapura with her friends who were also women activists. Now, she engages and participates in gatherings of victims supported by NGOs and the church. She is glad to know she is not alone. Despite the support and the push for justice, TR still experiences fear and embarrassment.

My hope is that this experience is not repeated against women in general, especially Papuan women. It is enough that we were born to be butchered and killed like animals. We are not strong enough to bear children who face the same fate.

IRENE SROYER: DISAPPEARED BROTHER



Irene in front of the water tower in Biak.

In July 1998, Irene Sroyer also stood peacefully during the flag raising ceremony protesting human rights abuses at the water tower in Biak. Fifteen years after that incident, Irene still does not know what happened to her relatives, or where their bodies are.

Many people disappeared. We were dragged to the harbor, where there were about 97 people. We were exposed to the hot sun and the rain until we were ordered to have photos taken of our whole body, left and right side and fingerprints. I don't know what document this was for. The men were beaten, ordered to lie face up and had their bellies trampled on and kicked. After 3 p.m. the women were told to go home and the men were detained in the police station. I have male relatives that I haven't seen again.

Irene's younger brother, Yuslin Sroyer is amongst those still missing. While taking part in a Memory Box activity, Irene explained:

I've kept my brother's black clothes. He was disappeared and probably has died. So when I look at these clothes I remember him.

While the ghosts of the past haunt her, Irene draws great strength from her children; they are the greatest joy in her life and help her move past the violence she has

faced. However, trying to move on is not forgetting, and she believes it is important to acknowledge and remember what happened in Biak.

In my opinion it is important to remember the Biak Massacre, because I think it is part of our struggle for our nation.

Irene also hopes for justice.

Today, almost 16 years after the event, we are still waiting for justice. The government should apologize and admit their mistakes. I'll feel satisfied if these people are punished.

Irene is married and has two children. To support her family she gardens and raises pigs.

MARIONES YARONA: FOUR YEARS FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST



On 2 August 1980, Mariones Yarona was traveling from her village, Ormu, to the market in Jayapura when she heard of a planned flag raising ceremony. Mariones and her two friends decided to attend a meeting where they were given a flag then told to leave. They returned to Abepura (a district of Jayapura), convincing passing Special Forces troops that they were just returning from their gardens.

Early the next morning at 5:30, Mariones and her friends gathered at the main flagpole of the Governor's office in Jayapura. They lowered the Indonesian flag, raised the Morning Star flag and stood under the flagpole. By 7 a.m. the police

arrived, lowered the flag and took the group of five to the police station in Jayapura. They were detained and interrogated for one night. Mariones heard a police officer threaten the leader of their group with a machete to her neck.

The next day they were moved to the headquarters of the Regional Military Command. They were detained for nine months in a very narrow space with no electrical lighting, sunlight, or sleeping mats. Their family members brought them fresh clothing once it was discovered where the detainees were held. During her detainment, Mariones became ill and had to be treated at the Aryoko hospital where she was handcuffed each night.

After nine months Mariones was moved to a cell in the Military Police headquarters in Klofkamp for one year before her case went to trial. Two detainees from the group were given light sentences and subsequently released. Mariones and two others were sentenced to four years in jail. With time served, Mariones was finally released in 1984. She remembers the time she was detained and the suffering she experienced.

When I was detained, it was for a long enough time. But I couldn't do anything. I can still feel the suffering I experienced in detention.

Like others, her suffering did not end with her release. When she returned to her village, the community treated her poorly and with suspicion and contempt.

People were mean to me because they thought I was involved in politics.

Mari believes raising the Morning Star flag is her right as a Papuan and what happened was an injustice.

What I did is the right of all Papuans. But why are we forbidden by the Indonesians? Why does the Indonesian government cover up the truth about Papua?



Martha pointing to the location where her father's body was buried.

DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMA

When Martha Adadikam was 19 her father was shot dead by the Indonesian military in 1970 in Biak. His body was mutilated and buried with three others in an unmarked grave in Sarwa village. With his death, Martha was accused of affiliation with OPM, resulting in stigma, discrimination and limited opportunities:

“We want to continue our schooling but we are refused because our parents joined OPM. So we are stamped as OPM. It is also hard for us to get work—we’re continuously denied.”

Mariones hopes that what she struggled for will lay the foundation for future generations. She is thankful to those who have asked her about her experiences directly.

What I have struggled for was not for me, but for Papua. People must know what happened

Mariones Yarona's
memory box

Mariones passed away due to sickness on June 9, 2015 in Sentani, Papua.



MARTINA WORKRA: A CAVE IN THE FOREST

When Martina Workra was in third grade the Indonesian military burned her village of Rordifu. She recalled that time and all that she lost:

...aside from burning our house they also destroyed our things, including these gold wedding plates. If I look at these plates I remember my parents. I have not gone back to see that place again.

Martina's family and other villagers fled to the forest. Her father hid the family in a cave, returning to the village and finding it completely destroyed. The family stayed in the cave for six months. Her father and brother were eventually killed by the army.

Their bodies were not buried, they were just left. I don't know if the bones are still there or not.



Martina in front of her house

Living in the forest, Martina married in 1973 giving birth the following year, however, the baby shortly died due to the harsh living conditions. Martina and her husband left the forest in 1980 and moved to Sosmai village, but like others she encountered stigma because of her suspected political affiliations.

I came out of the forest in 1980 safely, but then when I lived in the village it was with unkind words from others.

Martina hopes to open a small kiosk to support her children in school, however, lacks the resources and funds.

ESTEFINA WONAR: DODGED A BULLET BUT LOST EVERYTHING

Estefina was born in 1955 in Biak. It was during her tenth year when troops from Jakarta were deployed on the island, and by 1967 the OPM movement had began.

Estefina remembers in March 1968 her village was completely destroyed in a military operation. All the houses and the school were burned to the ground. Even the animals were shot. The military took over the church as their military post.

In 1968 the army attacked the village of Wari and we fled. We were shot at but I ducked down to dodge the bullets and they tore open my hand. I still have the scar.

Estefina with her husband and their grandchildren



Estefina's mother took her and fled to safety in the forest. They moved from place to place and were always pursued by the Indonesian soldiers. Estefina married at the age of 15 and had a daughter three years later who sadly died at the age of four, breaking Estefina's heart.

One late afternoon on 30 July 1969, along the Simarsdo River in Wardum region, Estefina remembers being attacked by Indonesian soldiers. Three people were shot, while others scattered and searched for safety. She witnessed extreme brutality:

At that moment we all jumped and ran off in different directions trying to find a way. I ran and hid, then saw with my own eyes the young girl Beatriks, who had been shot but was not dead, being raped and then beaten to death. Also Mr. Amos who was shot in the leg but still alive, was hacked in the head to death, with a machete.

Estefina in front of her house



She left the forest in 1975 and moved back to Wari village. Even today, Estefina suffers discrimination and social marginalization from fellow villages limiting her access to resources.

The community knew the things I went through. There was discrimination from people to me if any RESPEK fund aid was given to the neighborhood.

SARA AWENDU: A BULLET IN HER BODY, A REMINDER OF LOSS



Sara has born in 1952 in Wouna village, North Biak. When she was 16, military officers destroyed her village and many of the villagers were raped and killed. The people fled to the forest in search of safety, staying on the move:

When we lived in the jungle we heard that the army were going to attack again. We ended up moving further into the forest.

Sara, her family, and the other villages stayed in the forest for two years until 1970. By then, another ethnic group had inhabited the site of their village. In 1971, Sara's community started rebuilding their homes in a new location. Sara was married and gave birth to a healthy daughter.

That same year, Sara suffered the loss of her husband and daughter who were shot and killed in an attack on their village by the Indonesian military. Sara was also shot and still has the bullet lodged in her body, a painful reminder of her suffering. Once again,



Sara fled to the forest, this time without her family. She survived alone until 1972 when a family member came to find her and took her to safety in Sor village.

Sara showed the researchers the area around Wouna village and pointed out the site where bodies were dumped.

This is the path to the site of the mass graves of the people who were never buried. There are still bones around here.

Sara copes with her heavy past through the assistance of her family and the church. She also attends to her garden selling produce to support her family.

WELMINA RUMBRAWER-KARMA: EXCLUSION AND STIGMA



Welmina in front of her house

In 1967, Welmina Rumbrawer-Karma's husband joined OPM in North Biak. Welmina fled to the forest in 1968 to escape active conflict and remained there until 1980, moving around to avoid military raids. She had five children while in the forest.

In 1979 she was walking with her nine-year-old daughter to a seaside village to get information on military movements when they were fired upon by soldiers hiding along the roadside:

The soldiers shot at us and hit my daughter who was in front of me. I carried her and ran. They also shot me but the bullet damaged my clothes, I didn't die. My daughter was hit in the back, I left her in the gardens...the beach villagers buried her...

In 1980, Welmina and her husband returned to her daughters grave site and brought her remains back to their village. She insisted on keeping the bones in her bedroom rather than having them buried. However, the local church and other family members insisted the bones be buried. Welmina placed them inside a traditional china bowl (*resa resa*) that was then left to rest in a cave at the top of a small hill behind her house, close to a flowing spring. Welmina and her family still communicate with her daughter's spirit when they come to clean the area. This spiritual connection allows Welmina to express her love while coping with the grief of her loss.



Welmina's husband next to their daughter's bones in a traditional china bowl.

At the end of 1980, Welmina's husband and his group emerged from the forest and surrendered. Her husband went to the border town of Merauke in 1990, tired of being harassed by the military. He didn't return for 23 years and Welmina had to support her children by herself. She and her children survived off sweet potatoes and other vegetables grown from her own garden with additional support from selling handcrafts made from shells, earning Rp 150,000 to Rp 300,000 (approximately US\$ 15-30) per bag. She worked hard to make sure all her children graduated from senior high school. Her husband returned in 2013, however, was in poor physical condition.

Like many others, Welmina also found returning to her village from the forest was a difficult experience. The family feel they are constantly monitored by security forces, and she can't engage in social activities in the village because she is branded OPM. Welmina believes it is this stigma that prevents her family from accessing services from government programs in her village.

There is no one who helps me. People are scared because they think we are OPM.

The stigma has reached her children as well:

It is difficult for my children to go to school! They also cannot find jobs. My children cried, maybe because of me. My son finished his studies in Jayapura, he's a graduate, but took the public service exam and was shortlisted but never got an acceptance letter... Be patient. Pray.

Chapter 8

Aceh: An Unsettled Peace

The conflict in Aceh has multiple complex roots, including a proud Islamic identity, a culture of resistance against injustice, violent repression, and the struggle to control natural resources. The discovery of natural gas during the 1970s in the Arun region of Northern Aceh intensified militarization, with foreign investors such as Mobil Oil entering into agreements benefitting the Soeharto government and its cronies. Under a policy that protected “strategic industries” the military were paid to guard company assets, leading to clashes with nearby communities. By 1976, the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*; GAM) had declared unilateral independence.

Following years of low-level fighting with GAM, the army declared Aceh a Military Operations Area (*Daerah Operasi Militer*, or DOM) in 1989. The military conducted large-scale operations that killed thousands of civilians, detained and tortured suspected GAM supporters, and forced people into “training camps.” GAM also committed violations against migrants and those thought to be informers.

At the beginning of Indonesia’s *reformasi*, the new president B.J. Habibie established a Presidential Commission for the Investigation of Violence in Aceh (KPTKA) in 1999.⁷⁵ After conducting its inquiry, the Commission concluded:

*The acts of violence conducted by the military constituted a form of state violence. This means the violence was strongly perceived by the people as ‘cultivated’ by the state to ensure the exploitation of natural resources from Aceh for the benefit of the central government and of national and local elites.*⁷⁶

However, the commission’s findings and recommendations were never fully adopted. In 2001, the central government granted Aceh special autonomy status, but violence persisted. Peace negotiations began and failed. In 2003 President Megawati’s government declared martial law, increasing the number of troops and large-scale operations. Human rights organizations reported thousands of killings, disappearances, arbitrary detention and torture.⁷⁷

The Indian Ocean tsunami that struck on 26 December 2004 created an extraordinary opportunity for peace in Aceh. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between GAM and the Indonesian government was finally signed on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki. The MoU was later adopted as Law No. 11 on Governance of Aceh (2006.) Provisions in the MoU included amnesty for imprisoned supporters of GAM; benchmarks and timetables for the withdrawal of TNI soldiers and demobilization of GAM combatants; reintegration of former combatants and support for civilians affected by conflict; and key reform of the government and electoral system in Aceh to reflect the Acehnese self-governance. The MoU and the national law decreed the creation of a human rights court and a truth and reconciliation commission for Aceh. Similar to the situation in Papua, the central government has defaulted from establishing the mechanisms for justice.

For women victims, the peace process has not resulted in significant changes in their lives. They continue to struggle for survival on their own, excluded from policies and assistance programs. Many face economic constraints, with increasingly frail health, uncertainty about their children's education and future, and no promise of justice, truth and the restoration of physical and psychological pain they have suffered.

SAUDAH: SUFFERING NEW VIOLENCE



Saudah in front of her wooden house

Sixty five year old Saudah, together with her husband and granddaughter, live in a small and simple wooden house with a dirt floor in Alue Rambe village. The Indonesian military claimed that Saudah's husband had the name of a known GAM member. As a result, over a ten-year period Saudah and her husband were periodically detained, brutally tortured and interrogated.

In 1992, just before dawn, soldiers raided the village, arresting 11 men while ransacking their homes. At the time, Saudah and her husband were in the neighboring village of Tanah Pasih checking on their child who had fallen into a river. The village chief sent them a message telling them not to return home because their house had also been destroyed in the attack. Fearful for their lives, they did not go home for three years.

When they did return in 1995, Saudah and her husband were arrested as suspected GAM members. They were beaten and tied up. The soldiers then took Saudah's husband to a military intelligence post, known as SGI. Saudah was ordered to follow him. When she arrived at the SGI office, a SGI officer pulled her behind the office

and threatened to electrocute her. They had already prepared the equipment. Saudah was interrogated and tortured with a gun to her head and beaten with the handle of a broom.

This became the first of several times for Saudah and her husband to be interrogated and tortured. They tried to return to a normal life, but tensions in Aceh had heightened. Between 2002 and 2005, Saudah and her husband were interrogated often. But their interrogators were never able to find anything incriminating against them.

The soldiers would brutally beat Saudah's husband in front of her to exhort a confession on her husband's involvement in GAM; she had to watch helplessly while they beat him with fists, weapons and wood, and they were both tortured with electric shocks.

My husband and I were always forced to admit that my husband was a member of, or spy for GAM. But we always said that we weren't GAM. They even said they would give me Rp. 500,000 if I admitted that my husband was GAM. I was tortured because I wouldn't admit it.

Saudah, her neighbors, and even children in their community were offered money in compensation for turning in her husband as an active GAM member. But no one in the community gave in to these pressures. Their harassment continued up until the Helsinki Agreement signed in 2005.



Saudah and her husband peeling betel nut and jengkol in front of her child's house

While soldiers no longer disturb their lives, Saudah continues to experience violence. Her husband suffers from deep trauma caused by his experiences of interrogation and torture. He is often irrational and violent towards Saudah, becoming angry without notice and beating her. Sometimes she flees her husband's violence and hides in the fields. She has even spent the night there at times to stay safe. However she chooses to stay alongside her husband, believing that his behaviour is a result of his harrowing experiences of torture.

My husband was frequently tortured; he had melted plastic dripped on his skin and was hit with a gun. Now he is often angry and unpredictable... I'm frequently beaten and only after he's hit me is he aware of what he's done. Maybe it's due to the torture and beating he received during the conflict period.

Not only is her husband violent, but he has fallen ill, unable to undertake heavy work. Consequently, Saudah is the primary provider, responsible for supporting her family, including caring for her one grandchild whose mother is working in Malaysia. Saudah also often looks to supplement her income by peeling betel nut and *jengkol* for a betel nut trader in Alue Rambe village.

Saudah herself is often ill. There are lasting physical impacts of the violence experienced by women and few services available for treatment. When she recalls these experiences, she is overcome with hurt and anger.

I experienced violence all over my body. My heart is still in pain, it still has not healed. Sometimes (it feels like) blood comes out, my chest hurts and I cannot breath... Why did they treat us with so little humanity?

I need to treat my medical condition, as I have been sick ever since. Twice a day I drink milk and take medicine to reduce the pain. I've never received any assistance from anyone.

When asked about her hopes for the future, Saudah says she hopes the events in Aceh will not be repeated.

I hope that these things are not repeated. I have experienced them, and my children never should.

She also thinks it is important to share the stories of what has happened so that more people learn from this history and its mistakes.

If more people know, there will certainly be lessons for the future: that conflicts like this make people who know nothing about politics suffer.

MAIMUNAH: FORCED TO SELL LAND TO SURVIVE

Like Saudah, Maimunah is also from Alue Rambe. She is a widow and single mother to three children. Her life was constantly in the heart of the conflict between 1990-2005.

Maimunah's father and two younger brothers were amongst the 11 men who were taken by soldiers during the raid of 1992. The eleven have never returned. Their bodies never found. Not long after her father and two brothers were taken, the soldiers also came after her husband. When they were looking for him, Maimunah was out working in the fields. Carrying her two-year-old child whilst heavily pregnant, Maimunah hoped that she would be spared. These hopes vanished as soldiers destroyed her little hut in the garden, and forced her and her child to walk home in the midday sun. Once back at her house, the soldiers destroyed her chicken coop, stole her chickens and ransacked her home. Then they took Maimunah to the district police office in Buloh Blang Ara.



Maimunah
inside her house

Soon after I was taken to the police station. On arrival I was shown a man that they had shot not far from my field earlier that afternoon. I was ordered to admit that this man was my husband, but I insisted that he wasn't. The man was tortured with water continuously poured over his body while he was in a squatting position.

After a while, some soldiers took her to a military post where she was interrogated and tortured for over an hour. She was ordered to tell them where her husband was hiding and admit that her father was a GAM commander. Even though she was eight months pregnant, she was forcibly made to sit in a chair with her hands and feet tied. They put a pistol in her ears (left and right), pressed it into the back of her neck and threatened to shoot her. She was beaten with a rifle butt to her back, waist and hands.

They said, "There mustn't be any more rebels born"—at that time I was eight months pregnant. I was tortured for an hour. My fingernails were beaten with a large piece of wood, it really hurt, and they began to bleed. My fingernails are still deformed."

A policeman who knew her father halted the interrogation. She was detained for one month together with 20 other women. Luckily she was not tortured again. She was treated well after this, provided with a sleeping mat and a lamp. She also received regular health checks from the military paramedics.

During this time, she had to leave her eldest son at home with her elderly and sick mother. However, her two-year-old daughter stayed in detention with her. She witnessed Maimunah and other people being interrogated and tortured.

While detained I was given a packet of rice once a day. At night they gave us bread. I shared the food with my daughter. Fortunately the police officer that knew my father often brought food for my daughter.

She and her daughter were released not because she was due to give birth but because her husband, who had been in hiding in the bush, was captured. He surrendered himself when he heard that she was being detained and tortured. Maimunah gave birth to a son at home 15 days later.

Upon her release Maimunah had to care for her newborn, her other children and her frail mother. Two years later her husband was returned home from detention in Medan in a terrible state: unable to walk, thin and very weak. Maimunah now had to look after her husband as well. The only option for her to support her family was to sell her family land at a low price. The conflict also meant that it was often unsafe for her to go to the field. Her crops were neglected and yields decreased. The market for any produce was very limited.

I had to struggle alone to support everyone, provide for my husband and mother who were sick, looking after and take care of my three children. I had to divide my time in between making a living and taking care of my family. When my mother and husband died, I felt like all those close to me were gone and I was alone with my children.



Maimunah showing her release letter

Maimunah faces economic constraints to take care of and educate her children. She also worries about her children's well being, after witnessing so much violence from a young age, losing their loved ones, and having barely known their father.

I hope my children are supported to continue their schooling so that they can get a good job; and (their) life can improve and there can be capital for business. Up until now there has been no government assistance for us. I cannot really explain what it has been like to raise them by myself, not just from the economic side but many things. The situation demanded that I be stronger and more patient.

AINUN MARDIAH: VIOLATED IN PLACE OF HER HUSBAND



Ainun showing her old ID card, a special ID card used by Acehnese during military operation in Aceh.

Ainun Mardiah was born in Kuala Simpang in 1978 but her parents moved to Alue Rambe. Due to the move, she was unable to finish junior high school. She had to drop out because the distance from her home to school was now over 15 kilometers away. It was too far to walk. Ainun married at the age of 15 years and settled into her new life in Alue Rambe. She took care of her home, working her fields, raising goats and doing contract farm work during the fruit season.

One day Ainun's husband went to the forest to join GAM. Ainun moved back to live with her parents. During the month of Ramadhan in 2004, when Ainun was preparing food, a group of soldiers from Unit 112 arrived. They started yelling at Ainun and her family, demanding to know where Zulkiefli, her husband, was. The commander forcibly took Ainun from her parent's house to her own home about 500 meters away. They ransacked her home, destroying everything and then ordered her on to a pick-up truck to their headquarters.

There Ainun was interrogated and tortured for nearly five hours. She was asked where her husband was, who his friends were, who brought rice for GAM fighters and whether she could lead them to her husband. Whenever she said she didn't know they slapped her, beat her, kicked her and threatened to cut her face. She bled from her ears and her cheeks were sore and swollen. They were unsatisfied with her answers and became angry, blindfolding her with a black cloth and tied her hands behind her back with cable. She was taken in a car and driven around and sat at the foot of a tree. The soldiers told her she was in a graveyard and she heard the commander giving orders for some soldiers to dig a grave. Terrified, Ainun then heard the sound of digging.

They said to me, "This Friday night, we will shoot you and bury you in this grave we're digging." Then I heard the sound of a very loud gunshot right next to me. I thought they had shot me and I fainted. They tried to wake me up and threw water over my body until I was conscious. They removed my blindfold and I saw a pile of coconut shells near me. Maybe this is what they had shot.

What happened to her next was humiliating and is still difficult for her to talk about. She was taken back to the post, where 15 soldiers took turns groping her all over her body, trying to kiss her, and pushing and pulling at her, passing her from one to the other. They tried to tear off her clothes, ripping them.

I said to them, "It's better to kill me than rape me!" Then I screamed and yelled out to (their commander), "Sir, your boys want to rape me!"

Eventually the commander came and said "Ah, why do you scream? We want to give you pleasure." But he did end up reprimanding his men. When he left one of the soldiers said he would kill Ainun if she complained again and another said they would gang rape her if the commander was not around.

She was taken from the military post to a military intelligence headquarters in Buloh Blang Ara. She was held for three days, interrogated, tortured and suffered further sexual harassment. Later she was ordered to leave. She was also made to report regularly to the military post by phone about all her activities.

Ainun only returned to Alue Rambe in 2005 after the signing of the Helsinki Agreement. When she returned she found that she had lost everything, including her livestock.

All my things were destroyed; I had to start my life again from nothing. But this was not a problem. The hardest thing was forgetting about the humiliating events I suffered...I will not forget as long as I live what gives me nightmares and always haunts my life.



Ainun tried to get over the trauma by working in her garden and raising goats. What often makes her angry and sad is when her husband asks her what happened at the military post. He questions if it is true that she really wasn't raped.

The thing that makes me most angry is when my husband sometimes asks, "Is it really true that you weren't raped by soldiers when they arrested and detained you?" That question makes me annoyed and angry and I say to my husband, "Because of you I experienced everything, because I always kept your whereabouts, as a member of GAM being pursued by the army, a secret." If I say something like that he goes quiet and then I realize I can't really say things like that. But every time I remember and talk about that experience I cry.

Ainun does not have her own house or land. She now works as a farm laborer and washes clothes in order to support her family. Having not received any recognition or compensation for what she experienced, she feels a strong need for justice.

Perpetrators should be prosecuted and punished, not just apologize. No assistance whatsoever has been received [by victims, and yet] I have seen many people who are not victims of the conflict receive [assistance].

MUHARRAMAH: SEEKING THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MISSING



Muharramah has four children whom she supports by working as a farm laborer and peeling betel nut and other fruits. She earns Rp 500 per kilogram.

Muharramah had her first encounter with TNI when she was only 20 years old. Her older brother was arrested and taken to the sub-district military office in Grugok. Along with her brother's wife, she went in search of him but when she tried to go to him she herself was beaten and interrogated. She was accused of being related to GAM members.

I heard my brother call out for help; perhaps he had heard our voices outside. I was not patient and tried to go to his room but I was kicked and hit with rifles until I fell down and was dizzy.

Her sister-in-law kept asking where her husband was and why he was being detained. But they were not given any concrete answers. Muharramah was ordered to go home, her sister-in-law was not allowed to leave. The following



Muharramah showing the dress she wore when she was beaten and interrogated.

day Muharramah returned to Koramil but was not allowed to see either her brother or her sister-in-law.

When I approached the Koramil office I wasn't allowed to meet with my brother or my sister-in-law. They also threatened me, "If you are also a rebel, you cannot live, you must be annihilated." At that time I didn't understand what annihilated meant.

One week later she was sent a parcel containing her brother's bloodied clothing and was ordered to report to the military post. She took the clothes with her and demanded to know where her brother was.

They told me "Do not ask again about those people, we already sent the clothes, just take the clothes!" Since then I have not heard how they are and they have never come home.

In 2003 she was again interrogated by the military, accused of bringing food to GAM. In 2004 she was caught in crossfire between TNI and GAM. The soldiers then ordered people to line up, lie down and crawl on the football field where they would

be questioned about GAM. Muharramah told the soldiers that it was difficult for her to lie down and crawl, as she was eight months pregnant. Nevertheless, the soldiers ignored her pleas and ordered her to comply.

They told me “Lie down lady, just be quiet.” Not long after that I gave birth and the midwife said my child’s leg was slightly deformed. It looked like this was not a natural defect but had been caused by recent events. With treatment my child’s leg is fine now.

Muharramah hopes that the conflict will not happen again.

I hope that we can live in peace and earn a living because up until now the government has not provided any assistance to the victims of the conflict.

She also wants to know the truth about what happened to her relatives.

I want to know what happened to my brother and sister-in-law, not just to receive back their bloodied clothes.

MARIANI: TORTURED FOR HER BROTHER



Mariani in front of her house

Mariani is from Blang Pohroh Lhokseumawe. She sells fried bananas and washes clothes to cover the costs of her family’s basic needs. Like Muharramah, Mariana had her first experience of violence in 2004, when she was 20 years old. Soldiers came to her house at dawn looking for her older brother who they suspected of being a GAM member. When they couldn’t find her brother they slapped her and

dragged her into the kitchen where they continued to ask of her brother's whereabouts. Then they kicked her in the stomach and slapped her again until her nose bled. The soldiers grew angry, as they couldn't gain information so they grabbed her mother and threatened to shoot her.

I said, "It isn't true, my brother is not a GAM member!" My words only made them angrier and they kicked and slapped me again. My mother was worried about me being beaten so she said, "My child you are searching for has gone to Pusong Lhokseumawe." Then the soldiers accused me of lying when I said I didn't know where my brother was and they herded me like a criminal outside the house, only wearing my nightgown, to the Cot Sabang intersection 800 meters away.

Mariani will always remember how her neighbors watched her being taken away by soldiers. She was put on a waiting truck where two men from her village were already sitting in handcuffs. She was then taken to Pusong Lhokseumawe to look for her brother.

She was brought to her uncle's house but her brother was not there, her uncle was concerned about her and asked if he could take her home. The soldiers refused and said they would do it. They then took her to the 'Dutch House' (a house they were using as their post) where they interrogated her about her brother's whereabouts. They pulled her hair and threatened to rape her but she did not know where her brother was. All she could tell them was that he was not a GAM member, making them angrier. They pulled her hair and slapped her again. Before too long the village head of Blang Pohroh arrived, saying that they took the wrong girl.

Mariani standing in front of the ruins of the Dutch House where she was interrogated and tortured.



When Mariani was finally taken back to her home, the soldiers smashed plates, ransacked the house, and ordered Mariani inside. She didn't want to enter because she was scared they would rape her and threaten her mother. Because she refused, the soldiers took her outside again to the main road, but then brought her back to the house saying they were mistaken. Apparently, they had actually meant to arrest Mariani's brother's daughter. Two days later they came again and searched the house but Mariani's family had hidden her brother's daughter to keep her safe. They didn't come to the house or question them about the whereabouts of the girl again.

Mariana hopes that the conflict in Aceh will not be repeated and Aceh can be peaceful forever. She feels she has not received any justice but is not sure from whom she could demand it. She focuses her energy and time to make a living for her family.

I have a daughter now, my husband doesn't have a stable job so I have to help him to earn a living helping my sister to sell fried bananas in the afternoons, look after people's animals and wash the clothes of my neighbors.



Mariani and her daughter

LISA FITRIANI: A VIOLENT FATHER IN A VIOLENT CONFLICT

Lisa Fitriani is a university student. She works as a kindergarten teacher and bakes and sells cakes in order to support and help raise her three siblings. Fitriani experienced violence within her family. Her father was a violent man who beat her mother, her siblings and herself from a very young age. She believed that her father's violence was triggered from the stress of the uncertainty he faced due to the conflict.

Animals do not beat their children until they bleed but this is what my father did.

In 1999 during the month of Ramadhan, Fitriani, then about 9 years old, was playing out the front of her house when soldiers arrived. Trailing behind them were villagers from Meunasah Blang Kandang, Lhokseumawe. These villagers had fled to Fitriani's village because the military had entered their own village to look for Ahmad



Kandang, a GAM leader. Fitriana quickly attempted to go inside her house but she was pulled out and taken to the KNPI building in Lhokseumawe with everyone else. She did not know who pulled her. She was confused and didn't know anyone. She sat under a tree and when she tried to stand up she tripped over a tree root and fell. At that very moment she heard a gun shot above her head. She was terrified and everyone started running. Luckily she saw someone she knew in the distance and ran to where he was standing. Somehow she made it home and arrived to find everyone panicking and frantically looking for her.



Fitriana inside
her house

Five years later when Fitriani was 14 years old in 2004, soldiers came to her house to look for her uncle. At 4 a.m. Fitriani heard a pounding noise which was followed by a group of soldiers kicking down the door, searching everywhere for her uncle until they found him and took him away. When her mother followed them out of the house she was kicked and beaten with weapons. At 10 a.m. that same morning, soldiers came back to the house. Fitriana asked where her uncle was only to be kicked in the stomach and threatened to be shot. She believes she would have been killed if a journalist had not arrived on the scene, and until now she still feels the trauma from this event.

Her uncle was eventually returned home but was monitored by soldiers who often visited their house asking about GAM. Fitriani was never brave enough to ask anything or get close to them again.

I'm a little bit traumatized by that event, I'm surprised they got so angry with me and kicked me when I only asked where my uncle was being taken. I hope the conflict is not repeated because it would be detrimental to the generations to come, just let us be the ones who experience these things.

SAIDAH: IN DETENTION WITH HER CHILDREN



Between 1989 and 2003, Saidah was frequently detained and tortured by the Indonesian military because of her husband's association with GAM. When her husband went missing, Saidah had little choice but to bring her children with her when she was arrested and detained by soldiers from post to post. Throughout this period her three children directly experienced violations themselves and witnessed violence against their mother in detention. At times they were left and separated from her.

Saidah was first arrested and detained at Rumoh Geudong in 1989 for two nights. She had to take her three children with her because there was no one available to look after them at her home. She was the only woman imprisoned there at the time. She was interrogated and tortured, beaten, slapped, kicked and denied food for three days. She was permitted to return to her home because her children became sick.

The second time she was brought to Rumoh Geudong was in 1991. She was detained for over one month. She was beaten, electrocuted and tied-up. She was humiliated by being forced to 'entertain' the soldiers. She was stripped naked and ordered to dance to *dangdut* music while other prisoners, including men, were forced to watch.

Every time I hear dangdut music I feel tormented and remember how soldiers at Rumoh Geudong humiliated me. I was tortured with my hands and feet tied, and then they electrocuted my big toe. While I was in pain they stripped me. Naked, they forced me to dance to dangdut music that they played very loudly on a tape recorder. I was so embarrassed because many other prisoners were being forced to watch me dance naked. Whenever I stopped they would hit me and threaten to electrocute me again. Then when I danced they would laugh.

In 1996, Saidah was again taken and detained in Rumoh Geudong for a third time. Again, she was shamed by having to perform. They forced Saidah and a male prisoner to act as bride and groom, they were 'married' and forced to sit side by side and act out their roles.

At Rumoh Geudong, the soldiers would make fake wedding ceremonies. I was ordered to be a bride and a male prisoner the groom. We had to have a 'wedding ceremony', make vows and then after that we were seated side by side. They arranged us in poses and forced us to do as they liked. They were pleased and laughed; we detainees were used as objects of entertainment.

The fourth time Saidah was detained at Rumoh Geudong was in 1998. This time her son, who was just in fourth grade, came with her. He was also tortured to extract information on the whereabouts of Saidah's husband.

This time my son was taken with me to Rumoh Geudong. For three days he was also tortured with electric shocks, even though he was just in fourth grade. They tortured him so that I would tell them where my husband was. I had no idea where he was, and neither did my children.

Rumoh Geudong was not the only place Saidah was detained. Because her husband, who was a woodcutter, left home for work and never returned, the military suspected that he had joined GAM. Saidah was detained at the military post in Cot Tunong Glumpang Tiga Pidie. That time, she brought her 18-month-old child with her. During the seven days they were there, they never had enough food, even though her brother was sending them food.

From detention in Cot Tunong, Saidah was sent to a cell in Lamlo jail in Sakti sub district, Pidie Regency, for six months. That same year she was taken to the Jiem Jiem

military post where she was beaten with rattan as thick as her wrist. Her second child who was in first grade was with her while her other two children stayed with her mother. Saidah was interrogated about the whereabouts of her husband and told to share information about GAM members that she knew. During this interrogation her child was sitting on her lap. He was also hit with an electric cable when Saidah was whipped.

When I was interrogated I was ordered to sit down on a chair, my son was in my lap, and then when I was beaten with a long electric cable, my son was also hit.

Never in the six months she was held here was she given food for herself or her child. Saidah had to beg from people in the surrounding villages for work as a day laborer on their rice fields so she could get rice to eat.

For the six months I was detained at Jim Jim I was never given food. From morning until afternoon the soldiers allowed me to look for food around the village where I was detained. Every day I had to ask for the mercy of the villagers so they could give me some work in their rice fields so I could get a mouthful of rice for my child and me.



Saidah now makes a living as a farm laborer

Saidah was taken again and detained at another military post in Ujong Lebat village for one night. She was interrogated and beaten with bamboo so severely that she had to seek medical treatment for the bruising on her body and arms. This post was in her own village so she could leave her children at home.

Once again she was taken to the military post in Jim Jim and held this time for three months and six days. She was not given any food and was beaten with a cable. This

time she had to bring her youngest child with her who at the time was in third grade at primary school. She was released but only five months later she was detained yet again at the Jim Jim post for six months.

In 1997 when Saidah was picked up and detained at the military post in Lung Putu, she was forbidden to leave the post. This imposed curfew put unbearable psychological pressure on her. The soldiers did not grant permission for her release after her mother had died, and consequently she was unable to see her mother's body one last time. Saidah cannot forget this and it is one of her major regrets in her life.

When a neighbor came to the post and told me my mother had died I asked for permission from the soldiers to go home to my village just to see my mother's body. They didn't let me go and I got really angry and cried but they still said no. Later I tried to sneak out but they ordered their dogs to chase and bite me. I was always scared of dogs, but since then I am terrified of them. I remember how sad and destroyed I was because I was not allowed to go and see my mother's body.

Saidah took an extreme measure to protect her oldest daughter from the possible violence. She decided to deny that the girl was hers and instead told the authorities she was her niece. She was forced to persuade the girl that she was not her mother.

My daughter, my first child, I was forced not to recognise her as my own child because I was afraid she would be taken and abused by the military. I was forced to claim my child was my sister's.

The decision Saidah took to deny her eldest daughter as her own made a strong impression on her daughter. Saidah asked her daughter, now an adult, to assist her in writing her life postcards for her memory box, an exercise conducted as part as our action research. The exercise allowed her daughter to learn about Saidah's struggles. Her daughter began to understand and respect her mother for what she had done.

I was so mad when I found out that Saidah was my biological mother. Can you imagine? From the time I was small I thought my mother was my auntie. I only found out once I was grown and the conflict was over. I was angry and sad that my mother would have the heart to deny me as her own. I asked my mother but she was just quiet, she didn't want to answer me and just said, "What is important now is that you know." I only found out the reasons a few months ago, why my mother denied I was hers, because she wanted to protect me from being taken by soldiers and subjected to terrible things. I also now know everything that my mother experienced. She asked me to write her story for her on the postcards you gave us [for her memory box]. I was asked to help my mother to write her stories because she can't write very well. I feel guilty that I expected my mother to be really strong for me when everything she did was so I would be safe.

When Saidah was detained, she was faced with the impossible decision to either take her youngest children with her or leave them without proper care. Eventually,

she decided it was better to leave her children rather than bring them with her where they would suffer. Her children were left with Saidah's mother who was old and unwell.

From 1995 until 1997 when I was detained my children stayed in the village with my mother who was already old and sickly. Since 1999, when I was detained at Panteu Breuh for one year I was not allowed to return home to check on my children. Also when I was detained in 2003, I was not allowed to go home for one year. I don't know how my children survived with my family in the village because my mother died in 1997.

Saidah felt a glimmer of happiness after reformation and military operations were ceased in 1998 as she could return home and spend time with her family, including her husband. However, this was shortly lived. By the end of 1999 the conflict had heated up again and Saidah was detained again. Her husband was killed in an armed clash in January 2002.

Saidah hopes that there will be lasting peace and no more violence in Aceh.

My hope is that there will be no more disturbances and my son, my youngest, can get a job. He has passed high school, and is currently only working as a farm laborer to help me earn a living.

SARANAH: DETENTION AND SEPARATION

123

While Saranah's husband left home to join GAM, she had to survive on her own. Saranah now lives in Kampong Aron, Kecamatan Simpang Tiga, Pidie. She is one of three women from Aceh who was detained at the notorious torture center, Rumoh Gedong. Her husband was killed by the military in 1993. Now Saranah lives together with her son, her daughter and her grandson. Another son lives in Jakarta and has decided that he does not want to live in Aceh. He is still traumatized by the violence that his father and mother had to face.

Saranah experienced waves of violence. In 1989, she was imprisoned for nine months at Lamlo together with her young baby. She was tortured in order to give away the whereabouts of her husband. She was not given adequate food even though she was breastfeeding.

In 1990, Saranah was captured and detained again. Soldiers from the Special Forces (Kopassus) brought her to Rumoh Geudong, where she was detained with many other women. They were the wives, mothers and daughters of those accused of being rebels. There they experienced torture, were made to cook and clean, and forced to act as guides in military operations to search for their men.

The soldiers at Rumoh Geudong labeled me and a few other women as rebel sympathizers. Almost every day we were forced to join their operations to look for GAM headquarters and our husbands in the forest and mountains. We often rode in trucks and were ordered to walk in front. They didn't care if it rained or was hot; they still forced us to join them. We were also questioned, beaten and forced to cook. If they tortured us they



Saranah standing in front of her new house, renovated by her son.

played a tape recorder really loudly with the speakers placed outside the building, placed on the treetops, so that those living close by could not hear our screams and cries. Once I was taken in a helicopter to look for my husband in the mountains. I was forced to yell out to my husband to surrender while they said that they would drop me out of the helicopter into the sea if my husband could not be found.

The soldiers took Saranah and some other women to an empty house not far from Rumoh Geudong. They were not allowed to interact with residents nearby and certainly not with their family.

A few friends and I were for a few years housed in empty houses, so that our husbands could not come back home. The soldiers threatened us not to speak with other people. We could only speak with other prisoners in the same house, we were not allowed outside. Of course, no villager was brave enough to come to our house because members of Kopassus were together with us. The saddest thing for me was when I thought about my children with their grandmother and how they were living and eating. I often could not sleep if I thought about my children. They were surely suffering without their father and mother, even though their father and mother were both still alive.

They were not satisfied with what they had done to myself and my children, ordering me to live in isolation and apart from my

mother and children, making me abandon my crops and fields, all the capital and sweat I had invested in those fields, wasted. Kopassus also paid and ordered some people to burn down my house, leaving nothing but charcoal.

The most painful and bitter memory was when I was interrogated at Rumoh Geudong. They forced me roughly to undress, but I still didn't want to. A soldier aggressively ripped my clothes. Then he tied a rope around my neck like a noose, then without a shirt on I was paraded around the room and pulled like a buffalo while they cursed me and said I was a buffalo.

One soldier took a dagger and unsheathed it, pointing it to her stomach and threatening to stab her and throw her into the river if she didn't respond to their questions. He then brought the dagger to her throat, threatening to cut off her head and throw it in the well. The rope around her neck was tied to the feet of a table and if she moved the rope tightened around her neck. In that state, soldiers interrogated Saranah about taking food to GAM, asking her who was doing it. After the interrogation she was released, sent home and threatened not to tell anyone what had happened to her.

In 1993, her husband, Tengku M Yusuf, was shot in the mountains; his body was helicoptered back to their village by the army. This ended her harassment and torture by the military. With the death of her husband, Saranah was no longer abused. However, the loss of her husband left her as a single parent solely responsible for the upbringing of her children.

With whatever strength I had left, I handled all the suffering I had experienced to raise my children. I returned to farming like everyone else, even though some people sneered at me.



Saranah has faced stigma from her community, being judged for leaving her children while she was detained. This has only exacerbated the pain she feels about being frequently distanced from her children.

After reformation, her daughter became a civil servant and her youngest son started working for the provincial level government development agency.

I sacrificed my property and possessions, even my husband was killed, my children grew up without me, and my body was sullied by soldiers to help the struggle of GAM. But up until today I have not received any support, while those that never sacrificed anything are now living contentedly. I feel hurt and very sad when I remember what happened to my family and me.

Sarahah had previously borrowed money to start a business raising chickens and ducks but unfortunately the business fell through and she is now unable to repay her loan. Her health is deteriorating; she experiences pain in her knees and legs when she walks. She hopes that the government will be able to assist the women victims of torture. She has received some money in compensation for her husband's death but it does not redress the suffering she experienced.

My family and I do not feel there is justice; my child is a civil servant because I am a victim of the conflict, but that is because we know someone on the inside. Overall the government does not care about us. The housing compensation I received was not comparable to the value of my house that they burnt down. I have been ill but have had no assistance for treatment and I've never been given any capital to start a business despite the fact that they destroyed my business during the conflict. Now, despite there being GAM people at the top, we victims do not yet feel our situation has improved. We feel vengeful and hurt when we see GAM members who were children but now are rich, riding around in fancy cars and living in fancy houses, we feel hurt and taste blood; they do not care about us anymore.

One important step towards justice is the recognition of sites of violence. Sarahah and the other women who were detained and tortured at Rumoh Geudong want the site made into a museum to remember and recognize the contribution of the women of Aceh, many from Pidie, who suffered humiliation, loss of honor, and loved ones in the name of maintaining the homeland of Aceh.

RUKIAH: WORKING FOR HER CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Rukiah Ahmad is a widow with three children, living in Pidie. She works as a farm laborer. In September 1990, Rukiah, at the time heavily pregnant, was working in her garden together with her children when they heard gunshots. At the time, she was unaware it was her husband who had been shot. She rushed home. On the way, she met with the village head who told her that soldiers were coming to take her to Rumoh Geudong.

No one was at her house to look after her children and they refused to stay with the village head. She had no other choice but to take her two children with her. Once she arrived the soldiers asked that her children not enter their post. Rukiah left her two children at a relative's house not far from Rumoh Geudong. When Rukiah got back to the post, she saw in the yard that there was a corpse covered with banana leaves. She suspected that this was her husband's body. She tried to get closer but



Rukiah and her children
in front of their new house.

was forbidden by the soldiers. Instead they ordered her inside the building and asked her of her husband's whereabouts.

I was forced to go inside and then the soldiers asked me where my husband was and what I knew about the rebels. I said that I didn't know where he was, he never tells me where he is going and that the soldiers know better. I had nothing to do with the rebels, how could I know about them?

Rukiyah's firm and brave answer made the officers angry. They stripped her, leaving her naked without a single thread covering her body, then they doused her hair with gasoline, they said they wanted to burn her alive.

I was made to stand in front of a mirror and they put a horrible cowboy hat on my head. Naked, I was ordered to look at myself in the mirror. They laughed then took a dagger and put it to my ear. One of them said they wanted to cut off my ear. Then I was laid down on my back, they put a pistol muzzle in my mouth and a rifle muzzle into my vagina. Many other soldiers witnessed this. Then, still naked, the soldiers told me that my husband was dead and his body was the corpse I had seen in the yard of Rumoh Geudong.

The soldiers pulled her to standing and tied a noose around her neck using two nylon ropes, one to the front and one to the back. They said they wanted to hang Rukiyah. She was ordered to walk; when she walked the soldiers pulled the ropes.

Naked and with a rope around my neck, I was paraded around the room, witnessed by the soldier. It was so hurtful; I still feel the pain of being paraded around like a wild buffalo. I was ordered to look at the corpse of my husband from the window, but whenever I was about to go to the window [to look at the corpse], I was pulled back and forth by the rope around my neck...Before I could see out the window the soldiers shut it.

Eventually she was ordered to get dressed and was told to walk home.

At the time not one person knew what I had experienced. I picked up my kids from my relative's house and went home.... That night we were alone because at that time it was forbidden to gather, even to grieve and mourn when someone died. One month later I gave birth. My relatives helped to look after my two children and we lived at the mercy of the villagers.

She started work 44 days after giving birth to her daughter as a labourer peeling betel nut for Rp 25 per kilogram. With this she could earn Rp 500 per day to buy rice and bananas for her baby to eat and kerosene for cooking. The conflict limited the economic opportunities available to her. In order to pay for her child's delivery, and to simply survive, she had to mortgage her husband's land for 15 *mayam* of gold and Rp 1 million (approx. US\$100).

Her daughter whom she carried when she was tortured is now 23. Rukiah lives with her two sons, daughter and a six-year-old grandchild. Her granddaughter's father is divorcing his wife, Rukiah's daughter, because he is unable to get a job. Rukiah works in her garden and rice fields and supplements their income with wages earned from labouring on other farms. It is not enough to pay off their debts and sometimes they have to borrow rice from their neighbours.



As a war widow, Rukiyah has only received compensation (*dana diyat*, compensation according to Islamic law) of Rp. 9 million (about US\$900) received in three installments over the period 2001 – 2002. For this money, Rukiyah had to give *salam tempel* or bribes from the village level to the Regency level. These bribes cost from Rp. 15,000 to Rp. 50,000 each time.

What I experienced did not lead to assistance from the government. The compensation I received was only because my husband was killed by soldiers, not because of the torture I experienced. The torture I experienced is not considered for compensation by the government in Aceh.

Rukiah believes that all victims of the conflict should be acknowledged while justly and sustainably supported by the government, including the women that experienced violence like her. She wants to be able to pay off her debt and get back the land she had to sell, and she would like some small capital to start a business.

The government has not yet taken care of us, our suffering is not comparable with what the government has provided till now.

Rukiah and her children are deeply affected by what happened to her and her husband:

I live with fear and sorrow, when I remember what happened I find it hard to sleep. My children are often scared and sad. I also see my community is traumatized; especially when soldiers comes into the village and everyone shuts themselves up in their houses.

Rukiah inside
her old house



However, she thinks it has been very important for her to heal and one way to remember what happened is to tell her story to others.

There are no more bitter memories that I hide, I have told everything. Even though it hurts to recall the time I was stripped and pulled around like a buffalo. It's especially painful because I was heavily pregnant at the time, but I am happy that I have told all those stories.

One source of great strength for Rukiah is her children. She continues to remain strong so they can continue living.

My children and grandchild are my hope, they need me, I have to be strong otherwise how will they survive? I work, work really hard, as a hired laborer, when I work I only think about continuing my life and that of my children and grandchildren.

JAUHARI: WORKING AS A MIGRANT IN MALAYSIA



Jauhari inside
her house

Jauhari is a widow with three children. She spent three years working in Malaysia from 2003, sending money home to build a house and educate her children. She felt this was her only way to get ahead and reestablish herself and her family after suffering violence during the conflict in Aceh.

In 2001, soldiers came to her house to arrest her husband, accusing him of supplying food to GAM. Jauhari came outside holding her baby to see what was

happening. She was kicked in the stomach and waist until she fell down in pain. From her injuries, she lost control of her bladder for three days. Their house was ransacked and their possessions taken including cash and the stock in the small kiosk that they ran next to their house. The next day Jauhari received her husband's beaten body. He had been tortured and killed by soldiers: his hands and legs were tied, throat cut and he was peppered with bullets. She recalls how difficult it was for her to bathe her husband's battered corpse for burial. She was only able to give him the most basic funeral, only three neighbors wanted to help her. Jauhari knew that people were afraid that if they helped they would be labeled as GAM, putting themselves at risk of being interrogated and violated by soldiers.

Three days later Jauhari left her village because she no longer felt safe there. She headed to her parents house in a nearby village. About a week later she heard militia had burned down her house. She went to see for herself and found a pile of ashes where her house had been. Nothing could be salvaged.

In 2002 she had nothing. She was frequently sick and thought she might die. They struggled to make ends meet, and some days her children experienced hunger. She had to work hard as a day laborer to survive.

I never bought shoes or snacks for my kids. If their sandals broke I couldn't just replace them with new ones. I have to work hard to support my three children. They suffered; sometimes we had a meal. Sometimes we didn't even have rice. Every day I had to look for people to hire me, I always took work, even if they just paid me with bananas from their gardens.

In Gampong Cot Tunong she experienced violence again when soldiers came to her house and demanded her son's favorite rooster. When she refused to give it to him, the soldier slapped both her cheeks until her lips bled.

Besides physical violence, the conflict disrupted the livelihood of women in Aceh. Jauhari recalls:

I was on my way to sell my produce at the market and was only half way through my journey when soldiers in tanks and trucks intercepted me. They ordered me to watch the tanks and truck for them from morning to afternoon. This sort of thing happened a few times until I was not able to go to the market to sell my produce. Only at evening prayer time was I permitted to return home.

The three years in Malaysia as a cook and waitress at a small restaurant were not easy for Jauhari. Aside from working very hard, she had to wear shorts to work.

My boss did not let me wear a sarong. I had to wear shorts to work. I was so embarrassed and did not know what to say. In the village I don't wear shorts in front of other people, indeed even in my own room I don't wear shorts. However, I have to endure it so that my children can eat and continue their education.

She managed to save money over the three years and use it to support her family:

Three years I managed to stay in Malaysia and finally I came home. I was able to build a new house. My old shack had collapsed and the government never compensated me for the house that was burned down. Every month I sent money home to support my children and send them to school.

DARNI: MORTGAGING LAND TO SECURE HER RELEASE



Darni inside her parent's house

Darni comes from a large family. She has seven brothers and sisters. She works as a farmer, a day laborer, and sells cakes to make money to support her family.

In 2004, a soldier and police officer came to her house and accused her of being a member of *Inong Bale* (a term used for female combatants.) Darni denied the allegation but they forced her to go with them. The commander kicked her leg with his army boots.

I explained to them that I had just returned from Medan where I'd been working as a maid. But they accused me of being Inong Bale who looked for money in Medan to give to GAM.

When she arrived at the military post, she was slapped a number of times by the commander of the post. Her hands were tied up because she had not admitted to being *Inong Bale*. They also accused her of being a "snake dancer" for GAM in the

forest. They threatened to strip her and tie her to a tree so ants would eat her. They teased her and said she should become the wife of all members of their military unit, providing sex to the soldiers at the post.

That night, the commander came to me only wearing minimal clothes, a pair of shorts and a singlet. He said, "Now you must serve us" and he pointed a pistol at my head while threatening me. "Later, at 4 a.m., you will die, we will teach you." My two thumbs were tied together from 9 in the evening until 1 in the morning until my hands were blue and bruised. I was laid down on a bamboo bed, I felt really uncomfortable because I was surrounded by soldiers.

The following morning her hands were untied and she was ordered to cook for the soldiers. She was taken to the sub-district military post and held there overnight. She was then taken to district headquarters where she was interrogated again. In the afternoon, she was taken to the military police and held there one night. She was ordered to write and sign a formal surrender letter but she refused. She was then taken to the police station where she was held for five days. There she suffered further humiliation and sexual harassment from the police who were investigating her. Finally she was taken to Benteng Sigli prison where she was held for 10 days. From there Darni was sent to trial without a lawyer even though she had been charged with treason. She was sentenced to two and a half years jail.

While in Benteng Sigli prison Darni befriended other prisoners:

I helped a lady who had been shot in the arm to take care of her baby. I felt sorry for her because she couldn't carry her baby. I also helped an older lady who had been detained because she was accused to taking food to GAM. Actually, she was only providing food for her family.

Darni in front of
Benteng Sigli Prison



While Darni was in prison her family tried to find a way to get her a reduced sentence. Darni was finally freed on December 25, 2004. The day after her release, a tsunami hit Aceh, including the prison building where she was held. Her cellmates who were still in prison did not survive.

Her family had to pay 45 grams of pure gold to the relevant officials. Darni's sentence was reduced to 10 months and 15 days. The gold used to free Darni was obtained by her family through the sale of the family's rice field, their sole asset. Mortgaging the rice fields that were the source of the family's income had a tremendous impact on the family financial situation. Ten years later, Darni's family has not been able to get back the land they mortgaged. They have had to rent land so that they can work to earn a meager return.

After 10 years we are not yet able to get back our rice fields, even though my family and I have been working very hard. I wake up really early to make cakes to sell to a local food stall. I work as a farm laborer, and I teach children the Koran. I also help at a local health post. But we are not able to pay off our debts.

Darni thinks she will only feel a sense of justice if she is able to pay off her family's debts.

Maybe, if I have paid off my debts, thanks be to God maybe I will feel that all is fair.

Chapter 9

Women Lost in Time and Space



STOLEN GIRLS AND FORGOTTEN REFUGEES

Indonesia harbors East Timorese women who were affected by conflict.

According to Timor-Leste's truth commission, CAVR, some 4000 children were taken from their families and sent to Indonesia between 1975 to 1999. The transfer of children was a practice sanctioned by the military and civilian authorities, involving individuals and later on institutions (military, religious and other civilian organizations) that facilitated this process.⁷⁸ Many of these separated children are now adults, living in Indonesia, with a vague memory of being East Timorese. Some of those who were lucky enough to be cared for by loving families, raised and educated as Indonesians, have made their way back to Timor-Leste to visit with their relatives. However, for most of them, the road to reconciling their identities has been difficult. Many of these children were vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Some of them were not orphans, and continue to be sought by their family members.

Although the majority of these stolen children seem to be boys recruited as child soldiers (or known as TBOs-*Tenaga Bantuan Operasional*, Operations Assistants),

girls were also taken. Girls taken away from their family face risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. AJAR is currently working together with civil society groups from Indonesia and Timor-Leste, as well as the national human rights institutions from the two countries, to find these stolen children. In the last year, we have identified about 40, mostly men. However, in this chapter we share the story of Lina, taken at the age of six. She finally was reunited with her family thirty years later.

Another kind of separation took place in 1999. Following the announcement of the results of a UN-administered ballot, militia groups backed by the Indonesian military looted, burned and destroyed houses and public infrastructure in Timor-Leste. UNHCR estimated that about 300,000 people ran to the hills and forests close to their homes, and another 250,000 people fled or were deported to West Timor, Indonesia.⁷⁹

On 6 September 1999, refugees began to arrive in West Timor, Indonesia. A lucky few stayed in the homes of family members or were able to rent their own accommodations. Most of the refugees stayed in camps that had been prepared and organized by the place they originated from in Timor-Leste. These refugees were typically watched under the tight supervision of the militia from their district.⁸⁰



Timorese women refugees from Tuapukan camp, who participated in the research project

There were about 200 refugee camps throughout West Timor. Life in the camps was very harsh. In several camps, barracks were arranged in rows. Most dwellings were nothing more than sheets of plastic or whatever material was available, patched together as best as possible around local houses or along the banks of streams. In the early days, sanitation facilities were unavailable in these camps.⁸¹

Women were both economically and physically vulnerable. They faced various forms of violence, including domestic violence.⁸²

By the end of 2002 more than 200,000 people had returned to Timor-Leste. Nevertheless, there remain thousands of people from Timor-Leste in West Timor, in the same locations they were brought to (“former” refugee camps.)⁸³ Many live in simple housing made available by the government or scattered among local residents.

The women involved in this research originated from the regions of Viqueque and Baucau in Timor-Leste. They fled the violence that raged in Timor-Leste in September 1999, with promises that they would be provided with housing. Once they arrived at the refugee camp in Tuapukan and saw there was nothing, they felt disappointed and helpless. None of them can afford to buy land and most of them have been separated from their family networks. Sixteen years later they are still living in makeshift shacks in Tuapukan, scraping by to make ends meet. They are forgotten and invisible to both governments.

ISABELINHA: A STOLEN DAUGHTER

Isabelinha was six years old when a soldier took her from her family in 1979. Her parents refused to sign an “adoption letter”, an official letter signed by the military commander giving the soldier permission to take her home with him. She was still able to communicate with her family until approximately 1984. But when she was moved to Manado in North Sulawesi they lost contact.

Her removal from her family was traumatic. She recalls being brought to the port in Laga where she was boarded onto a small boat.

During that trip, in the middle of the sea, the soldiers moved from [the small boat] to a large ship by climbing up a rope. I was scared and started to cry. This made the soldier angry and he almost threw me into the sea. . . . Other soldiers yelled, “Don’t do it sir, don’t throw her away. She’s just a little child. If you’re just going to toss her away, why did you bring her?” I finally fainted and was pulled on board with a lifebuoy from the ship. Several hours later I regained consciousness in the soldier’s room.

The navy boat docked in Surabaya. Lina (Isabelinha’s nickname) and other children also taken from Timor-Leste by the soldiers. From the time she was taken to Jakarta, Lina experienced abuse and neglect. She recalled feeling hungry and alone. She was treated as a domestic servant, made to wash laundry by hand for a family of five before she went to school. After school, she had to sell blocks of ice in the neighborhood. She was often not fed until she was able to sell all her goods.

The wife of the man who took me did not like having a daughter. Even though the formal document said that the reason for adoption was to treat me like their own child, because they did not have a daughter. But in fact they did not like having a daughter.



The wife's abuse and disdain towards Lina continued to grow. When Lina was in junior high school, she was moved to Manado where she lived with another relative.

It was only with this family that I began to feel happy because I was treated well and in every way the same as their own two children. I was sent to school until the second class of Senior High.

During her last year of high school, she was summoned back to Jakarta. The abuse she experienced escalated.

My adopted mother and her children hated me. My adopted father . . . loved me because he had a different intention, not proper of a parent towards his child.

I resolved that whatever happened, I had to get an education. I had to pay my own way. The man who took me paid my school fees for a while, but his wife was jealous of me. It turned out that the man who took me had another motive. He wanted to treat me like a wife.

After Lina graduated from high school she moved far from home and worked at a Japanese company. The owner and his wife were very kind to Lina. They sponsored her for a visit to Japan and paid for her university education in Yogyakarta. Although she was far away, memories of her family in Timor-Leste stayed with Lina.

By then I had forgotten my family. I only remembered that the name of my father was Manuel Pinto and my brother's name, as I recalled, was Fernando. Now I know that his name is not

Lina with the man who 'adopted' her, the man's friend, and her cousin. This picture was taken in Viqueque before she was taken to Java by ship.

Fernando, but it sounds a bit like that. I have a younger sister whose name I remembered as Magdalena, but her name is Filomena. At the time, I had resigned myself that were I to ever meet a relative, it would be a miracle.

While at university Lina fell in love with a good Indonesian man and they were soon married.

I have two children. When I was about three months pregnant with my second child, I had a feeling that I would meet my family. I prayed constantly, I did the Novena every night for three years. I never missed it, not even for one day. I had this hope that I would meet them.



Lina holding her old picture.

One night, Lina dreamed that her house was hit by a giant tsunami wave from the Timor Sea. In her dream, she held her husband and children and said:

“Do not be afraid. This is in Laga. I was here when I was a child. I was taken from here.”

It turns out that my brothers and cousins were looking for me. I had not seen them for 30 years. Three days later, I received a phone call from my foster sibling, the youngest one, who was the most kind to me. She said, “Your brothers are looking for you.” I pinched myself: “Is this true, oh God? Is this what I get after all the suffering I have experienced?”

When I was a child my father once told me, “If you are ever separated from me, look at the sky. If the sky is blue and the breeze is cool, it is a sign that your brothers and sisters miss you. That afternoon I watched the sky behind my house, Dili felt near. Hopefully, I can tell my family that I now have two children.

My cousin came, and I cried in my room. “God, is this true?” My son ran into my room, saying, “Mother, your brother is here.

His face is exactly like yours.” When I saw him, he really looked like me. My cousin entered the house and immediately phoned my parents. I told them all about my life’s journey. My mama told my cousin what to check: “Her forehead protrudes and she has a burn mark on her arm.” This all matched. When I talked to my mama on the phone, she asked, “Do you still remember any Tetum or not?” I said, “Yes, I only remember the phrase ‘rou Dili seidak mai’—the boat from Dili has not arrived. My father used to sing this song when he was hunting, ‘Imi atu ba nebe . . .’ That’s all I know.” “Well that’s all,” my mother said. “Your name is Isabelinha de Jesus Pinto. You are usually called Nina.” Finally I could see my family again.

Before I was separated from my father, he said, “You have to be strong, honest, and brave.” I remembered these words constantly. When the people who took me were cruel to me, I held on to those words. I held on to the truth. I wasn’t plucked from just anywhere. But because he was a soldier [the man who brought me to Indonesia], he was always right. I lived under pressure, abuse; I experienced it all. But I became strong.

OLANDINA DA SILVA XIMENES: BROKEN PROMISES

Olandina has kept photos of her husband’s burial after he was killed.

I want to tell my story so that the world will know and there can be changes.

Olandina’s mother died when she was small and she doesn’t remember her. Her father married again but was often stationed far away for his work.

Because father worked and his job was far away, I was left with my grandfather . . . My father remarried and when he went to work we were hit at home. I had five stepbrothers and stepsisters, but one died . . . two live in Mataram and one lives in Timor-Leste. When we were little we suffered, but if father was around we weren’t hit.



In 1975 Olandina's father died. She remembers there was active conflict at the time and they ran to the forest. They had to wait for Indonesian troops to pass the town of Viqueque until they could come out of the forest and bury his body in a cemetery. While they were in the forest, Olandina's stepmother died when she was around 13 or 14 years old. She was left to take care of her younger half-brothers and half-sisters. Living in the forest was very difficult.

We didn't have any food . . . we bought cassava, corn . . . we [also] had no money so we sold our clothes.

Olandina remembers her first encounter with Indonesian soldiers when she was captured looking for food outside the forest.

The Indonesian soldiers were mean. We didn't know Indonesian so didn't understand them.

Olandina managed to sneak away and was then taken back to the forests of Mt. Matebian by resistance fighters. Conditions there were so difficult that the group agreed to split up and Olandina returned with her younger half-siblings to their hometown of Ossu. In 1988 she married a Timorese soldier⁸⁴ and they moved to a boarding house in Dili. They had five children and when her husband was stationed again in Viqueque, she and the children also returned there.

In 1997 her husband was sadly killed while on duty. According to Olandina, he was killed by civilians who often ate at their house, not by soldiers.

All the children were angry and wanted revenge. He was a good person, so why was he killed? My daughter once said, "If I were a man, I'd want to find who killed my father." But I said, "Just be patient, for God doesn't close His eyes."

Olandina still keeps photographs of her husband's funeral. For a few months, each night Olandina and her children slept at a military post because they were too scared to sleep in their own home.

In 1999 Olandina was ordered by the authorities to go to West Timor. Of her five children, her two youngest daughters came with her to West Timor, while the other three stayed behind in Dili. Her oldest daughter, who was studying in Dili, stayed with a relative. Olandina's 12-year-old son stayed with another relative in Dili, but joined Olandina several years later. After he graduated from high school he worked for a while in Sulawesi. He has now returned to Dili and works on a boat that delivers oil from Timor-Leste to Bali. Olandina's second daughter stayed behind because she was studying to be a nun. In 2002 Olandina heard that this daughter died from an illness.

When my daughter died I tried to arrange for a passport and visa, but I was unsuccessful. I am so sad and bitter that I could not witness and attend the death of my own child. I haven't even seen her grave.

When Olandina and her two daughters left Timor-Leste they traveled together with one of Olandina's older brothers, his wife and their five children. Her brother and wife have both died in Tuapukan—the wife in 2002 and Olandina's brother in 2004. Since then, Olandina has cared for their five children. The oldest is now married and still lives in Tuapukan. The second is a pastor serving a church in Papua. The third,

who was in Mataram when his parents died, has since returned and lives alone in Tuapukan. The youngest two are studying at a Catholic high school in Kupang.

Olandina is sad about the loss and separation of her family. She continues her struggle to survive and strives to educate her children so they can get good jobs and support her in the future. However, options in the former camp are limited. She received aid from one NGO, but that stopped in 2002. Although she was initially promised a house and land by the Indonesian government, she has received only minimal assistance and must use government land for her garden. She also recalls a governor candidate who visited former camps in 2008. He promised assistance in exchange for votes.

He asked that we in the refugee camps support him in the election. He promised that if he were elected, he would return and take care of us. So we voted for him. However he never came back to the camp to bring assistance.

This visit also led to jealousy from another person in the community who accused her of receiving aid and not sharing it with others. The rumors and jealousy culminated in an attack on her house.

They destroyed my house, I was disappointed, but I didn't take revenge. I just surrendered to the Lord. I hope the Governor will fulfill his promise.

Olandina drawing water from her well.



While life is difficult in the former camp, Olandina is hesitant about returning to live in Timor-Leste.

Recently I had the chance to go to Timor-Leste, however I did not go to the village; I was only in Dili because I was scared to go there [the village].

Because the Indonesian government now considers women and children from Timor-Leste who are living in West Timor as Indonesian citizens, refugee aid is no longer available. Olandina still lives in a shack with a dirt floor and draws water from a well that she dug herself.

My [life] and that of my children is very difficult at the moment . . . By telling my story I feel some relief . . . I pray to Mother Maria and to the Lord Jesus. They will surely help me. It won't be direct aid, but [they'll help me] to be strong.

JULMIRA SOARES: NOWHERE TO LIVE



Julmira and her husband outside their house.

Julmira Soares was born an only child in Ossu, Viqueque District. Her parents died when she was young and she went to live with relatives who sent her to school and took care of her. The family had rice fields she helped to plant and harvest. She had a happy childhood and felt loved.

I'm very lucky because I lived with good people who took care of me and loved me even though I was not their own child.

Julmira married a man from her own village and they had one son. They lived as subsistence farmers, planting corn and vegetables. Her first husband died of illness and she later remarried. When Indonesian troops invaded Timor-Leste in 1975 Julmira and her family did not flee to the forest but remained in their village Beasu, hiding in the tall *alang-alang* grass near their home to stay safe.

In 1999 Julmira and her husband were taken to Kupang. She is still traumatized by the loss of all their possessions in the violence and chaos that followed the referendum. Her son decided to stay in Timor-Leste and they left him with her extended family. Julmira describes what it was like when they arrived in Tuapukan:

When we first arrived in Kupang we did not have a house. Together with many people we stayed in the Tuapukan camp. We arrived and just sat under a tree, later the government came and set up a tarpaulin for us to live under. I cried because I had been separated from my child and family. My husband and I set up a shelter with the tarpaulin so we had a place to sleep. After a few days we got aid. It was not just food, but also a lot of cooking utensils, cooking oil, soap, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc. Once the community accepted us, we then built a house for us to live in although the house is very small.



Julmira at the back of her house

Life is difficult in the former camp at Tuapukan. Julmira's husband is blind preventing him from working, leaving all responsibility for their survival to her. She has to walk a substantial distance to fetch water and they do not own any land. Nevertheless, Julmira has managed to do some gardening and grow vegetables, bananas, cassava, and corn on someone else's land. At harvest time she gathers leftover rice from other people's fields. As she grows older, the work is becoming more difficult, especially as she has limited support networks and no family to assist them. However, kind neighbors sometimes give her food to help her.

Julmira worries about their future and how they will survive. She wants to see her son and his family but is scared of returning to Timor-Leste.

I often get headaches, sore eyes, hands and feet. Even though my feet hurt I still work in the fields. I think about a lot of things. We are already old, work on our own, live in the camp, and are far from our family. I long to meet my family in Timor-Leste again. I always pray and want to go to Timor-Leste. . . . I only think about the two of us and our one child who is living there [in Timor-Leste]. He already has a wife and children, but we have never met them. I hope that he can come and see us. I don't have money for a passport. Just to eat and drink is hard. If the government wants to help us [they should organize passports]. We also need money.

MARCELINA MONTEIRO: LIVING ALONE



Marcelina Monteiro is from Osudesima village in Viqueque. In 1975 she fled her village with her family to Mt. Matebian. They were terrorized by the Indonesian military who used bombs and shot from low-flying planes. They later moved to Ossu where Marcelina gardened and sold her produce at the market to help support her family. She was married in Timor-Leste, but eventually divorced her husband.

I divorced my husband . . . because of his poor character . . . [He] always gambled and if I said anything [about that] we always argued . . . He wanted to get married again, so he beat me. It was better that we broke up; I didn't want [to be with him] anymore.

In 1999 Marcelina tried to flee with her older brother and mother to the forest for safety, however, they were stopped and returned to Ossu by the Indonesian military.

When we arrived in Ossu we were ordered to board a military car and taken to Beaco and then put on a military ship number 503. We disembarked at Bolok Harbour [near Kupang]. There, soldiers ordered us onto another truck. I was scared so I just complied. We were taken to Tuapukan and we have lived here ever since.

She recalls that Indonesian government officials came and collected their details, but not all those from Timor-Leste received assistance.

Only those with a complete family received assistance, but those of us who were widows didn't get anything. The government forgot us. We got a house, but it was not fit to live in. The government wanted to build houses, but there were too many people so we built a house from [palm] leaves.

Soon after arriving in the camp, Marcelina suffered the devastating loss of her brother and mother in 2013.

My heart still aches because my brother and mother died in the refugee camp. I don't want to [return] to Timor-Leste because my brother and mother died and are buried here. . . . I have another older brother, but he lives with his family. I'm divorced from my husband and don't have my own child. I cared for one child, but it was the child of my older brother who has gone to work on a copra plantation.

Marcelina wearing her deceased mother's tais (traditional woven cloth).

Life for Marcelina is tough and she struggles to survive on her own. Her house is falling down and she has no money to repair it. She grows corn, cassava, and bananas, and resells vegetables that she buys from the market. But if she can't go to the market, she cannot sell anything.

I live here alone, I don't have children. I support myself by growing corn, cassava, and bananas. I also have [another] garden, but it is far away. I must cross the creek to reach it. I have sold vegetables since 2002. I go to Oesao [market] at 5 a.m. and buy vegetables . . . if they sell I am happy, but if not I start thinking: What will I eat?. I try to earn enough to eat and drink every day. My parents are both dead, so now I just struggle for myself. Because I no longer have a pig . . . I want to raise pigs again, two. . . . My life is no different than it was in Timor-Leste because there I worked like I do now.



Marcelina gains strength from going to mass and from her network of friends.

No one helps me; I'm on my own. If I feel sad, I get together with Oland [Olandina] or someone close to my house.

Marcelina didn't want to tell her story to others, however, found the courage to share it with AJAR researchers. She felt comfortable and hopes they will share her story with others so they too will know what she has suffered.



Marcelina in front of her house where she sells vegetables

EDIANA MARIA S. AMARAL: A LEAKING HOME

Ediana comes from Dilor Village in Viqueque District. She was 16 years old in 1999 when she and her parents were transported to West Timor by the military. Ediana says she is still feels sadness from the time they had to leave family members behind in Timor-Leste.

Ediana and her husband struggle to survive. Her husband rents a motorcycle to drive as a motorcycle taxi. Ediana works as a labourer in others' rice fields during planting and harvesting time, gardens on government land, makes and sells cakes in front of her house, and raises animals including one pig, two chickens, and two dogs.

They live with their four children in a small two-room house. Like all the other houses in the former refugee camp, it is built with the spines of palm leaves and has a grass roof. Tuapukan itself is situated in a low-lying area so that the houses, which



are nothing more than small shacks, are very susceptible to flooding and leaking during the rainy season and to burning during the dry season.

148

In 2004 there was a fire [as the result of] a small child was playing with fire one day. More than 60 houses burned, almost this entire complex. It was 2005 before [people] rebuilt their houses.

Ediana and her husband hope that they will be given land and a house by the Indonesian government.



Ediana with her son.

ANGELINA SOARES: A BRIDEPRICE UNPAID



In general, refugees from Timor-Leste are still unaware of who picked them up and forced them to go to West Timor in 1999. The situation for Angelina was different because her uncle who was working as a soldier picked her up along with her family.

Angelina also felt cheated by the government's promise that proper facilities would be available when they arrived in West Timor.

When we were ordered to come, we were promised we'd be given a house; it turned out that was just a trick. In the end I had to break my back to find food. Because I had no land, no garden, I usually helped people work in their gardens so that we could eat. I came with three people [relatives] here to Tuapukan. We really suffered. Sometimes we were given government-subsidized rice for poor people, sometimes not. Those close to the village head, they got [rice aid].

Angelina is struggling to make ends meet in the former camp at Tuapukan. When her children were still school age, she was unable to pay their school fees.

Like Ediana's family, Angelina lives in a house with two small rooms made from the spines of palm leaves, with a dirt floor and a palm-frond roof that easily leaks during the rainy season. The well closest to her house is used by many others and is often dry. She has to go to the well at 1 or 2 a.m. to ensure that she can get water.

Although she is currently raising a pig and selling vegetables to support herself, she struggles everyday to feed herself.

Angelina's first husband committed suicide in Timor-Leste. In addition to the loss of her husband, she had also had a still birth and her other child passed away just before he was ready to begin high school. She came to Tuapukan with her second husband and her two children in 1999. But after only a few months, her second husband returned to Timor-Leste, taking their oldest son with him. His move was a surprise to her. She has decided not to follow her husband back as the bride price her second child must pay is not yet settled.

My child has not yet paid the 10 million rupiah bride price [that he owes], so he lives with his wife and mother-in-law. So I live alone [now].



Angelina's small altar in her home.

In such a difficult situation, Angelina still places her hope in God and prays to Mother Mary. A statue of Mother Mary, an item Angelina still takes great care of, was among the few possessions she managed to bring with her to West Timor. This statue is part of a small altar Angelina has kept in her house until now.

ROSA SOARES LOPES: HOPING FOR HEALTHCARE

"My face was dark and I don't know anything anymore." This is what Rosa said to express her sadness when she recalled the story of her arrival in Tuapukan from Timor-Leste. When the results of the 1999 referendum were announced Rosa, her husband, and children were ordered to flee to West Timor by the Indonesian government. The government said it was not necessary to bring anything because there would be a house and key ready for them. Rosa left all her family and her parents behind and came only with her husband and children, but there was no house, land, or garden for them. Even the leaves they cut to build their house had to be purchased. Her husband, Bernadus Lopes suffered from distressful thoughts and illness throughout his life which sadly ended in 2007, in Tuapukan.



Rosa suffered another great tragedy. Two of her five children died in Timor-Leste before Rosa and her family were transported by ship to Tuapukan. She currently lives with her son, his wife, and two grandchildren. The five of them live in a simple house with a dirt floor and three rooms separated by old pieces of cloth and lit with one 60-watt bulb. In the house next door is Rosa's daughter and her four children. Rosa finds comfort in her six grandchildren. They have access to a well to draw water, but after the rainy season it is often dry. Only one of her sons has found work as a farm labourer. They also have a pig but it is difficult for them to feed it, let alone themselves.

Rosa was unwell and bedridden for several months when friends from *Sahabat Doa Lansia*, a prayer group of elderly women survivors of the 1965 tragedy, visited her, prayed, and gave some financial support to her family.

The biggest challenge Rosa faces is a lack of access to health services. The closest hospitals are 20 kilometers away in Kupang and her family are unable to transport her there safely in her condition. In June 2014 she received some assistance from JPIT members who took her to a hospital and to an orthopedic specialist in Kupang. X-rays revealed a crack in her hipbone and possible kidney stones. Over a period of one month Rosa was taken to see doctor or visit the hospital five times and prescribed a number of medicines, some of which were out of stock in Kupang. Like the other Timorese in the former Tuapukan camp, Rosa has no medical insurance and therefore has to pay cash prior to receiving medical care. While Rosa has been lucky enough to have assistance from JPIT, there are many other women from Timor-Leste in Tuapukan who also need access to adequate services for their health needs.



Rosa with her six grandchildren

Rosa does not fear returning to Timor-Leste as she has many relatives there. However, a lack of money is why she and her family haven't returned. A life of peace that Rosa teaches her children is very simple: "Teach them to work so that they can get their own food and drink."

AMELIA & MARIANA SOARES: MOTHER AND DAUGHTER STRUGGLING TOGETHER

Like many others, Amelia was ordered to go to West Timor and promised housing assistance. She fled with her four children as husband had been killed during conflict in Dili. It was during their journey she was sadly separated from one of her children. To this day she doesn't know where he is.

I am sad because I had to be separated from my family, including one of my children. I don't know where he lives because at that time it was war and we ran in our own directions. I don't even know if he is alive or dead.

Despite being ordered to go to West Timor, Amelia never received the aid she was promised.

We were ordered to come to Indonesia and told not to be scared because there were already houses [here]. However, there was nothing. We came with nothing. So we had to struggle to survive.

Amelia is now old and often falls ill. From the first joint learning circle, her 30-year-old daughter, Mariana, represented Amelia. Mariana has not yet married and has never been able to attend school. She lives with her mother and about eight other



Amelia and Mariana Soares

family members in a very simple house. She must compete with others for water from the same well. Although Mariana does not read or write, she works very hard to help support her family's economy. She gardens, works in the rice fields, and cares for four pigs and five chickens. Her hopes are that the government will provide them with land, a house and another well.



Mariana

JULETA DA COSTA BELO: A WRONGFUL ARREST



154

Juleta's father died when she was two years old and she only remembers her mother raising her and her three younger siblings. When she was moved to West Timor in 1999 she left her mother in Baucau. She was promised at the time that she would be returned to Timor-Leste in two or three months after arriving in West Timor, but 15 years later she and her family still live in the former camp at Tuapukan.

We wanted [to bring] things, [but they] said don't; everything is ready there . . . you just need to get the key [to your new house] . . . I had a child who was still small, one month . . . I [came] with him and his older siblings . . . [When] we got here it was very dark; just full of thorn trees . . . it was also windy, already the middle of the night. How were we to cook porridge [for the baby]?

In 2010, Juleta heard that her mother had passed away. With no passport, Juleta was unable to attend her mother's funeral, but since then has returned using a secret path.

I've been there once, but used mouse paths [back roads] because I didn't have a passport. How can I arrange for a passport if [I'm just in] my own house; [I] cook there, eat there, sleep there, and money is difficult. However, because I was so homesick, I had to go on the back roads.

In Tuapukan Juleta lives with her husband, eight children, one in-law, and a grandchild in a small house built from the spines of palm fronds. It is difficult for them to find enough to eat. They garden but their produce is never sufficient. They own a motorcycle her son uses as a taxi to bring in some money, while Juleta raises two pigs and two goats.



Juleta and
her family

Juleta's son who drives the motorcycle was once involved in a legal case related to a hit-and-run accident. Her son was the first to approach the victim, a police officer, and was subsequently accused of being the person who hit the man. Juleta fought for her son's rights and to have him released from police custody. It was not only because he was innocent, but also because he made an important contribution to the family's economy. With the help of a priest who approached the police, her son was released. Nevertheless, Juleta still regrets the way the police arrested her son, taking him in the middle of the day while he was asleep and without an arrest warrant.

She holds onto the hope that her older brother in Timor-Leste will visit them in Tuapukan. She also hopes that the government will provide land, a house, and food security for her family.

TERESA FREITAS: CARING FOR A GRANDCHILD



In [Timor-Leste] people were shooting each other . . . A person came and took us on a ship. They let us off at the harbour [in Kupang], then we were picked up by a bus [that] let us off at the [Tuapukan] camp post, but because someone was angry with us, we moved to a quiet spot under a tree. At that time it was all forest; we had trouble getting water, we were all thirsty. We didn't know where there was water. Our food, plates, and spoons had all disappeared on the ship. . . When we arrived here, things were very difficult for me because I was already old and had to work in someone else's garden.

Teresa Freitas is 75 years old. She is from Quelicai in Baucau District and only speaks Makasai. She lives with her son and grandchild. Her son's wife left them and returned to her own parents in a village in West Timor.

They live in a small hut with a thatched roof that leaks during the rainy season. Luckily their neighbor has a well so they are able to access water fairly easily. However, Teresa has to work hard in the garden to get food for her family and often feels sick. She also raises a pig and a goat. There are also some chickens that are so important to Teresa that she cares for in her own house. Up to now, Teresa has suffered—her daughter-in-law is not there, so she must care for her six-year-old grandchild, must work hard, and is still haunted by the past.

What greatly disturbs [me] are thoughts about the war. There the war caused me to suffer; even here I suffer . . . because I am old, I work alone, so I have a lot of thoughts.

When asked about government assistance, Teresa became angry.

Since when? What have they ever given to us? We just live alone here. We buy only rice and we eat. If there isn't any, we just sit like this.

She hopes for assistance with money, food security, and house improvements.

DOMINGAS SOARES: LIVING IN THORNS AND GRASS



Domingas remembers when the Indonesian soldiers reached her village Trilolo, Baucau District, in 1975. She fled to the forest with her parents and three siblings. After six months they returned to Trilolo and adjusted to the Indonesian occupation. She started attending school in 1979 without a school uniform or shoes. It was only in 1984 that teachers from Flores arrived and began teaching them Indonesian. Domingas was actively involved in church activities and the scouts. She finished junior high school then moved to Dili to attend senior high school. She also recalls her father attended training for militia in 1990 that, according to Domingas, was conducted in Bali and Surabaya.⁸⁵

She married in 1992, had her first child in 1993 and moved from Dili back to her parents in Viqueque. Her husband was a civil servant in the office of the district-level military command, and in 1999 they moved to Baucau. After the results of the referendum were announced, Domingas with her husband and four children were moved to West Timor, leaving behind her parents and extended family.

Fourteen years ago, when . . . there was unrest in Dili, Timor-Leste, the government ordered us to come to NTT. My husband and I didn't want to come because we didn't have any family here. However, the government said, "Just go . . . there's a room

there for you to live in. There's already a key to the house, just get the key, open the door, go in and live."

When we first arrived [in Tuapukan] we were met by a forest of thorns and wild grass. . . . I was confused because I didn't know where we could live. . . . We opened a tarpaulin in front of the camp's coordination post for three months. We then asked permission from the locals to cut down some branches and build a house of our own. We had to buy the branches which my husband and I cut down ourselves. As people from Baucau we didn't receive zinc sheets for roofing like others did [who were from Viqueque].⁸⁶

Domingas gave birth to a fifth child in Tuapukan camp, but her baby tragically died four days later. She gave birth to two more children who survived harsh conditions. Domingas' mother visited her in Tuapukan when she returned to Timor-Leste she took Domingas' oldest child with her who had dropped out of school while in junior high.

Since arriving in Tuapukan, Domingas has had to carry water from the well of a local resident and wash clothes in a creek. Besides that, she and her family have never received any assistance, despite frequent promises.

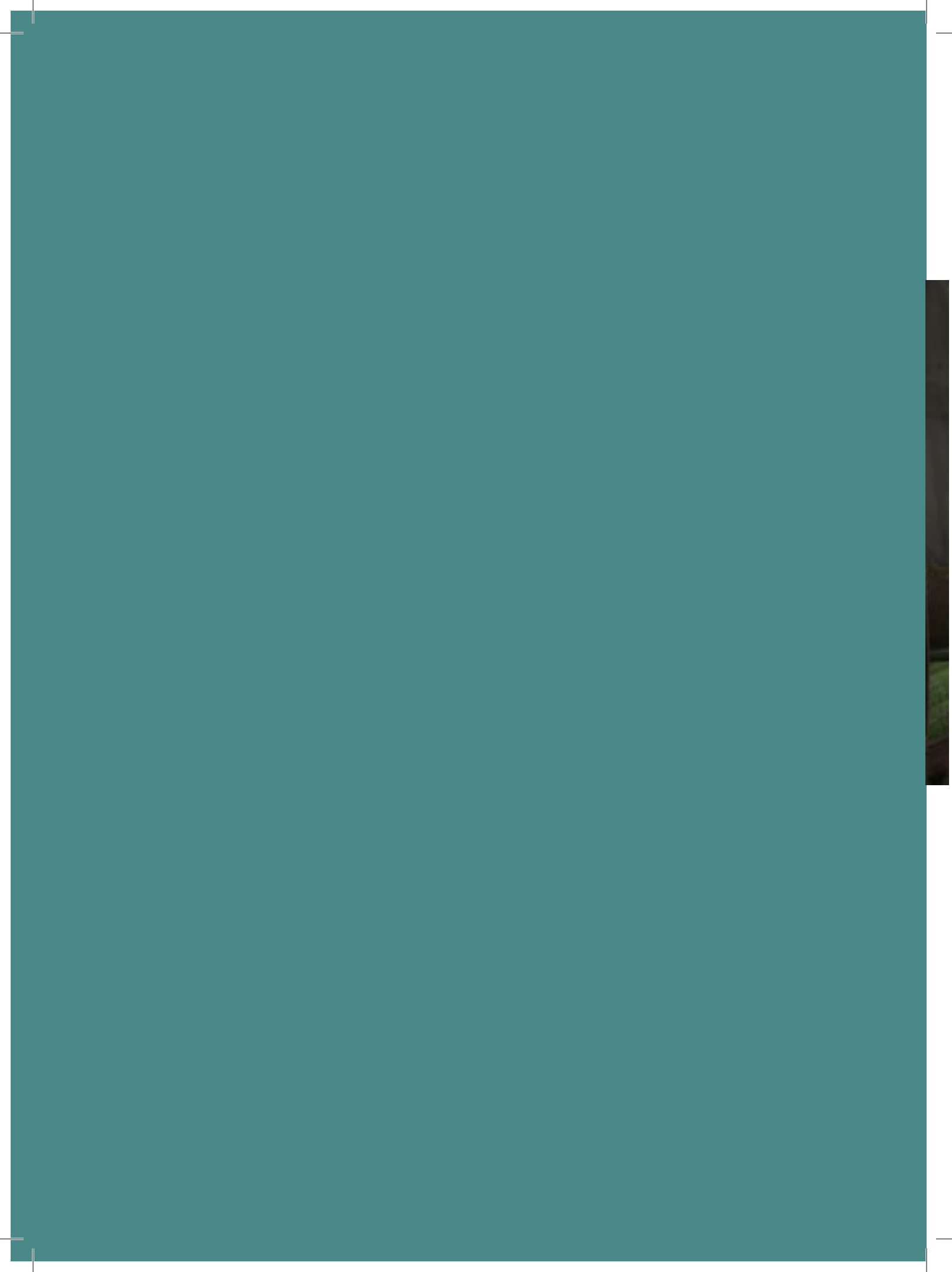
I am still sad . . . we have been here from 1999-2006. Then the government said we must leave the camp . . . [The government] said we must buy land so they could build houses [for us]. So those with a salary were able to buy [land] but those who couldn't buy land remained in the camp. The government has already built houses [for those] who could buy land.



Domingas and her family

Domingas and her family currently live in a small three-room house with a dirt floor. Her husband once worked for the sub-district military command in Camplong, about 20 kilometers from Tuapukan, but took early retirement due to a cataract. They depend on his salary, which is now a pension salary, but with four children in school that is not enough. Domingas hopes the government will provide assistance the education of the children who still live with her and her husband in Tuapukan.

Timor-Leste



Chapter 10

Timor-Leste: Vanishing Women Victims



After centuries as a neglected outpost of the faded Portuguese colonial empire, Timor-Leste entered a turbulent decade in the 1970s. The Soeharto regime was by then a decade old. Indonesia, which included the western half of the island of Timor, had established itself as a reliable ally of the Western Bloc in the Cold War. Fearful of the spread of communism across Southeast Asia, Indonesia with the support of its Western allies took aggressive steps to suppress what was perceived as the threat of communist expansion.

In 1974, Portugal's Carnation Revolution effectively ended over 400 years of colonial rule in Timor-Leste, Angola, and Mozambique. In the resulting power vacuum in Timor-Leste, three key parties with different agendas for the country emerged: *Associação Popular Democrática Timorese* (APODET) who supported integration with Indonesia; the left-leaning and anti-colonial *Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* (Fretilin) who supported independence and *União Democrática Timorese* (UDT), which was dominated by traditional Timorese elites. UDT initially formed a coalition with Fretilin, before later mounting a coup against them on 11 August 1975.

The internal armed conflict between parties led to an estimated several thousand deaths in just one month. As Fretilin expanded its control, the Indonesian military stepped up border incursions, while also training and arming APODETI and UDT party members in West Timor to form paramilitary groups, the so-called “partisans”. Fretilin declared independence on 28 November 1975 and just nine days later, with the same anti-communist fervor it had shown a decade before, Indonesia invaded Timor-Leste with a barrage of sea, air and land attacks. The invasion unleashed countless atrocities against the civilian population and set the tone of the 24-year occupation that followed.⁸⁷

An estimated 60,000 East Timorese were killed in the months after the invasion.⁸⁸ According to Timor-Leste’s truth commission known as the CAVR, from 1976 to 1978 Indonesian forces systematically destroyed houses, food sources and stores, using chemical weapons to poison crops and water.⁸⁹ Civilians fled their villages for the mountainous interior until intense bombing and encirclement campaigns forced many to surrender in the late 1970s.

After a few years, many in the mountains surrendered to the Indonesians. The return to towns and villages was also a strategic move by the resistance to focus on a smaller guerilla force in the mountains and a broad clandestine network in populated areas. The backlash by the military against the civilian support for the rebels was extreme, with thousands being detained, tortured and exiled. In order to cut off support to the rebels, entire communities were forcibly displaced and detained in ‘resettlement camps’ (often located in malaria-infested and infertile areas), where they suffered inadequate housing and sanitation, food, and medical services.⁹⁰ The most notorious of these detention camps was on the barren island of Atauro, off the coast of the capital Dili, echoing the island prison of Buru. Collective punishment was meted out by forcing entire families, regardless of their age, of those suspected of joining the resistance into these squalid detention camps. Residents of the camps were not allowed to farm or leave the camp to gather food, and yet were provided almost no rations to survive. These practices resulted in a widespread illness and famine throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In spite of this pressure on civilians, by the 1980s, the resistance reorganized into a guerilla force operating from the interior, supported by a town- and village-based “clandestine” movement who covertly provided the rebels with food, intelligence and communications support.⁹¹ In response, the Indonesian military extended its reach down to village level, creating civil defense organizations, such as *Hansip* (Civil Defence Force) and paramilitary units, such as *Halilintar* and *Team Saka*, to help detect and combat the resistance.⁹²

Towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, the end of the Cold War and increased international attention on the human rights abuses being perpetrated in Timor-Leste, meant that Indonesia came under increasing international scrutiny.⁹³ A key turning point was the Santa Cruz massacre on November 12, 1991 when Indonesian troops opened fire on peaceful demonstrators, killing some 271 people, and detaining hundreds more.⁹⁴ Film footage of the attack was smuggled out of the country, sparking international outrage.

However, it was only with the fall of Indonesian President Soeharto in May 1998 that change became possible. B.J. Habibie, Soeharto’s Vice President, assumed the presidency, and in attempt to stem popular protest, announced in January 1999 that the people of Timor-Leste would be offered a choice between autonomy within the

Republic of Indonesia or independence. With the support of the United Nations, a referendum, known as the Popular Consultation, was held on August 30, 1999.⁹⁵

In the lead-up to the referendum, Indonesian security forces mobilized local militia groups across Timor-Leste, with the aim to intimidate the Timorese people into choosing autonomy. Although militia terrorized and displaced people from their communities, the turnout for the referendum was an astounding 98.6% of registered voters. On September 4, 1999, the UN announced that a majority of 78.5% of voters had rejected autonomy within Indonesia and voted for independence.

Almost immediately following the announcement, pro-autonomy militias, together with the Indonesian military, embarked on a brutal and violent backlash against civilians and forcing UN forces to evacuate. Approximately 1,200 – 1,500 East Timorese were killed and 400,000 East Timorese fled for safety or were forcibly deported across the border to West Timor.⁹⁶

After the departure of the militia to West Timor and Indonesia security and government officials also announcing their withdrawal on 12th September, the United Nations issued a resolution to establish the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) to provide an interim civil administration and peacekeeping mission until independence.

A LINE IN THE SAND

Under the United Nation's guidance, Timor-Leste adopted a number of transitional justice mechanisms designed to draw a line between its violent past and the promise for a better future.⁹⁷ Within the first year of its administration, a Serious Crimes Court was established with jurisdiction over genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed at any time, as well as murder, sexual offences, and torture committed in 1999.⁹⁸ The legislation included sexual offences in its list of serious crimes⁹⁹ and adopted gender-sensitive rules of evidence lifted directly from the groundbreaking jurisprudence developed by an international court established for the former Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁰ Although, various UN experts had recommended the establishment of an international tribunal, a "hybrid" court (i.e. a mixture between East Timorese and international judges, prosecutors and investigators) was established instead. This political decision reflected international good will towards reform in Indonesia at that time, with President Abdurrahman Wahid's commitment to establish a human rights court with jurisdiction for crimes against humanity and genocide. Although established with good intentions, the court performed poorly. Eighteen mid-level officers and militia leaders were charged, six convicted but eventually everyone was acquitted upon appeal.¹⁰¹

Investigations by UN investigators for the Serious Crimes Court led to 95 indictments involving more than 360 persons (most of them *in absentia*, as they had fled to Indonesia), including Timorese militia and high-ranking Indonesian military officials. However, of the 95 indictments, only eight involved gender-based crimes. Six of these eight indictments were for rape as a crime against humanity and only one of the six cases went to trial resulting in the only conviction for rape as a crime against humanity. Sexual slavery and other types of gender-based crimes were never charged, neither were any of the gender-based crimes committed before 1999. This missed opportunity reflected a failure to prioritize the subject from the initial design and resource allocation in the early phase of investigations, poor communications and coordination with local women's groups working with

survivors, as well as the unbreakable cultural and social barriers for women victims to speak out about the violence they experienced.¹⁰²

Three years later, a truth and reconciliation commission was established to look at violations that were committed by all sides, between 1974-1999. This truth commission (CAVR),¹⁰³ which was conceived as complementing the legal accountability process of the Serious Crimes Court, tried to ensure that women's experiences were integrated into its truth-seeking process and the harms they suffered acknowledged and repaired as part of the reconciliation work of the commission. Between 2002-2005, CAVR collected about 8000 statements from victims & witnesses, including 21% from women, organized public hearings including a thematic hearing on women and conflict. The CAVR made a finding that rape was committed as crimes against humanity, and made specific recommendations to eliminate gender-based violence and assist women victims.

CAVR's findings reflect the harrowing experience of civilians under successive waves of violence and repression. Commission research documented 18,600 killings and disappearances and found some 84,000 people died from illness and malnutrition during displacement from conflict or forced into resettlement camps. To grasp the impact, these numbers need to be considered in relation to Timor-Leste's population, estimated in 1999 to be around 800,000.¹⁰⁴ From its national statement-taking process, CAVR documented 5,120 extra-judicial killings, 836 disappearances, and 60,000 non-fatal violations (illegal detention, torture and ill-treatment, sexual violence, forced displacement, and destruction of property).

CAVR statements also documented 835 counts of sexual violence (rape, sexual slavery, forced or coerced contraception and abortion, and other forms of sexual violence) CAVR's women research team conducted another 200 interviews with women survivors of violence. They found clear evidence, which depicted:

"The widespread and systematic nature in which members of the Indonesian security forces openly engaged in rape, sexual torture, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence throughout the entire period of the invasion and occupation... [T]here was a widely accepted practice for members of the security forces to rape and sexually torture women while on official duty, in military installations and other official buildings. These practices were covered by almost total impunity."¹⁰⁵

TIMORESE WOMEN STRIVING FOR JUSTICE

For women in Timor-Leste, nation building meant new opportunities for political participation, as well as truth telling about their suffering and accessing justice. For example, the 2001 election saw 23 women (26%)¹⁰⁶ elected into the Constituent Assembly, tasked to write a constitution for the new nation, a constitution which guarantees equality between women and men (Article 17). Gender quotas were introduced at national parliamentary level (Decree Law 6/2006) and local government (*suko*) level (Decree Law 3/2009).¹⁰⁷ By 2012, women's participation in the national parliament reached 38%, a relatively high percentage in comparison to other countries in the region. However, women are still under-represented in local government. None of the 13 district heads are women, although 11 women were elected as village heads (out of 442) and 37 as sub village heads (out of 2225) in the 2009 local elections.¹⁰⁸ Further, Timor-Leste institutionalized its commitment to

eliminate domestic violence by enacting Law 7/2010 against Domestic Violence and backing it up with a National Action Plan for Gender-Based Violence prevention and response.

In this research, compared to Myanmar and Indonesia, Timor-Leste had the most number of women who were able to access justice. However, out of 51 Timorese women, merely seven were able to do so (see Key Finding 2: Atrophy of Justice). Out of the 140 women survivors of violence who participated in this research, only 10 were able to access justice. Out of this small group, seven were Timorese (See Key Finding 2: Atrophy of Justice).

Women were involved in testifying at the Serious Crimes Court, even though these trials were mostly of militia members for murder committed as crimes against humanity. Although only a tiny number in comparison to the crimes committed, four perpetrators were nevertheless convicted for gender-based violence.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, CAVR made great efforts to involve women in its various activities including giving statements, speaking at public hearings, participation in community reconciliation processes, and victim support and urgent reparations programs. However, because these efforts were not followed by a genuine and long-term effort to assist victims to mitigate the impact of serious violations on their lives, many women who took time out of their lives to participate in these mechanisms feel disappointed and abandoned (again).

RESEARCH BY AND FOR VICTIMS

Against the backdrop of these findings by the CAVR, the research outlined in this report focuses on four sites in Timor-Leste: Marabia, Baucau, Ainaro and Bobonaro. These are not the only locations where women suffered violence in Timor-Leste. However, these sites focus on different periods and varying types of violence experienced by women throughout the occupation. Marabia was the site of the first armed rebellion against the Indonesians in the 1980s, which was met with a vicious crack down on the civilian population where many women and children were detained, interrogated, tortured and exiled to Atauro Island. Baucau, Timor-Leste's second largest city, is the site of the notorious Hotel Flamboyan, used as a torture and detention center throughout the Indonesian occupation where women suffered sexual violence including sexual slavery and forced marriage. The districts of Ainaro and Bobonaro were sites of horrific violence perpetrated by Indonesian sponsored militia groups. Women in Ainaro speak of sexual violence, detention and torture at the hands of 'Team Sukarelawan' (the Volunteers Team) from 1991, a group that later became the *Mahidi* militia (Mati Hidup Dengan Indonesia/Dead or Alive with Indonesia) in the lead-up to the August 1999 referendum. Women in Bobonaro also speak of 1999 as the peak of violence in their lives with the Maliana Police Station massacre leaving all but two participants from the Bobonaro group widowed.

Women from these four sites tell stories that stretch from 1975 to the present, telling of the violence they have survived and its bitter and pervasive consequences in their health, family relationships, standing in the community, and even their economic well being. For many women victims, their lives continue to spiral deeper into poverty and exclusion. Their economical survival is a daily challenge, the education and future of their children is uncertain as the loss of a male provider and protector in their families has enhanced their vulnerability to ongoing violence, the physical and psychological impacts of violence and lack of access to treatment hamper their lives. Stigma has often kept them silent about the atrocities they

experienced. The idea of justice is something out of their reach and many feel that their sacrifices and contributions have not been recognized nor valued.

These legacies of abuse shed some light on the underlying causes of women's victimization as rooted in their lack of social, economic and political power. Tragically, this vulnerability has been worsened by their status as victims, particularly those who suffered sexual violence.

Despite such adversity, the women of Timor-Leste also tell remarkable stories of courage in their sacrifices for their families and the cause of independence, as well as their tenacity and perseverance in continuing to struggle on despite their disadvantages and pain. They work hard and relentlessly for their own children and the future generations of their country. These women deserve recognition of their suffering and heroism, justice and repair for the harms inflicted on them, and ongoing support to heal and recover.

Chapter 11

Marabia: Three Decades of Pain and Loss



Maria was tortured by the Indonesian military.

On the evening of 10 June 1980, members of the clandestine rebel support network and the Falintil guerilla force attacked a new television transmitter at Marabia, near the town of Dare in the hills above the capital city, Dili. It was the first major uprising since the apparent defeat of Falintil in 1978 and took the Indonesian military by surprise. The attackers reached the outskirts of Dili, even seizing weapons from the armory of Company B of Battalion 744 killing several soldiers.¹¹⁰

The Indonesian military retaliated against known and suspected members of the resistance and their families. The massive operation involved all elements of the Indonesian security apparatus in Dili, from Special Forces to civilian defence forces.¹¹¹

An estimated 400 civilians were detained after the attack.¹¹² Many were severely tortured using electric shocks, submersion in water tanks (sometimes containing crocodiles), beatings, and sexual violence, including rape. CAVR identified 121 people who were killed or disappeared, or who died in detention due to severe torture or lack of food and medical care in the weeks following the incident.

Detainees were frequently moved between formal detention centres, including the Provincial Military Command (Korem), the Dili District Military Command 1627 (Kodim), various sub-district military headquarters (Koramil) and the Balide Prison, as well as informal centres such as the military-run maternity clinic known as Kartika Sari. Soon after, several hundred people were sent to appalling conditions on the barren island of Atauro, off the coast of Dili, many of them women and children on their own.¹¹³

The stories of nine women who suffered after the Marabia incident are told here. They were detained, interrogated and tortured. They lost family members, were forced to 'entertain' Indonesian soldiers, were raped and sexually humiliated.

The tenth woman in the Dili group shares her story from a decade after the Marabia incident when she was arrested, detained, and tortured for her undercover resistance work. Her story underscores the potential for women victims to use their experiences in a positive way to help others.



TEREZINHA: INTERROGATED AND EXILED AT AGE 15

After Terezinha's de Jesus father was arrested on 10 June 1980, the military came back to arrest her. Only 15 years old, despite both threats and promises, she revealed nothing, and they took Terezinha, her mother and her older sister to Atauro by ferry. On the ferry, they saw her father and uncle, who had been imprisoned for three months and were tied up and in terrible condition. The family was held on the island for four years. She says:

*There is still no justice for my family, or for me.
No one from the government has ever come and asked
us anything. This is the first time I have told my story.
I really want the government to pay attention to me,
my family and to all the other victims.*

JOSEFA ADAO DA SILVA: COURAGE TO LEAVE A FORCED MARRIAGE

When the Indonesians invaded in 1975, Josefa Adao da Silva fled with her family to the forest. She was 12 years old. Her mother, father and four younger siblings died in 1978 from illness and hunger, leaving her with one older brother. She became involved in the clandestine movement, tasked with teaching children and patrolling. She was captured by Indonesian armed forces in 1979 and taken to the Remexio detention center.

I was tortured badly but I was brave and I didn't tell them much. Not because I didn't speak Indonesian, but because I did not want them to know about my work. I told them that if they wish to kill me then do it, I was ready to die because I had already lost my parents and siblings.



Josefa inside
her kiosk

The soldiers wanted to take her to Java. When the Red Cross visited her, she pleaded with them to hide her in their car, and she managed to escape to her aunt's house in Dili. From there she fled to Dare, seeking the protection of the Bishop.

However, on 10 June 1980, she was captured again by the army. She had just returned home from a gathering where members of the resistance held a party to distract the local Indonesian soldiers as they undertook preparations to attack three military bases.

I returned home, bathed and washed my clothes and hung them out to dry. At that time I was wearing an old sarong and I hadn't even put underwear on when suddenly two Indonesian soldiers and two Hansip entered my house and grabbed me. They asked, "Where is your brother?" I answered, "I don't know where he is." They said to me, "Last night you gave food to Fretilin?" I replied, "Last night we cooked for everyone. We gave food to Koramil and Hansip too."

Then they grabbed me and threw me to the ground, sticking their weapons into my back, and pulled me out in front of a grotto. They wanted to shoot me, but I begged them to let me pray first if they were going to kill me in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary. They didn't shoot me but took me outside the seminary and tied me up.

Another soldier threatened to shoot her, but a Timorese soldier intervened. She was interrogated and badly tortured. At 11 p.m. she was taken by truck with another

woman and four men to the Provincial Military Command (Korem) where she was detained and tortured again, this time with her uncle, brother and cousin:

I confessed that he was indeed my uncle. Then they electrocuted me until I fell down near my uncle. They burned my body with cigarettes until I fainted. They waited until I was conscious, then lifted me up and sat me in a chair. They poured hot tea on me, kicked my legs which became swollen and bled, they continued to stomp on my feet. They interrogated me for two hours, then I was taken back to my cell. My uncle never returned to the cell. I never saw him again.

At three in the morning she was taken from her cell and raped by a soldier:

He said I was being called by the Commander for interrogation. He took me out [of the cell] and I followed him. When we passed the bathroom he pushed me in there, stripped off my clothes and raped me. I cried and screamed but he closed my mouth with his hand, saying "If you don't surrender your body, I will not shoot you - I'll cut your body into pieces right here."

After he raped me he took me back to my cell and locked it. My cell mates asked me "Where did they take you?" I answered, "I don't know anymore, I just want to wait for death." I cried, I was devastated.

She was held in Korem for two weeks then taken to Kartika Sari for further investigation. She was tortured again, forced to take off her clothes and stand beside a tank filled with crocodiles, forced into the tank and repeatedly dunked and beaten for two hours. They took photos of her naked in front of many soldiers, then returned her clothes and sent her to her cell. She was interrogated and tortured every night for two weeks, until her body was swollen and covered with sores and blood.

Josefa was then sent to Balide prison for six months. She slept on the floor with two other women and only ate rice porridge and spinach. An Indonesian soldier offered her a gold ring and asked her to come to Java with him. When she refused, he slapped her and sent her back to her cell.

One night a soldier came to my cell and said, "tomorrow you will go home." I thought I was going to be killed. In the morning a jeep came and picked me up, I was so scared, but they took me to Dare. My family met me, crying when they saw me covered in wounds and bleeding.

She was told she had to report every day to Korem, but this was not the only imposition on her freedom. A member of Hansip threatened to kill her family if she refused to marry him. She was left with no choice but to accept his proposal to keep her family safe. She gave birth to a son in 1984.

Not long after, one of Josefa's friends encouraged her to apply for a job in Dili. She was hired as a government employee, processing Civilian Identity Cards. The job was an opportunity to create ID cards for clandestine comrades, and it also gave her confidence to leave a husband she never loved:

When my child was three years old I said, "I was forced to agree to marry you, now I want to live alone." We argued, and he took a gun and shot me, but missed. I ran to Kodim to report him. He was dismissed and we separated.

She met someone else the next year:

I explained everything that had happened: the sexual violence and the forced marriage. At that time my child was four. My husband accepted us and agreed to marry me.

They have been together ever since, gardening and running a small kiosk, set up with the support of Asosiasaun Chega Ba Ita (ACbit). Josefa is very keen to learn and enjoys workshops, traveling by bus and encouraging friends to join her. She worries about not having a stable job and how she and her husband can support themselves.

We don't have stable jobs, we garden to try and meet our families needs. My child is already married and has his own family. He helps to support us. I really want the government to look after me and my family-- not because I can't look after my family anymore but because I think I deserve it. I need something in return for what I have suffered. I want a good life for me and my family and, for now, I can't achieve it on my own without government assistance.

.... Justice should be ongoing, because only with justice can we get truth about what we suffered. There especially must be justice for all the women for whom independence cost them their dignity....

171

AUGUSTA AND ROSITA: FORCED TO DANCE WITH SOLDIERS

Augusta Soriano da Silva put aside a portion of every harvest to feed the resistance members, including her brothers, who met on their farm three times a month. After spies reported the family to the local military post, on 10 June 1980 her mother, brothers and older sister were taken to jail. Augusta stayed in Dare to take care of her blind father. Almost every night the Indonesian military and civil defense forces came to the house to intimidate them, kicking down the door and questioning her.

Sometimes they took us to their military posts at night, saying it was for interrogation, but actually they forced us to dance with them. We Timorese do not like this kind of behavior, like prostitution. We're ashamed if we're called prostitutes... This happened almost every night and it was terrifying. Finally I reported to Koramil, saying that our family wanted to live and be free, so we would surrender. We also wanted to be treated humanely and with dignity.



Augusta in front
of her house

She and one of her brothers were held on Atauro Island for three years. They worked on a road project and farmed to survive. Augusta now lives with her three children after her husband passed away due to illness. She supports her family by selling produce and raising small livestock. She has never received any government assistance, and says, "If you speak of justice, I don't feel like I have justice, I only have suffering."



Rosita
inside her house

Rosita Maria da Costa had similar experiences. In 1975 Rosita's family fled to Aileu, chased by paramilitaries. They kept moving over a number of years, often without enough food. At last they surrendered, but their problems continued. Her husband, brother-in-law, and father-in-law were detained on 10 June 1980. The army released her husband and brother-in-law but their father, accused of spying for the clandestine movement, was fatally shot.

They held my father-in-law then Hansip killed him, and before he was dead they dragged him to his grave and buried him alive. The Hansip that killed my father-in-law was called Victor and he has already passed away. At that time it was difficult to find his body, because the situation was still tense, and we had to wait to go and collect his body.

Rosita was taken to the military base and forced to dance with the soldiers.

At that time I was still very young, Hansip came and took us to dance with the soldiers. They threatened us, "If you don't go and dance, we will shoot you dead." Every night for two months we were taken by Hansip and forced to dance with soldiers.

She now works in her field, planting corn and sweet potatoes and selling the produce. Sometimes her husband works on road projects to supplement their income.

AUGUSTA ARAÚJO: A LOST CHILDHOOD

173

On 10 June 1980, Augusta de Jesus Araújo was 12 when the Indonesian soldiers came.

The Indonesians came and rounded up the young men and women, beating them and herding them into cars... My father, a village leader, was taken from our house to the main street and beaten until he was bleeding. They sent him to Balibar in a navy truck and continued to beat him with a metal rod. Then they sent him on to Kodim Dili by helicopter.

I knew my father would never be safe, that he would never come back alive. I couldn't focus on my studies. I cried every night and hoped that my father would survive.

On 2 September the soldiers came back for the rest of the family:

My mother told me to get changed, gather dried cassava, and pack a small bag with extra clothes. I asked, "Where do they want to take us?"

That night they were loaded onto military trucks, transported to the beach, and taken by ferry to Atauro. When the ferry picked up prisoners in Dili, Augusta's father boarded. She didn't recognize him:

When my father left the house he was in good condition. But by the time we saw him his body was swollen, weak, and he looked like he hadn't gotten medical treatment or enough food.



Augusta inside
her house

On Atauro, the shelter for prisoners was appalling, just a structure with an iron roof and no walls. There were no bathrooms or kitchens, and for three days they didn't eat. When they were finally given food it was two cups of rotten corn. This daily ration was only enough for breakfast and lunch. They soaked and fried their food and were sometimes able to ask locals for *marungi* leaves (a plant native to Atauro) to eat too. Men, women and children were forced to do hard labor to repair the main road on Atauro. Augusta's father, beaten severely and then forced to work hard on the island, developed an infection on his neck. They tried to find medicine but were unable to save his life.

The prisoners struggled to survive on meager rations and were very resourceful. Augusta's parents tried farming, asking permission from locals to use their land. They managed to grow corn, green beans and pumpkin to feed their family. Others prisoners produced sea salt, raised chickens, or traded clothes for food from locals.

We were patient and dealt with it. We could not let our father suffer alone on Atauro. Even though I had to let go of the world of education and I felt the loss of not going to school, I was ok. At that time, I was a young girl and wanted to be like my friends... I felt sad.

We suffered on that small island but when we returned we continued to suffer and be victims, we never felt the happiness life can offer. We want to ask the government to help us.

These days, Augusta supports her 12 children through gardening and selling flowers, a business that ACbit, the NGO carrying out this research, helped her to establish.

If I can get enough money from selling flowers I can support my family, but sometimes I have to supplement that income by selling cassava or bananas. On a good day I can earn \$US 15, but not every day. I know this country will develop and have a bright future, but only if those in power recognize our sacrifices and suffering for independence, suffering that continues to today.

MARIA IMACULADA: RAPED IN DETENTION THEN EXILED



Maria at the STP CAVR office where she was one of many Timorese detained and tortured.

Maria Imaculada joined the clandestine movement, transporting food and clothes to the guerilla forces in the forest. After an Indonesian military offensive on 10 June 1980, Maria was arrested. They were taken to the Korem military post and then held at a building called Kartika Sari, in Dili, for six weeks:

Every night they would order us out to be interrogated. During the interrogation they beat us, burnt us with cigarettes, gave us electric shocks, forced us to walk naked for about one metre and then into water tanks, women and men together were interrogated in the tanks, until we confessed our involvement.

Maria was sent to Balide jail where torture and interrogation continued night after night. She was raped and consequently conceived a child. She was sent back to to Kartika Sari to give birth:

I had no clothes for my baby there, the staff helped me and gave me a blanket and a sarong. After the baby was born, I was taken back to Balide with my baby and held there just over two more years before being transferred to Atauro along with many other prisoners...

We had no housing there, just simple structures with a roof. We tried to fix them using coconut leaves up so we could live in them. We slept on the bare earth and everyday we were forced to build roads. Once a week were given 2-5 cans of rotten corn which we ate with marungi leaves. Because there was no food, my milk went dry and my baby died.

In 1982 Maria married a fellow prisoner and they had a son. When the boy was 11 months old Maria was sent back to Balide prison in Dili. She was taken to court and sentenced to another five years, which she served in Becora prison. She was released in 1988 after Amnesty International conducted a campaign on her behalf. Maria relished the feeling of freedom:

When I was released from prison I felt better, I can go everywhere freely, earn my living and no one has control over me. My family is also free, we can walk together.

Maria sewing on the terrace in front of her house.



She worked hard to restore her life and sustain her family, running a small kiosk and sewing. Now, she also receives a veteran pension, and her husband is working in the United Kingdom. Maria is happy because she feels that she is doing well. She is aware that not everyone is as fortunate as her.

I want to help my friends, the victims and fellow inmates, who also fought and sacrificed but have not received anything in return. There must be justice and an improvement in the lives of those who are vulnerable, and also recognition from the government of the anniversary of 10 June 1980. Every year we remember the anniversary but the government officials we invite never come.... For this country, we suffered for a long time, but we also feel happy. I think the suffering we experienced must not be repeated.

LUCILIA ALVES: CONTINUING A FATHER'S STRUGGLE



Lucilia da S. Alves's father was also captured by the military in the mass arrests of 10 June 1980 because he was in the clandestine movement. He was held at Balide prison for four years and then Cipinang Prison in Jakarta for a few months. Lucilia joined him there and returned to Timor-Leste with him.

I thought my father ceased his political activities when he was released, but it turned out he hadn't. He was one of the bravest, continuing to struggle for the independence of Timor Leste.

Once, the guerilla leader Xanana Gusmao hid in their house and later took him to a hiding place in the forest. After Lucilia's father and brother were killed, Lucilia and her mother continued their clandestine activities.

Every day my mother and I would bring a basket and pretend to visit our rice fields. But really we were carrying food for Xanana in his hiding place.



Lucilia standing in front of her house

On 3 September 1980 Lucilia was arrested, tortured and exiled to Atauro for three years. She is still nervous when she sees police or other security personnel. In 2000 she was married and started a family with her husband. They support their children by gardening and growing rice. She receives an old age pension, but no reparations or other recognition of what her family endured:

My father and brother died for this nation's independence, but now we have independence, no one remembers our sacrifice.

DOMINGAS MENDOÇA: WE SACRIFICED IN VAIN

When Domingas de Araújo Mendonça was only seventeen years old, she was captured by the Indonesian military on 18 June 1980 and taken to the Provincial Military Command (Korem) for interrogation. She and six other women were tortured daily, stripped naked and forced to sit in water tanks, given electric shocks, and sexually abused. Some detainees were killed.



After three months, she was briefly released. Then on 2 September 1981 she was detained again at her house and transported to Atauro with family members. They were forced to work on a road, the women collecting rocks from the coast as the men broke them up. She remembers, “we had to break our backs to work for food and drink.” After a year, a Red Cross visit led to better conditions.

179



in front of their simple plant stall.

After being released in 1984, Domingas has tried to rebuild her life, looking after her children by selling plants and flowers. But she feels her suffering has been forgotten.

If you talk about justice, I don't know what justice is because up until now I have never experienced it. Even though I am a victim, I have never received any kind of assistance. My brothers and sisters died during the struggle and I don't even know where their bodies are.

To further add to her suffering, Domingas was recently evicted from the plot in Dili where she sold plants:

Our bitter experiences are unforgettable, but what do we get in return? There is no reward for our suffering, there is no justice for us. I grow and sell flowers in a vacant lot in the centre of town and now I am being evicted. No official has approached us and asked if we already have an alternative, or offered us another empty site to sell flowers. We just accept it and wait until luck is on our side. I feel really disappointed. We sacrificed in vain.

AMELIA CONÇEIÇÃO: DISAPPEARED LOVED ONES



When the Indonesians invaded Amelia da Conceição fled with her family:

Amelia in front of her house.

In 1975 we fled to the forest and didn't take anything with us. All our papers and documents were destroyed. We stayed in the forest for three years. We have recently been trying to organise our papers, but do not have a single one, so it is difficult. We just have to forget about it.

On the 13 June 1980, the family had just returned home after two months hiding in the forest. Early that morning, a member of Hansip came to their house and warned her family that there were people coming to arrest them.

So my husband, four younger siblings and I left, leaving my mother, father and uncle in the house. We fled to the coffee plantations.

Her mother, father and uncle were later beaten and killed by Hansip. Until this day, Amelia does not know where their bodies are.

We have thought about making graves and in 1997 managed to build the structure but we still have no bodies. When they were killed there were many dogs, so there is a strong possibility that their bodies are not intact.

Amelia and the others sought refuge in the church, staying for three months. They were provided food and were not allowed to go outside because of the people searching for them. They waited until the next rotation of security personnel, and then felt free to move around.

Amelia and her husband worked to establish their farm to support their family. Her husband works on their land and sometimes gets work as a day labourer on a project, earning \$3 an hour.

I have 13 children and we lack many things. I ended up looking for other work, but all I could find was washing clothes for a relative of mine. With the money I earned I was able to help my child finish senior high school.

Every day Amelia used to walk to her relative's house, one hour each way. With funds and encouragement from ACbit, she later opened a small kiosk in front of her house, making her life much easier. However, Amelia still can't educate all their children and hopes for government assistance. Amelia also believes in the importance of truth and justice for her missing loved ones:

There should be justice for my family's tragedy, for the loss of our parents. We want to know where our parents are... Every All Souls Day we call their names so they do not disappear.

FELISMINA: FROM VICTIM TO ORGANIZER

On the evening of 13 October 1991 Felismina dos Santos da Conceição had a nightmare and woke up feeling terrible. Felismina was employed at the provincial military headquarters, Korem, but had been working undercover for the resistance – copying military letters and documents and smuggling them through a complex network of trusted family and friends to resistance fighters in the forest. She also received letters including one from Xanana Gusmao, who reminded her to be careful and not get caught.

She had refused the pleas of friends and her younger sisters urging her to flee to the forest. She felt responsible for taking care of her younger sisters. But that day, when she arrived at work, she saw many soldiers and her colleagues looked pale



and drawn. She remembers, “I knew in my heart that I would not be going home that day.”

She didn’t go home to her family for five years.

Intelligence officers took her home and searched her room. Her sisters had taken letters that incriminated her, destroying or burying them. However, they found one document and took her back to the military headquarters.

She was able to send messages to her family through sympathizers. Eventually, someone contacted the Red Cross, and they began visiting her. Despite this, her interrogation and torture continued for four days. She was not allowed to wash despite getting her period, making her feel humiliated. Every time they interrogated her, usually at night, they bought a snake in a cloth bag and sat it on the table next to a pistol to intimidate her. She was repeatedly interrogated, beaten and suffered sexual violence while in prison. On the fourth day she admitted that she was guilty. The following day they transferred her to the police station near Mercado Lama.

She had many horrific experiences but also experienced the kindness of people. She recalls on 28 October 1991, the day pro-independence supporter Sebastiao Gomes was shot in the prelude to the Santa Cruz massacre, five intelligence officers tried to enter her cell, threatening her with rape and murder. But they were prevented by a sympathetic Balinese guard who hid the key to her cell. The next day she was moved to Becora prison where conditions vastly improved. She was still interrogated but without violence. She was tried in court and received a sentence of seven years, later commuted to five.

When she got out of jail she maintained her commitment to the resistance. She sought out the priest who had visited her while she was detained, and started accompanying him to visit people in detention, smuggling out letters.

I was very grateful to God, but my life was so difficult, I lived with my younger sisters, they were the ones who worked, and I had to be patient. Sometimes they got mad at me, but I had to remember that they are still young and had to support me. I was afraid to go outside because I was scared of the military. My neighbours also mocked me, saying that even monkeys had better luck than us, but I remained silent.

In 1997, she joined a workshop with other women survivors, convened by a group who then founded Timor-Leste's first women's organization working on violence against women, Fokupers. She was one of the first staff recruited by Fokupers to go to remote areas and support survivors there. In 1999, she fled to the hills around Dili when militia groups began a campaign of violence around the ballot. She returned to her work with Fokupers, after the arrival of UN Peacekeepers. In 2003, she worked as a researcher for CAVR.

After independence, she married and had two daughters. In 2008 she took the opportunity to become a public servant with the encouragement from others.

If you talk about justice I always cry. I feel like I have justice, I can eat two or three times a day, but for many of my female friends, their life is still a struggle and they are thirsty for justice. The government still does not care, they don't care and they don't pay any attention. So I recommend that organizations must assist the women victims, because they are not yet at peace. They have to continue to ask the government or parliament to recognise the women victims.

If Fokupers had not helped me, I would have gone crazy. They helped me get to where I am today. However, I cannot say I am completely recovered. If I sit alone I always remember the past, everything comes back, but I can say that I am stronger, I work hard and reach out to women that require my assistance.



Chapter 12

Baucau: Torture Centers All Around Us

On 9 December 1975, two days after they invaded Dili, the Indonesian military reached Timor-Leste's city of Baucau. Many people sought safety in the surrounding hinterland, as Baucau became Indonesia's base of military operations in the east. The Indonesian military began seizing buildings that were used as makeshift torture and detention centers, including the Hotel Flamboyan.

The hotel, initially built as a soap factory and a transformed into a hotel in 1960, was confiscated for use as barracks, and then an ammunition depot and finally, a prison. The name was changed after the Flamboyan military operation, the second of three major operations against Timor-Leste. According to CAVR, many prisoners disappeared from the Hotel Flamboyan especially in the first two years of occupation, while interrogation and torture was most intense from 1975 to 1980.¹¹⁴

Based on CAVR interviews, at least 30 women were tortured at detention centers in Baucau from December 1975 to 1984, and nearly one third of them were also raped.¹¹⁵ In our research, women in Baucau shared their stories of being forced to dance with Indonesian soldiers and paramilitary. Some were forced to 'marry' them.

These women not only were victimized by the military, which have not been held accountable for their crimes, but also by their community. Women who sacrificed themselves to protect others have faced judgment from their families and communities that has both psychological as well as social-economic impacts on the lives of victims. These women continue to live with stigma and disempowerment today and struggle without support for their survival and recovery.

SOFIA DA COSTA: SACRIFICING FOR OTHERS

My tears do not dry when I remember the events of the past.

When Sofia da Costa was 22 her husband was killed in a bomb explosion in Dili during the pre-invasion conflict between UDT and Fretilin. A year later Sofia began supporting the resistance through gardening and sewing, also performed dances when they raised the Timorese flag.

By 1978, her brothers had been detained and she was forced to 'marry' an Indonesian soldier, with whom she had a daughter. One year later she was accused of delivering information to the guerillas and detained at a military post in Quelicai for a week.

At night they questioned me, but I always told them I had done nothing wrong. I said I'd never been to the forest [to contact the rebels] and never gave clothing to the resistance fighters. I think back and I still don't know what I did wrong to be detained and tortured and taken to prison.



Another Indonesian soldier from the Special Forces unit known as Nanggala advocated for her release. She later 'married' him for two years and had a son with him before he returned to Indonesia. She had little protection from further violence. She was forced, along with others, to 'entertain' Indonesian soldiers.

Every Saturday the military would come to our house and force us at gunpoint to go with them. If we protested they said they would kill our families. They forced us to do many things, whatever they wanted. Not only dance, but they also groped us and threatened us and took us to the forest to sleep with them.

My life was so difficult then. We had to obey the soldiers' orders because we were scared of being killed. It was like my friends and I had been marked, every time a Hino truck and armed people came to the front of our house, we had to go with them, to go to parties and dance with the soldiers. Wherever there was a big event, the posts, the forest, and the district military command – even on war ships – we were taken. This happened from 1977 up to 1985.

Adding to her suffering was the talk and gossip from fellow Timorese who judged women for what they were forced to do.

We suffered, but we always smiled. Many people talked about us, mocked us, but we just resigned ourselves to our fate. Our brothers had been captured and jailed, our parents only survived because everyday we lived in this way so that we could save



Sofia in front of
her house

them-- Especially the soldiers knew we were Fretilin leaders. Many people called us "lonte" [prostitute] but we just resigned ourselves to it because it was war. We women are not stupid, but we sacrificed ourselves so that we could save our families.

Today, Sofia grows vegetables and bakes and sells cakes to support her family. She received an old age pension payment, but it was insufficient for her and her children. Sofia carries on despite the hardship, motivated by the need to support her family.

We don't have enough money to eat and that makes me sad.... Life is better now but I still struggle. My body is still strong and I can work to earn money.

I don't know what to say to my kids when they ask where their father is. I just tell them to think about the future. We used to be so happy, but the war has made our life so difficult. I have so many children and when I think about what I went through I get really sad. I really wish the government would pay attention to my family and to me.

FILOMENA DE FATIMA: NOW ALONE



Although I am still alive, I feel as if I were dead because I don't have anything to pay for my child's education. Because I couldn't pay, my grand-daughter was expelled from school.

Filomena de Fatima struggles to make ends meet every day. She cares for the daughter of her youngest son who was killed in a bus accident. She cannot afford to send her to school and can barely afford food, often relying on neighbors to give her a meal. They live in a dilapidated shack with walls made from a tarp that leaks in the rain.

What I can earn from my business is only enough to feed us for a day. I sell sweets and drinks in front of the school. My highest income for a day is 50 cents (US). I know I have to work harder to earn more money, but I just can't because I don't have enough to start a bigger business, and I am also getting older and weaker.

Throughout the Indonesian occupation Filomena suffered repeated violence:

When the Indonesians came to Baucau I didn't flee to the forest but stayed at home. I was young at the time. Soldiers came to my house and forced me, if I didn't comply they threatened me with weapons. They asked "Do you want me?" I didn't understand Indonesian so I just stayed quiet.

Over the next five years Filomena was used by each troop rotation of Indonesian soldiers. One soldier came to her house and demanded to 'marry' her:

In the middle of the night an Indonesian soldier carrying just a backpack came to my house and forced me, he said I had to marry him. I was scared to look at him. The soldier came from Battalion 33, the group that always took turns coming to my house.

The last soldier to come was from the Military Police, he was called Hamer, and he lived with me for a long time. They then went to their new assignments and returned to their own places. They took turns living with me over six years, from 1975 – 1979. At the time no one dared talk with the Indonesian military because they had weapons, shooting left to right, up and down and making me scared.

She had three children with the Indonesian soldier, though one died. In 1999 her youngest son was arrested by the Indonesians and detained at the police station in Waillili. Filomena found out where he was and went to find him:

They beat and kicked him in front of me. I screamed for them to stop but they continued until he looked like he was going to die.

Her son survived the torture but her heartache was renewed when he was later killed in a bus accident.

Filomena has lived with the judgement of her community towards women who were used by the Indonesians. Her four surviving children are not close to her, possibly because they are embarrassed by what she went through during the occupation.

When I am sick I am alone in the house, there is no one who cares for me. I think maybe because I carried my children when my life was so difficult, that is why they are far from me and leave me all alone.... I don't have big expectations and hopes I just want anybody, leaders of this country to give me some support for my children and myself. I don't even know what to say about justice.

MIRA: STILL BEARING SCARS

I suffered for independence from 1975 until now. I still bear the scars. But I am still waiting for justice.

In 1975, Mira became involved in the fight for independence and in mid-1976 she attended a meeting to plan an attack on a visiting Indonesian official.

Unfortunately the Indonesians heard about these plans and they started coming to our village and searching for us. Many escaped to the forest but 31 of us were captured in June 1976.

They were taken to Rumah Lima and held for one month then to Hotel Flamboyan where all 31 of them (including four women) were detained in one cell, with no room to walk or lie down for six months. She was interrogated and tortured. Every night



the women were taken out and sexually abused. While being interrogated Mira was forced to hold the penises of Indonesian soldiers, and was kicked if she stopped. She was horribly tortured with cigarettes on her thighs and still has the scars.



When I came back my friends would get angry at me because they thought I've been giving information to the Indonesians. But I just stayed quiet when they asked me questions, because I could not explain what I was being taken for every night. When the soldiers interrogated me they kicked my legs with their boots. I still feel pain, especially if I walk. I can only walk slowly now because of that.

When she was finally released and went home her older brother questioned why she had been gone for so long.

When they released me and I came home my brother asked me, "Where were you that you have returned home like that? Usually when people are taken for interrogation they come back quickly, why did you take so long?" I didn't reply because I felt sick and my thighs were swollen.

Mira and the other female detainees were ordered to report every day to the military police:

We became 'outside prisoners'. At 7am we went to report and again at 4pm. They sent the older ones home first, me and my friend Celestine followed afterwards. They forced us to 'serve' them before we left, if we refused they threatened to kill our friends who were still in prison. This went on for three years. In 1979 they ended their rotation at the prison in Dili and we could stop reporting. We were lucky if we reported to a good person, but if we met with a bad person we would have to 'serve' them before leaving.

Mira was forced to 'marry' a military police officer for one year. During that time she became pregnant and had a son, but he died when he was one year old.

I'm still in pain. Since 1975 until 1999 I never got anything. Now we have had independence for over 10 years, no one has ever come and asked about our experience.

Mira has attended NGO workshops, learning about her rights and the concept of justice. But she feels she has not been able to access justice and has been forgotten.

I have not received any justice. Of those who captured me, some have died, only one is still alive and he is in Kupang. If he did come back one day I would not take revenge, because we already have independence. I accept my fate and surrender to God.

Mira manages to earn enough to take care of her children through gardening and farming on her land. She also sells her embroidery at the market. She has lost her mother, father, brothers and sisters. Two of her five children still live at home and help where they can. Sometimes she gets help from other family members if she is sick and needs to go to the hospital. She uses a walking stick and has been diagnosed with diabetes. Mira has received an old age pension from the government, but no formal recognition or compensation for her suffering. She says only some people have received a veterans pension, which is disappointing.

As illiterate women, what should we say? People do not believe us, educated people are the ones who are clever enough to lie and people believe them. What should people like us say? Those who previously informed on us to the Indonesians, they are the ones who are able to lie and get money....

I have never received any assistance from the government. When the people from the Social Solidarity department came to our village they said they would provide assistance to widows and those who are poor. My name was not on the list. My child

asked them why but they just said my name wasn't on the list. My child came home and asked me why. I answered "forget it because before your father was a public servant and his pension is still being kept at the Bank Mandiri [an Indonesian bank] and because of that they don't want to give us any money." My child was just silent.

MARIA DE FATIMA: SPEAKING OUT ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE



Maria in front of the Flamboyan Hotel where she was detained, raped and tortured by the Indonesian military.

Maria de Fatima was married in 1975 when the Indonesians invaded. She and her husband were frequently threatened in their home and accused of clandestine activities. Her husband was a primary school teacher and head of the school. Whenever he came out of school the Indonesians would be waiting for him. They went in and out of their house, often interrupting their meals. Her husband was beaten and shot at.

I was scared my husband would be killed, my husband's family were blaming me. I encouraged my husband to leave Timor to study (in Indonesia). He was gone for 15 years before he came back, leaving our two children with me. I had to 'marry' a soldier; if not they would continue to threaten me.

When her husband left Timor in 1977 Indonesian soldiers began to visit Maria in her house, picking her up and forcing her to 'dance' at the Hotel Flamboyan:

I was tortured for this country, I think that no one cares.

The Indonesians didn't wait outside, they just came in. Sometimes there were 10 of them sitting on the terrace, two would guard the doors to the left and right so no one else could come in.

This is where we were tortured and beaten by soldiers. They threw us to the floor. We crawled to wash ourselves, our clothes were stripped off. After one left another would come in. We just lay on the cement crying. We could only accept it. They stripped us naked again. If we refused, they would force us. We cried and held each other. When I realized I was pregnant there was nothing I could do. I couldn't accuse anyone, because there were so many. They took turns. I didn't know exactly who was the father of the child I was carrying. In that condition I could only submit.

I never thought of taking revenge on the children I was carrying. I never wanted to have an abortion. I always loved them, even though they came into my womb out of wedlock. I never thought ill of my children. Let them live. I supported them by sewing and embroidery.¹¹⁶

Maria had four children with Indonesian soldiers. She owns a small house and some land, selling cakes and running a small kiosk to support herself. She was assisted by ACbit to build her house and set up the kiosk. She also gets support from her nephew and other family members, but has not been able to get any veteran support.

When I organised my paperwork for the veteran's office many people said that I was lying. I told the commission that I suffered, because my brother and other relatives were in the forest with the resistance. They laughed at what I said, but I will not stay silent. I will continue to fight so that people will recognise my suffering.

My friends and I are going to continue to struggle to remind the government to implement the Reparations and Institute of Memory Act so that we can protect the women who became victims. The government has only paid attention to male victims because they carried weapons. Is the law only on the side of men who carried weapons while us women were used as they wished: detained, tortured, burnt? Is our struggle not counted and valued by the government? We women did not carry weapons like the men, but we women gave our body and soul to defend our country.

MARIA LEMOS: LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF VIOLENCE



Maria holding the picture of her husband

Maria da Gloria Lemos fled when the Indonesian military invaded, hiding with her family in the forest for 15 days before surrendering. Her family and her husband were detained at the hotel commandeered by the military, for three years. She was given permission to provide food for her family. Like Maria de Fatima, she was also called by the military to be raped.

She was detained three times and interrogated and tortured at the Hotel Flamboyan. Some soldiers were kind but others insulted her because she was associated with Fretilin. She just accepted it:

I prayed before I met the Indonesian soldiers. We were questioned and they used an interpreter because we didn't speak Indonesian then. They asked my friend, "Have you taken a bath yet? If not then go to the bathroom and bathe." They asked me if I had a husband. I said I did. Then the soldier asked me, "At night how many times do you do it?" I didn't answer, I was just quiet.

Even representatives of the resistance appeared to not care about her abuse. Once she met two resistance leaders near the district military command where she was being questioned. She remembers them telling her, "You should just do what they want."

Maria's husband and relatives were released in 1979. Her husband began working as a civil servant but also supported the resistance, carrying reports and mobilising others to resist. He was soon imprisoned again. The family continued to be monitored and was labeled Fretilin or Communists.

Maria's suffering continued over the years. Her younger brother was killed outside the Cathedral in 1981. Her husband faced intimidation and threats from the Indonesian forces until he was hit by a car and killed in 1983. In 1999, she experienced the terror of the militia group called Tim Saka in the lead up to the referendum. She felt engulfed by the convulsions of violence that followed it.

Maria's life is better now. She works as a teacher, raising pigs on the side. She has received a pension from the Veteran's Office and owns her own house and land. She is a mother to seven children. She knows there are other victims like her who are struggling.

I only hope that the government can give appropriate help to those like me so that they can live well, and especially renovate homes that are damaged or have collapsed.

But it is difficult for Maria to forget the past. She lives just behind the Hotel Flamboyan.

My house is exactly behind the Hotel Flamboyan, when I sit by myself and see the hotel I cry and my heart fills with pain.

ANTONIA DAS NEVES: A MISSING MOTHER



Antonia das Neves and her family also sought the safety of the forest when the Indonesians invaded, surrendering after eight months. Her father had died, her mother and two siblings could not walk anymore. There was no food. The Indonesian military were dropping bombs. Antonia still remembers what the Fretilin soldiers said to them at the time:

"You must surrender yourselves to the Indonesian soldiers because they are already close to capturing you. We can't run anymore because there is no more rice or other food, there are elderly and small children who can't run anymore. It is better to return to the village. Just surrender yourselves. Your hands and

feet will work for the Indonesian soldiers but your hearts will remain with us in the forest.”

After surrendering they were closely monitored by the security forces and lived in constant fear. They were especially nervous at night when soldiers would peek into their houses.

The soldiers were always looking for virgins. That made us uncomfortable and scared. By eight or nine at night they controlled the yards of our homes. We were so scared because when they saw a young woman they would take her from her parents. They just had to accept it. Because of that we slept next to our older brothers and lied to the Indonesians, telling them they were our husbands. If the Indonesians saw us sleeping alone they would forcibly drag us from our beds and take us outside.

Her mother and step-father, older brother and sister were arrested and sent to Atauro for three years, leaving Antonia with her two sisters in Laga. Her mother was among the many who died on Atauro.

In accordance with tradition, my older sister told me to bury my mother’s clothes in Bagaia [our village] in place of her body. We don’t know where she is really buried.

When I think about my mother I am so sad and can only cry. I miss my mother terribly because she sacrificed herself for me. I never had the opportunity to repay her. When I eat I always remember her. When we celebrate national hero’s day I always remember her and I cry.

Antonia in front of the house she lives in, a building formerly owned by the Indonesian government.

When the violence broke out in 1999 Antonia and her family were forced to leave their village of Bagaia and go to Atambua in West Timor, Indonesia. When they returned they discovered that their house had been burned to the ground by the militia. They have been occupying a former government building for over 10 years.



My family and I occupy land owned by the government, but we have been asked to move out. They told us they will compensate us for the investment we have made in the surrounding gardens but I have not heard anything further about this. If we have to return to Baguia I don't know how I will pay school fees or buy food, it would be so difficult because I don't have any land.

Antonia and her husband have 10 children. To support them Antonia sells *tempeh* in the market so she can buy rice. She also borrowed money to start a small business but instead used it to pay for school fees and food. She has received some support from ACbit to set up her *tempeh* business.

Making tempeh is a good way to earn money because you can make a good profit but it is hard work. All my children are at private school and the fees are really high..... I also support my children studying at university. If I don't have any money I sell one of my pigs. I always accept what I have to do as I want my children to have a bright future.

LUISA DO REGO: STANDING UP FOR HER LAND



I thought that after independence we would be free of all violence, but in my life I have not attained freedom or my rights.

In 1975 Luisa do Rego and her family fled to the forest near Natarbora. She was thirteen but was already involved in the activities of women's groups. Her father and younger brother were captured in 1976. They were detained in a cave in Wemori. In

1977, Luisa and many other exhausted, sick and injured people surrendered in Venilale. The following year, she and her family moved to Baucau. The military there was suspicious that she was taking information to the forest.

In 1978 when she was sixteen, Luisa went to visit her mother and sister in Dili. There she was captured by Indonesian soldiers, accused of stealing arms for the guerillas. She was taken to the subdistrict military command in Becora and held for six months. Her mother visited her every Saturday and Sunday. She was treated well and fell in love with one of the Indonesian soldiers. She later married him and had a child. He built her a house in Baucau in 1981. Her child is now married and lives in Manatutu.

During the Indonesian period she was often mocked for being a Fretilin supporter. Her house was destroyed by the Indonesian military.

There were many people that cursed me saying I was a Xanana supporter. I just ignored them and still greeted them. When I went [to the market] people always insulted me saying I stole weapons. I just stayed quiet and didn't answer them. On 12 November 1983 soldiers ransacked my house and threatened to kill me. I sought strength in God.

Luisa continues to face discrimination and hardship after independence. Her neighbours want to take her land, arguing that it was bought illegitimately by an Indonesian soldier:

My life is not peaceful because I am always being intimidated and threatened by my neighbours over the land dispute. They accuse me of using black magic. In 2008, my neighbour and their family beat me in public. My body was swollen and injured. I reported to the police but no one paid attention to my case.

Now, even though we have independence, my life is just the same. Because of land, my neighbours always lie and beat me. I still feel hurt if I think about what happened. People who previously teased me for being Fretilin have [powerful] positions in this country. Because I am illiterate, people always discriminate against me.

Luisa sells cakes to support herself and has received some government assistance from the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) through ACbit. One of her children has a scholarship to study at an Australian university.

HERMINIA DA COSTA: A YOUNG WIDOW STRUGGLING

When the Indonesians invaded, Herminia da Costa (Saeloi) fled to the forests of Mt. Matebain with her family, where they experienced terrible hardship. During the three years they were in the forest, Herminia lost her father, mother, and five of her eight siblings. She and her three remaining siblings surrendered in 1978. Herminia's husband also suffered—he was captured and tortured before they had married. He became sick and died from these long standing injuries in 2004, leaving Herminia with seven children to support.



Herminia inside
her house

Without any government assistance, Herminia supports her family and sends her children to school with the money she makes from selling drinks and sweets. She just makes ends meet, receiving some support from ACbit.

I work every day at home, when school is in session, I make ice sweets to sell. On holidays I just stay at home, I make a few ice sweets in the fridge and at midday the kids come and buy.

While she owns land and lives in the house her husband started to build before he died, the house has no windows and is very simple. Herminia lives next to her husband's family and they share a bathroom, which sometimes leads to disputes.

Herminia's
memory box

Justice is a word I often hear people using. Whether it is real or not I don't know, because I've never experienced it. We have suffered hunger and economic crisis but no one cares about us. I don't know where the process of justice is. I have never heard about it.





Julieta was the local coordinator for a Timorese women's organization, OPMT (Organização Popular de Mulheres Timor, the Timorese Women's Populist Organization), affiliated with Fretilin. As she was coming home from the mountains one day in 1975, Indonesian soldiers invaded her village. She had to flee to Vemassi. She was captured along with two others and detained for one month in a small room at the district military headquarters. She was not allowed to leave. They were terrorised daily by soldiers brandishing their weapons and holding them to their heads, stomach, and foreheads. They found strength through prayer. Even though they refused to share any information they were not interrogated or tortured. However every night they were forced to dance at the Hotel Flamboyan and other different places.

Julieta now receives support from the veteran's program. However, she feels that does not compare to the suffering she experienced.

The pension I received was based on 4-7 years [of service] but I hoped for extra, I feel like my sacrifice was for nothing. I received a total of USD\$1,013 which I initially refused but my friends said to take it and later apply again.

This war was enough for us. We are waiting for justice but it still hasn't appeared. We just hope that Timor-Leste can move forward and not dwell on the past. But our suffering should be addressed. While I am not satisfied with the benefit I received, this is the reality faced by us women who struggled for independence. What is important is that there is no more violence.

JULIANA PEREIRA: A SINGLE MOTHER



200

Juliana Pereira's husband was arrested and detained for his involvement with the clandestine movement before he met her. When they married in 1983 she was nineteen. She knew he was a former political prisoner. But he never told her about the suffering he experienced.

I married my husband after he was released from jail. He was not in good health because his body was covered with bruises and he had an internal infection. He was scared to look at Indonesian people and never said anything to me. Eventually he got sick. I took him to a doctor who told me that he was sick because he had been repeatedly kicked and beaten.

Her husband worked as a teacher, but continued to support the resistance:

When he came out of jail he returned to working for the resistance, secretly in the forest, taking food and other things for his comrades. I asked him about it once when he was taking some shoes for his comrades in the forest, but he ordered me to be quiet. He said it was his business. The shoes were not for him but to help his friends in the forest. He ordered me to be quiet and not tell anyone about it.

When violence erupted in 1999, Juliana and her husband hid near their house. Armed militia came looking for her husband but didn't find them. After the referendum her husband didn't return to work as a teacher. Instead he worked on his gardens and rice fields. He became increasingly ill and died in 2006, leaving Juliana with five young children.

Without her husband, the responsibility to take care of the family fell to Juliana. They owned their land, so she has been able to plant vegetables to sell in the market, making up to US \$8 per day. She also makes coconut oil, and prepares jackfruit snacks to sell to pay her childrens' school fees.

I have been gardening since my husband died, planting green vegetables, water spinach, jackfruit, and preparing coconut oil and selling it all at the market to support my family.

I haven't ever received any type of help from the government. I did once receive some money called 'Bolsa da Mae' [a cash supplement for mothers] of US\$180, but this was far from adequate to pay for the school fees of my children.



Juliana and her sons

She now has eight children, two girls and six boys. The youngest child is in primary school, one is at university. Although she is a single parent struggling alone, through hard work and determination Juliana has managed to provide a good education for her children.

Only two of my children have not completed high school. I have used my ten fingers to dig the soil and garden to pay for their school fees.

PAULINA DA COSTA: TERROR AT THE HOTEL FLAMBOYAN

Paulina da Costa and her husband were captured, interrogated and tortured by the Indonesian armed forces because they were accused of working for the resistance. They were detained at district military headquarters, Uma Lima and finally Hotel Flamboyant for three months.



The time in detention was horrible. They tied us up really tightly, with men facing women, then turned the lights off. There were four women tied up amongst many men. Because I was tied up with someone else, I was terrified and screamed until a soldier came and he thought I had gone crazy. There was a really big room like a balcony where they murdered people so whenever I see that place I get really scared and traumatized. Sometimes I saw blood on the walls and around the room, maybe they [Timorese] were killed or hanged or something like that.

We were tortured in many ways because the military accused us of being spies for Fretilin but we were just ordinary people. We suffered alot, my husband became sick and eventually died. I am already old now, often sick and I forget things. I never went to seek medical treatment because I had no money, I just suffered at home. When the women from ACbit came to see me and saw the condition I was in they took me to the hospital in Baucau and I was diagnosed with tuberculosis. I have just started a six month course of treatment.

I am already old, I don't want to keep suffering and be a burden on my children. I want God to quickly call me home.

Paulina recently passed away in 2014.

Paulina with her daughter, son in law, and grandchildren.



Chapter 13

Ainaro: Ferocious Mountains Resilient Spirit

By February 1976 Indonesian troops had reached the mountainous southern district of Ainaro. Women from Ainaro shared stories of fleeing to the forest and the mountains to evade the approaching Indonesian troops, moving from place to place, struggling to find food and hide from bombing raids. Many stayed in the forest until the late 1970s, when they were captured or conditions forced them to surrender.

In Ainaro during the 1980s and 1990s a civilian clandestine movement supported armed resistance. The Indonesian military responded harshly and many people were detained, tortured, exiled to Atauro or disappeared. In Ainaro, many were thrown to their deaths off the Bulilico cliffs, a site which became known as “Jakarta II” because after their murder the Indonesian military told their families they had “gone to Jakarta.”¹⁷



Builico cliffs,
also known as Jakarta II

In Ainaro, militia groups set up by Indonesia were responsible for many cases of violence against women. These militia were trained throughout the occupation, and reinvigorated before the 1999 referendum. Team Sukarelawan (Volunteer Team) was established in 1991 to crackdown on the clandestine movement and resistance activities. That year the Indonesian army’s belief that Xanana Gusmao was in Ainaro



prompted a huge spike in detentions, ill treatment and torture of civilians, including sexual violence against women, until Xanana's arrest in November 1992.¹¹⁸

In the lead up to the August 1999 referendum, the Indonesian armed forces began to mobilize local militia groups across Timor-Leste. *Mahidi* was one of the most notorious militia groups in Ainaro.¹¹⁹ In Ainaro in 1999, at least 34 people were killed by these militia, 13,000 people were forcibly relocated and some 3,700 buildings were destroyed, all with impunity.¹²⁰

Agripina and her sister-in-law, Ana Maria, demonstrating how they were restrained by the Mahidi militia.

CELESTINA DE LIMA: DISABLED FROM TORTURE

At first I thought that after independence I would be able to breathe freely again, that I had sacrificed everything to gain security and freedom. After independence there was talk of justice but I still don't know what that means.

In 1975 Celestina, her seven siblings and their parents sought refuge in the forest. She remembers this as an extremely difficult time. They were bombed and shot at, and endured sickness and hunger. So many people were buried without a proper grave it was impossible to count them. Celestina's father tied the children to his back so they wouldn't be separated. Her family was fortunate because after four years in the forest, they all survived.

In 1981, when Celestina was fifteen, her parents were captured and tortured. The following year they were sent to Atauro Island for three years. After they returned to Ainaro in 1984, Celestina was arrested for carrying food to her uncle in the resistance:

I was tortured, kicked until I fell to the ground, and not just that, they beat my back with weapons and forced me to go to the forest to look for my uncle. I said I didn't know [where he was], and then they threatened they would rape me. I said to them, "why don't you just kill me?"



She was detained and tortured daily at the special forces headquarters for two weeks then moved to the subdistrict military command in Hatudu. Her parents did not dare to come and visit her. She was severely tortured. Like many others, after her release, she had to report each week to a command post which was a three hour walk from home.

Celestina in front of her house



Despite all she had suffered, Celestina continued to support the resistance, sending information and food to those in the forest.

Celestina is not satisfied with government support since independence. She feels that her sacrifice and her contribution to the resistance have not been recognized. She has lasting injuries; her back is permanently swollen and misshapen, affecting her health and ability to earn a living. She has not received a disability benefit for these lasting injuries from torture, only qualifying for a veteran's payout for 4-7 years. She feels this is unfair and upsetting.

Celestina married in 2001 and had a daughter and two sons. Sadly, her daughter died soon after birth. Pregnancy and childbirth took a toll on her fragile frame. Her second labour was especially difficult. Afterwards, she was bed-ridden for seven months in excruciating pain. Her back became even more bent. Her family was very supportive, with her mother drawing on her old age pension, her younger siblings helping to look after her children and her husband taking on domestic duties as well as working to sustain them. ACbit helped to access physiotherapy at the hospital in Dili, but treatment was brief. She had to return home and look after her two children.

Her bad back prevents her from carrying out physically demanding work but she operates a small kiosk in front of her house, supported by the Ministry of Social Solidarity through ACbit.

FELISMINA DE ARAÚJO: SEEING MOUNTAINS

Felismina de Araújo and her first husband hid in the forest in 1975. She worked for the resistance, cooking for Falintil. In 1976, she gave birth while briefly in her village to retrieve sacred objects:

The Indonesians were already in Ainaro but not in our village yet. I asked my nephew to come down from our hiding place with me to our sacred house (uma lulik) to retrieve some ceremonial objects. It was so quiet. I felt pain so called out for me nephew to help me. Not long afterwards I delivered my son. Then I heard the Indonesians approaching so I carried my child and took my nephew back to our hiding place in the mountains to join my children and other family.

Felismina and her children separated from her husband in the forest as he joined the armed resistance. Felismina continued to deliver food to Falintil. She and the children surrendered after three years in hiding. Every night she was able to meet her husband who would visit her with his comrades and they would all eat together. One day someone reported them. Felismina was arrested and taken to the Ainaro military subdistrict command, leaving her children with her sister. She was four months pregnant.

They interrogated me while kicking my legs with their military boots, "You provided food to Falintil?" I answered, "We never went to find them and give them food, but when we were in our gardens harvesting corn they appeared. We were scared we would be killed so we gave food to them."



Felismina in front of her house.

At the command post she was gang raped, by both regular soldiers and high ranking officers as well.

I told them I was pregnant but they didn't care and said if I fought against them they would throw me into the river. I just cried.

In 1982 she was arrested again and taken to Atauro Island for detention. She had just given birth and found it very difficult to support herself and her child on the barren island. During the three years on Atauro she met a man with whom she had two more children but one of them died. During this time her mother in Ainaro cared for her six older children.

After she return to Ainaro, Felismina worked in her garden and bartered for food for her family. She receives a small pension from her husband's time as a civil servant for the Portuguese. But she never found out what happened to her first husband-- a wound that has never healed.

I often see the mountains and I cry because they remind me of the time we escaped with my husband who is still missing. I remember the hard times, how we nearly starved. But I also remember the good times, how we used to entertain ourselves by dancing together.

I feel my life is good, all my children have work and I have received some compensation from the Veteran's Office and my eldest child received compensation on behalf of my husband. I hope there will be justice. My husband's grave has never been found.

MARIA MARTINS: A DREAM OF INDEPENDENCE

Maria Martins was thirteen in 1974. She remembers the revolution when she was active with OPMT. She and her family went into hiding when the Indonesians invaded, carrying only a few items of clothing, a machete, a crowbar, some cotton and thread. They were able to plant vegetables and trade clothes for food. They were captured in 1977 and sent to Dare, where they continued working for the resistance. "They didn't know and we didn't tell them."

In 1982 the military captured many people in her resistance group. They kicked down her door and searched the house. Maria's parents were sent to Atauro. While Maria was attending mass, she was dragged out of church by civil defense and soldiers.

They brought me to my house at gunpoint so I could get some clothes and waited outside. As I came out one of them, Felipe said to me "You just go with them. You are just a woman, if you die or live it is in the hands of the military."



Maria Martins and her memory box.

She was beaten with weapons and then told to get in a car and pray to God. She was moved around, between military posts and houses. She was beaten, given electric shocks, sexually assaulted and raped.

When they wanted to punish me they took off all my clothes in front of other men. Once there was a long table and many men sat around it: the deputy sub district military commander, sub district head and his deputy, a company commander, and the village head. They stripped me in front of them and they talked about me.

When she was released she had to report every week for the raising of the Indonesian flag. She continued to be abused by the Indonesian soldiers. The community in Hatubuiliku watched her come and go to the military headquarters. They would spit at her in the street, believing that she was a "fallen woman."

In 1996 she married a Timorese of Chinese decent. He knew all that had happened to her and accepted her. But he was much older than her, and passed away before they could have any children. In the 1999 violence, her house was destroyed and

someone else occupied her parents' land. Maria feels powerless to reclaim her rightful inheritance.

She married again in 2002. Maria now sells cakes and sweets, instant noodles and other items at her small kiosk in Dili. Maria has received support from the veterans' office, including a monthly pension in recognition of two years of sacrifice. She says, "Now that we have independence I feel a bit better."

ALDA BAPTISTA: A HELPING HAND



Alda inside her house.

Many of Alda Baptista's family have been missing since 1975. She herself fled to the forest, hiding until 1978. She remembers being attacked by low-flying Indonesian planes.

I don't know how many we counted, because at that time many people were killed, killed by bullets from planes. Hundreds. It was impossible to know because everyone was running for shelter.

She also recalls the solidarity and strength of those living in the forest, sharing food and caring for the injured and the sick using traditional medicines.

Alda's husband was detained and tortured in 1991, not long after they moved in together. She reported his arrest to the Red Cross in Dili who lobbied with the

district head of Ainaro for his release. From 1998, Alda's husband became active in the resistance, mobilizing youth in preparation for independence.

After the referendum everyone fled to the forest to escape the violent backlash from the militia and military. Alda's husband came down from the hinterland and helped approximately 60 youth evacuate to the hills. Members of the Mahidi militia became suspicious and started looking for her husband. When they came to Alda's house, she said he had gone out:

They said it was lucky he wasn't home because they wouldn't have let him live. Nervously, I said, "we women don't know anything about politics," thinking that maybe this way I could save my husband. We had to be clever, to keep secrets and act wisely in hard situations so as not to become victims.

Alda says she is sometimes unsatisfied with the payments given to veterans by the government. She feels the contribution of the youth is underestimated, often getting only a single payment: "I feel disappointed and sometimes I protest. But they say we were only young during the struggle." Alda believes that the youth involved in the resistance missed out on opportunities because they prioritized their nation over everything else.

Alda's husband is now the Deputy Administrator of Ainaro. They own a house and a large garden. She tries to help other women who are facing difficulty.

Since independence I feel happy, calm. No one is chasing us anymore. I often help other women in Ainaro look for solutions to attain their rights as citizens, especially victims of the conflict who still suffer discrimination when they try and submit their paperwork to receive a veterans' pension.

MARIA FERNANDES: EDUCATION COMES FIRST

When the Indonesian military reached the town of Maubessi in December 1975, Maria de Fatima Fernandes and her family escaped to the forest, where they lived in hiding for seven years. They found refuge on Kablaki Mountain, and then moved to Lauteli. They were finally captured in 1982 when Maria was twenty-one. She was detained with her father and other family members and tortured at the district military command with her uncle:

We were punished by electrocution. At that time there were no police at the district military command. The situation was a bit chaotic in 1982. Even though we were family we were not allowed to speak [to each other], if they saw us [speaking] they would take us to Jakarta II (a cliff where many were murdered by being pushed over the edge.)

Maria was also sexually abused and raped; an Indonesian soldier fathered her first child. She was released and allowed to teach in a school, Leutelu Nunumoge, but remained under house arrest for three months, and every month had to report.



Maria de Fatima Fernandes inside her house.

There are many things that I can't forget because they still hurt me when I remember them. However since independence I do feel better. Many people in the community know how I suffered from the violence I experienced.

She married in 1985, she and her husband had 12 children. Her husband died in 2006 when their youngest child was just six months old. Another child passed away, leaving her with four girls and seven boys. Maria has no land, and lives in a former civil servant's house from the Indonesian period. Although her livelihood is meager, Maria is proud to have succeeded in providing an education for her children.

I have been able to send my children to school. A few have even graduated university. All my salary and my pension go towards educating my children. I have not received any justice for the time I was detained. My house is in terrible condition and last year it was further damaged by strong winds. I say to my children "We have to repair it step by step. I can pay for your school, and what is important is that we have enough money to eat, that's enough".

DOMINGAS GUTERRES: VIOLENCE FROM BOTH SIDES



212

In 1975, Domingas Araújo Guterres supported Fretilin, while her only brother supported UDT. Her husband was a Fretilin commander and together with other Fretilin leaders, they fled into the Timorese hinterland. They went to Ainaro by foot, crossing through Dili and Aileu districts. Near Aileu, the group split, with armed guerrillas staying to fight the approaching Indonesian soldiers and Domingas going with the rest of the group to town.

The guerrillas said to me “Comrade, take the people to Aileu, we will wait and meet the enemy with bullets.”

They found transport to Aileu and were met by the local Fretilin commander. He gave them rice to cook but before it was ready the Indonesian forces started bombing the area. They grabbed what they could and ran to the forest and made their way to Ainaro. However, when the Indonesian forces took Ainaro, they terrorized Domingas to find out where her husband was. She decided to return to the forest. However, after her husband was suspected of disloyalty to Fretilin, he was sent to be detained in the town of Same. Domingas and her father-in-law were also captured and tied up:

During the time I was in the forest, I was detained on and off, together with many others, as we moved from place to place, like Fatubessi and Zumalai, because I was suspected of changing my political allegiance. I spent four years in the forest with the guerrillas and was detained for one year.

Fretilin detained us in 1977: me and my father in law, along with others, in a deep hole in the ground for over a year. Many people died during this punishment in the “rehabilitation

*centre*²¹, because we had to stand there rain or shine....Every day they ordered us out to line up and receive food like rotten corn, tunis [a type of legume] and cassava leaves.

A Portuguese Falintil commander, who went by Maubusa, stood up for Domingas and her father in law and argued for their release.

In 1979 the group was arrested by the Indonesian military in the mountains around Cailako. They were detained and interrogated about the weapons they carried, and then taken to Bobonaro town and detained in a school for four months. Once freed they were given a travel permit to return to Ainaro so were able to walk on the main roads. The journey took them about one week. However, once back in Ainaro, Domingas was captured by the civil defense force. Luckily her cousin was a police officer and after being questioned by the army she was able to stay at his house, but had to report to the local army post daily for over a year.

In 1980, she heard that her husband and father-in-law had been captured by the Indonesian military. Both were eventually brought back to the Ainaro sub district military command. Domingas moved there to be near them.

In 1982, her husband was about to be transferred to Atauro when someone negotiated with the army to release him, as he was a teacher. He was sent to teach junior high school in Hatubuilico. They had escaped Atauro, but still faced great challenges:

Domingas holding the picture of her husband.



Our life was not peaceful. Every night the local army post sent people to intimidate and threaten us. They planned to kill us, but the wife of one of the soldiers sent her daughter to tell us to leave that very night. I called my two cousins and the four of us left our house. It was raining heavily but we walked to the office of the sub district head. We stayed at his house and in the morning my husband asked if we could move to Dili.

They were moved to the neighboring district of Suai by the education department but after the outspoken Bishop Belo visited them, the military police accused her husband of being a traitor and demanded that he give them his salary. For the rest of their time in Suai, her husband was not paid, and they were constantly intimidated and threatened.

In 1999 she remembers the situation in Suai becoming increasingly tense, as militias began burning down houses. Her husband was working with a priest to receive American donations by plane. When they went to pick up the items they were met by the military and local militia, known as Laksaur, who threatened them.

Domingas and her husband heard that they were on a black list - Laksaur and the army planned to kill them. They

used their connections to enlist the help of Cancio Lopes, the militia leader in Ainaro, to negotiate their safety and transport to Ainaro.

On August 30 1999, Domingas and her husband voted for independence in Ainaro. As soon as the results were announced they went into hiding. On 17 September 1999 her husband and father-in-law were lowering an Indonesian flag when they were attacked:

They hit my father-in-law with a piece of wood and he fell to the ground. My husband ran to hide in the kitchen. They carried my father-in-law into the kitchen with my husband and poured gasoline around. I was still in the house, people were running around and screaming, "people are burning Zeca Ramiro and his father, they shot them but they are not dead, they are going to burn them alive!"

Domingas escaped into the forest, but her son was not so fortunate. He and a friend were caught by the militia and taken to the village head's house. They were beaten and hit on their heads with weapons, until a member of the civil defense forces helped them escape into the forest.

Even today my son is affected. I sent him to study at UNPAZ [the national university] but he couldn't study because his head is frequently causing him pain.

Domingas hid in the coffee plantations for a few nights before INTERFET forces arrived. Her relatives tried to retrieve her husband's and father in law's remains, but there were many dogs scavenging the corpses left behind by the Indonesian forces. The UN's Serious Crimes Unit later took their remains for investigation and then returned them so Domingas could bury them properly.

When you [the researchers] or my family come and talk to me I feel happy, but when you go I can't sleep well that night. I remember my suffering. My house burnt down, my husband and father-in-law were burned to death. I feel very sad. I keep an old sheet I have kept since 1975 and fold it tightly in my hand so I can sleep. When I sit alone and look at the mountains I think of when we were in the forest. It makes me so sad—their suffering was for our independence today.

Domingas' sister-in-law works in Africa and Domingas looks forward to her yearly visit:

When she and her children visit me they bring food, fruit and clothes. We cook and eat together in front of the graves and think about my husband and father-in-law. Since my husband has died she has looked after me. She makes me happy and makes sure I don't think too much.

I have received my husband's veteran's money, every month I receive US \$250. I use the money to help my three grandchildren. I also receive his pension money from the Portuguese government, US \$100 monthly.

She has used some of this money to build and maintain the graves for her husband and father-in-law. She grows corn and vegetables in a small garden next to her house, and has also established a small kiosk with help from ACbit.

Domingas does not think the victims' fund has been distributed fairly: the compensation for her husband is not adequate, and she is also upset that she never received compensation in recognition of her own suffering.

One thing that really hurts me is that I have never received any victim's compensation. My name was not on the list because I already received my husband's money. It makes me mad but I have to accept the situation.

MARGARIDA PEREIRA: DISCARDED LIKE A PIECE OF CLOTH



We women from Cassa, Ainaro suffered, I know everything. Your suffering with my suffering, I can't compare. My suffering resulted in miscarriage. We can't count these things.

Margarida Pereira's body is compact and muscular. Her movements are efficient and athletic, shaped by her efforts to survive a war. At the workshop with women survivors, she spontaneously began singing a song about the war. "We took up stones and machetes, to defend ourselves against the world's forces," she sang in a voice quivering with emotion. Her friends bowed down their heads, tears streaming down. Her voice touched a core where the pain is still so immediate.

Margarida took on the role of facilitator for the research with gravity. She enthusiastically gathered her friends and family, women who experienced violence like her in her village of Cassa. She teamed up with the wife of the local sub district head, Alda Baptista to find 14 women to participate, six more than what had been agreed upon.

In November 1991 Margarida was eight months pregnant with her daughter when the Mahidi militia captured her and her husband.

My husband was tied up with four others with a cable. Our cheeks became swollen and our ears felt like we were going deaf. Our hands were tied like buffalo are tied up, and became sore and injured.

They hit me until I miscarried. I was bleeding heavily. I used my sarong to wrap up the baby and then covered it with bed sheets and sleeping mats. Luckily I was a traditional midwife so I knew how to press down on my stomach and push the baby out. I kept bleeding afterwards. I was also mourning the death of my mother at the time. I still carry the suffering over this event.

Margarida also suffered sexual assault.

They took me to an empty house and attacked me. I felt heavy because I had lost so much blood. I couldn't do anything but they forced me. They said it didn't matter if I'd miscarried or not. They kissed my cheek, not because I am a prostitute. They tore at my thighs, not because I am a prostitute. We were treated in a very cruel and vicious way. Like we were not human.

Margarida inside her house



Margarida has faced discrimination and has been stigmatized over what happened to her. She also suffered shaming from her mother-in-law and husband, which almost made her husband want to leave her.

Before, and up until now, I am likened to a piece of cloth in a store. We take it and use it, and then we return it. Why would they want it back? Certainly no one would want a used cloth. The two of us became distant over eight years. It was the doing of mother-in-law towards me; she said I was a prostitute.

This shame and the stigma she carried affected her physical and mental health. Her husband wanted to have a relationship with another woman. Margarida became ill, losing weight, suffering from malaria and depression.

Margarida works hard on her garden and rice field. She also weaves *tais*, and saved up all her earnings and bought buffalos. She is happy carrying out her daily activities; sewing and feeding her pigs, goats and buffalo. She receives a monthly payment from the Veteran's Office of US \$276, up to a total of \$4,000. She has used \$1,000 towards her child's university and with \$3,000 she and her husband bought tiles, cement and sand to build a grave for her child and to build a house for them to live in peace. Despite this, Margarida still feels a lack of justice: "Even though I received a veterans payment I am still sad and don't feel I have justice."

AGRIPINA SOARES: REJECTED BY HER HUSBAND

Agripina Soares and her husband Jaime transported food and supplies such as radios, clothes, and cigarettes for Falintil for two years, until they were reported. Jaime was captured in Ainaro and taken to the local special forces headquarters. The Mahidi militia captured Agripina, along with six others, including Agripina's sister-in-law, Ana. It was 11 November 1991, the day before the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili. First, they were beaten and questioned.

They tied us up and two persons became one. At 4 a.m. they finally untied us. That morning, they called us and tied us up again, and started questioning us, asking, "Did you bring them food or not?" "Yes, I did," I answered. Then they tied us again, beat us, and released us. We were there for two nights and two days.

They were then moved to Cassa where Agripina, Ana and the other women were raped:

When I was raped I didn't scream, I just said I was pregnant and the baby in my womb was just two months. Then they said "Two months, no problem". They added, "We want to kill you or let you live, when we get to the post we will kill you, we don't want to let you live because you are traitors providing food to the people in the forest. You will die." Luckily the Nanggala soldiers arrived, or else we would have all been killed.

Because of this attack, Agripina had a miscarriage. After the Santa Cruz massacre, there was an increase in military operations. However, with a visit by the



Agripina in front of her house.

International Red Cross to Ainaro, Agripina and Ana were released soon after. However, Agripina's husband could not accept the fact that his wife was raped.

He left me because he kept on thinking about the rape, and those who raped me. Everyday he hated me, and could no longer accept me. We always ended up fighting when he spoke about it. Later, he married another woman, but his new wife never had any children.

At the time Jaime left Agripina, she was eight months pregnant with their daughter. He still lives in Ainaro and has received assistance from the Veteran's Fund. He has not given her anything. The men who raped her went to Betun in Indonesian West Timor and have not come back to Timor-Leste.

I heard that they have already died, and I said that is justice from God. When I see the site of the rape I feel so sad and always cry.

Agripina's life took a turn for the better when in 1995 she remarried. She and her second husband went to live with her father and mother, her eldest daughter from her first marriage and their seven children. In 1999 they were forced to go to Betun in West Timor and stayed for two months before returning.

My life is not so good, because we have many children and my husband is a simple farmer, so we just work in the fields to survive. I am still not happy because my friends have a lot of

work, and we used to work together to support the resistance in the forest. They have all received pensions from the veterans fund, but I have been unsuccessful. I have tried to organise my papers to apply for assistance since 1999, but have had not any results.

However, her husband is a good man and they manage to support themselves.

My husband really takes care of me. He works—gardens—we always go to our garden. It's very big and we grow corn, cassava, bananas and sweet potatoes. We take our produce to Ainaro to sell, and we also eat some. All our small children are able to go to school.

Agripina also weaves *tais* and sells them at the market for about US \$25. ACbit has helped her buy weaving equipment, as well as some household items such as sleeping mats. When they first visited Agripina she and her family were sleeping on an old tarp from the International Organization for Migration.

ANA MARIA PEREIRA: DISABLED FROM TORTURE

Agripina's sister-in-law, Ana Maria Pereira Soares still carries the physical impact of severe torture more than 20 years ago. She lives alone in a small house made out of palm leaves, in a compound owned by her niece. Her house has no furniture, save for a simple wooden day bed. When she returned home from West Timor after the violence of 1999, all her possessions had been burned and looted.

In 1991 the Mahidi "Volunteers," a precursor to the militia group formed before the 1999 referendum, found out about the clandestine activities of Ana and her husband. Her husband escaped but Ana was caught on 8 November 1991 and detained, interrogated and brutally tortured in Cassa.

I was detained because they accused me of telling my husband to run into the forest. They took me to the field and tied me to my sister-in-law, Agripina, under the flagpole. There were also other people from the village, including Kasno, Guido, Joaquim, Jaime, and Margarida....

After they tied us, they tortured us by hitting, kicking, punching and slapping our faces while we were bound to each other. They also kicked us, so we were rolling on the floor, and then they stepped on us. My women friends and I, we could not bear the pain. We urinated without even realizing it. My face was swollen, my nose bloodied. From my fingers to my shoulder were swollen because they were tied for too long. Although we cried until we lost our breath, they did not care about us.

The night after she was released a Timorese militia member Eusebio came to look for Ana Maria.

They released us and we went back to our homes. In the middle of the night a soldier named Eusebio called for me. My mother,



Ana in front of her house.

father, nephews and other family cried. I just thought that they were taking me to kill me. There were no lights, it was really dark. Eusebio took me to a house at the edge of the street and pushed me inside. He took off my clothes and raped me. After that Pak Broto [a soldier] raped me. He [Eusebio] then took me home. Out the front of my house he threatened me, "Don't tell anyone about this, if I later hear someone talking about this, you have to die and I will throw you off Builico". I just kept quiet and cried. I was so upset and crying, my younger sibling said to me, "Be patient. What was most important is that you survived. What happened was because of the war."

Mahidi militia acted with complete impunity, under the protection of the military. But what hurt Ana the most was her husband's betrayal:

Before my husband ran to the forest [in 1991] he asked me to wait for him. He promised that he would come back to me. But he never came back, even now that I am as old as this. Even though I became this way because of him.

He came out of the forest and went to Ainaro and married another woman and stayed there. We never had children so maybe that is the reason he married someone else.

Her husband assisted her by acting as her witness at the Veteran's office and Ana qualified for veteran support. She received a one-time payment of about one

thousand dollars, but the money quickly ran out. As a poor single woman who depends on her family for a place to live, she had little power to make decisions about the use of the money she received.

From the money I received, I put some aside to repair my parents' grave. The rest ended up being borrowed by my family members.



Ana's fingers still do not function normally due to the torture. She is unable to weave a whole *tais*, and instead she buys them from someone else, adds some decorations, and sells the product. When she sells her weaving, she keeps enough to buy yarn for her next piece, buying food with whatever remains. She has received some assistance to buy weaving equipment from ACbit. She also receives an elderly pension every six months of US \$30 per month.

Sometimes I cannot sleep soundly because my mind feels full. I wake up in the middle of the night, and remember that bitter experience. When that happens, I just cry and cry, especially since both my parents have passed away.

When the group shared important objects to their story, she brought out the sarong that she wore when she was captured, and her wedding ring.

This ring is a memento of my husband and me, a sign of my love for him. Life is not fair. I live like an animal that crawls on the ground. My life is difficult, I don't have a decent house and I don't want to live with my niece because she has a large family to take care of.

One day she ran out of food, and walked for almost three days to her relative's house in Hataudo. But the trip was for nothing, as the family she visited had little food for themselves. When she returned, her neighbor helped her.

Ana feels lighter for sharing her story and is supported by some of the women in her group. She also keeps up her spirits by working hard to survive.

*I get strength from having to make *tais* to sell, fetching water for cooking, asking my family for food when I don't have any, and raising chickens and pigs which I sell when I don't have money, spending some on food and some on ceremony.*

MARTINHA ARAÚJO: CHILDREN ARE HER SOURCE OF STRENGTH

Martinha inside her house.

In 1975 when Martinha da Conceição Araújo's step-parents were killed she luckily was not at home. She had heard people outside her house saying that her husband was a soldier in Dili and they would come back the next night for her. The next night she was gone, she packed her things and left. Martinha's husband died in the forest and she does not know where or how he died. She was raped by members of the Indonesian military and civil defense forces. She had two children born of this torture.

Martinha has received some support from the Veteran's office and has used the money to send her children to school, but she was not satisfied with the amount. She has also received assistance from ACbit to open a small kiosk which supplements the money she earns from sewing, embroidery, crochet, and weaving *tais* to sustain her and her children. However, she is often ill and is unable to work as hard as she used to.

We women still have not seen justice, and I don't only keep struggling for myself, but for all the women who have suffered like me, but until now there is no justice or recognition from the government.

But when I remember all my suffering, I see the face of my children and that makes me happy, they are my strength.

RITA BARROS: LOST FAMILY TO THE CLIFFS OF BUILICO



Rita inside the house she used to live in.

My father was killed in 1986. Three of my uncles were the first people taken and thrown off the cliffs at Builico, known as 'Jakarta 2'. My aunt went to look for them at Koramil and they told her 'Your three older brothers have been sent to school in Jakarta to become Hansip'. It turned out they had already been killed by being thrown into the ravine. My aunt is now old, she is lame and suffers, she has to walk really far to sell the produce from her garden at the market. No one pays attention to my aunt. There is no justice for my family. Luckily I earn enough to care for my own to children and support my aunt.

223

PRISCA CONCEIÇÃO'S: HER HUSBAND'S KILLER FREED

On 4 September 1999, after hearing the results of the referendum, 10 of my family members were gathered at my house. Two sisters-in-law, my older sister, my husband and five children....In the middle of the night we heard people [Mahidi militia] outside surrounding our house. I asked my husband, "Do you think the police will come and protect us? What should we do? Where can we go if they burn down our house?" My husband shouted out and they answered, "Why don't you come outside?" My husband became afraid. Not long afterwards they burnt down our traditional house (rumah adat), which was close to the kitchen, and then they doused our house with petrol and the fire grew. I said to my husband "If we don't go outside we will be burned alive!"



Her husband's grave.

Prisca da Conceição's husband ran out of the house and was shot:

My husband was shot right in front of the kitchen door. He was still able to speak to me: "Don't come outside, I've been shot." I answered, "I don't care, if you die then I want to die together." Then I went outside to see my husband.

They definitely had a plan to kill my husband. My youngest child cried, scared, and called me to come back inside. Paulino [a relative] checked on my husband then became frightened and ran off to the forest, leaving us alone. We were four women who were already old and not strong enough to lift my husband's body lying on the ground. The fire was still burning. I sat by my husband's body until morning. At about 5 a.m. I went inside and found a tais to cover his body.

The militia came back with a car to collect her husband's body. Prisca protested and begged them to leave him so he could be buried properly. When they threatened to kill her too, she watched them take her husband's body away.

They took my husband's body to a river and threw him on the ground then they used a loader to cover his body with earth.

That day Prisca and her family were forced to cross the border into Betun-Atambua. After INTERFET arrived in Timor-Leste one of her children looked for them at the border. Her children had been able to find out where her husband had been buried

and retrieve his body. Her house survived the fire but all their possessions were looted.

One of the six people that took her husband's body has come back to Timor-Leste and was tried in Dili. In 2002 the Serious Crimes Unit brought her to Dili to attend the trial. He was the only one who was tried and he served two years in jail. He received a presidential pardon and returned to Cassa.



Prisca makes a living by weaving *tais*.

Prisca has strived to rebuild her life after losing her husband. Even though her house was ransacked she is lucky to own it and the surrounding land as well as rice fields. She also raises pigs, goats, cows and chickens, has a small kiosk and weaves *tais*. She has also received a veteran's payment every month since 2006. She puts the payment of US\$260 in the bank, and uses it for her children and "to make a grave for my husband's body so he can rest in peace." Her children and grandchildren are a major source of strength for her.

When I first got back from Betun and saw the condition of our house I was devastated. But my children who are all grown up support me. I have many grandchildren and they sometimes help me to forget what happened.

She also tracked down a child that her husband had with another woman and adopted her as her own.

My husband had a child out of marriage. When I heard that that woman was pregnant and had a baby I went to her to persuade her to let me adopt the child as my own. I never took revenge towards her but I was angry at my husband. Now, that girl always takes care of me.

Prisca keeps her husband's traditional clothing to remember him.

I kept the traditional clothing that he used to wear to ceremonies or formal occasions. I packed it and took it with me to Betun. Sometimes I get sad and I cry when I look at these clothes.

I feel happy because my children are grown, some have work and some work in their gardens, I also have many grandchildren. I have tried to persuade my children to wear their fathers clothes but they say they are old people's clothes. At my age I can only enjoy things, because I feel that throughout my life my children have always looked after me.

LINA MAGNO: A TEACHER TARGETED



Lina in front of her house.

Lina Magno is a teacher. She married an Indonesian teacher from West Timor in 1986 but he passed away two years later. Lina had already lost her father in 1981 and her older and younger brothers are all missing.

In 1991 when the Volunteers were terrorizing the population, she was repeatedly interrogated to determine her political leanings. She was released after being forced to take an oath of allegiance to Indonesia by drinking blood.

On 18 December 1991 we walked to Ainaro to a school and undertook a "blood oath" where crowds of us from all areas had to kiss the Indonesian flag and have our fingers pricked with a needle. Our blood was collected in a glass and we all had to drink it to show we were pro-Indonesian. Only God knew and ourselves knew what we really thought.

Although people thought Lina was pro-Indonesia until 1999, she was actually supporting the guerilla forces in the forest. In 1999 she was forced to report daily and was detained and interrogated.

In 1999 the situation was chaotic, I had to report daily because I was a teacher. They always reminded me to stick to the curriculum and not teach my students about politics...Even though we answered [the milita's] questions they still didn't believe us and they told me to write a statement and sign it, in relation to 12 November (the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili) when a pastor and the youth were brave enough to hold a demonstration. A soldier approached me and kicked me and was about to do something else criminal, but because my son was with me nothing happened to me...I was the only teacher in the area so I was always interrogated and accused of being anti-Indonesian. I tried to trick them and say, "My husband is Indonesian, so how could I be anti-Indonesia?" But in my heart I was against Indonesia...There wasn't a day when I wasn't interrogated. I was forbidden to teach. I said "Teaching is my profession--where will I get food and drink." I can sew and weave tais but who would buy that?

While waiting for the results of the 1999 referendum Lina and her family packed some clothes and documents, ready to leave quickly. They had already heard what might happen and by 4th September houses were already being burned, and animals being killed. Lina and her family fled to Kupang, using connections to evade the militia.

After I received my husband's pension (a one-off payment) of Rp 400,000 I gave some money to those that had helped us to escape and return to Timor in safety.

Lina lives in a simple house and tends her garden and rice fields. She still teaches senior high school in Cassa and received a small one-off payment from the veterans fund. She is content living simply because her two children have been able to continue their education. One son studied medicine in Cuba.

My house is just like this [indicating] because I must provide a living to my two children myself, so I just submit to God. When I got my pension I renovated my house.

JULIETA DA COSTA: A DEDICATED MOTHER



228

In 1975, Julieta da Conceição da Costa went with her father, brothers and sisters to the forest. Her mother died when Julieta was a young child. Out of nine siblings, five died from hunger in the forest. Julieta and her family were not captured by the Indonesians but were asked to come down from the mountains to Cassa by the village chief Mateus.

Julieta was young but she still remembers when the Indonesian soldiers came to their house looking for chickens. Julieta and her sisters hid inside the house, but the soldiers came every night and peeked in the windows at them. Julieta and her sisters couldn't sleep and were very frightened.

My father went to Mateus's son Benjamin to ask for help so our lives would not be disturbed any more. Then my father brought money and a cow to them.

Before she married her husband, Armando, in 1982 he had often been imprisoned and beaten by members of the battalion Lino 700. They had two children together but one died at birth. In 1986, when she was five months pregnant with their second child, her husband was killed.

The military captured my husband and said they were taking him to control the situation, but they took him to the mountains. He was tortured, beaten, and kicked until his bones were broken and he vomited blood. He was released and walked back home bleeding and sore. When I saw him I could only cry and could not speak because I was so scared. I treated his wounds with traditional medicines, but he didn't get better. Everyday he vomited blood and couldn't eat, and then he died.

Three months before, her father had also died at the hands of the Indonesian military. He was captured on his way to his garden and taken to the subdistrict military command, tied up with three friends at a flag pole and beaten, kicked and skewered with sharp weapons. Julieta was summoned by two relatives who worked for the Indonesian military to bring food to her father at the army post. Her brother bargained for his release with gold coins, but due to lack of medical treatment he died soon after.



Julieta in front of her house.

As a single mother she worked hard to support her son and give him an education. When he was still in high school in Ainaro, Julieta carried and sold *kangkung* (water spinach) at Ainaro market, one bunch for 5 cents. She gave the money to her son to buy whatever small things he needed.

Julieta was very fortunate to inherit one hectare of rice fields from her father. She employs people to work on the land and also grows vegetables to sustain herself. She takes pride in her ability to take responsibility for herself and her son.

I have a lot of family, but they all have their own family and children who need their attention. Everyone has their own lives. I have never asked for help from them. I try myself to be responsible for my child.

I try to be independent and earn a living, gardening and paying someone to help me plant my rice fields and make a fish pond. Part of what I earn I use to buy food and the rest goes to school fees for my child. He has already graduated university.

She has received offers of marriage but feels a responsibility to her child. She also thinks about her husband.

One thing from my husband which I keep is a watch, if it breaks I send my son to go and fix it. I also keep photos and some items of clothing.

JACINTA DE ARAÚJO: OFFERING OUR SUFFERING TO GOD



Jacinta in front of her house

From 1975 Jacinta de Araújo was in the forest for three years, moving from place to place to seek safety. Her task was to cook for the guerillas. But her group became exhausted from lack of food and were caught by the Indonesians:

I was fourteen, but my body was very thin and small. My clothes were threadbare; my mind was that of a child.

They were taken to a military post at Unil Mountain in the afternoon and that night she was forcibly taken from her parents:

I was taken outside to an open space to be gang-raped by the TNI and Hansip. When they took me they threatened my parents with weapons, my parents could only sit and look at me, silent and crying.

At the time I thought they were taking me to kill me, I didn't

think anything else. First they frisked me because they were suspicious that I carried a weapon or grenade from Fretilin, then they threatened me, saying "Don't scream, Maubere." The first person raped me, after that another came and pulled me to a different place and raped me again, then another came and pulled me to the flag pole and raped me again. Other soldiers and Hansip watched and laughed, others waited their turn to rape me until morning. They treated me like an animal, like a dog or goat. I couldn't handle the pain so I screamed and cried.

As the sun was rising Jacinta was carried back to her parents, unable to walk after the assault. Once back in Cassa her parents looked after her and treated her wounds with traditional medicine. Jacinta remembers other women had been raped, but they have chosen to keep quiet because they feel ashamed.

Only one other woman and myself have spoken out about what happened. It was not our fault; it was because of the war.

One year later she married a man who knew about her suffering and accepted her:

My husband understood. He knew about the violence I experienced and still accepted me as his wife. He says that it wasn't my choice, I wasn't looking for men. It was because of the war. Women face the war by experiencing (violence) like this, while men carry guns. My husband accepted me, and we offer our suffering to God.

Jacinta is hurt that she has only received a small sum from the veterans fund and feels there is a lack of recognition of what she went through:

I tried to submit my papers but only received veteran support for one year. I didn't receive it again. It hurts my heart. I was treated like an animal, and now I see others who didn't experience violence the way I did, who did not support Falintil, they have received more money and a high level of recognition.

Jacinta still carries the trauma of what happened to her and finds it hard to sleep.

That place gives me pain when I remember the past, how they treated me and other women like animals. I have never been back and never want to see it again. I would rather die.

Sometimes when I find it difficult to sleep or when I dream about what happened I feel sad. Many people say our struggle in 1975 had no meaning, these words really hurt me. Who did I suffer for?

Jacinta's eight living children are all grown up now. She and her husband were unable to send all their children to school with their income from their garden and rice fields. She also weaves *tais*, especially for customers who appreciate the high quality of Timor-Leste's weavers.

LUCIA BIANCO: LIVING IN PEACE

Lucia Bianco's husband was a civil servant under the Indonesians, while also working for the clandestine movement since he was in junior high school. In 1999 he planned to bring Lucia and their one-year-old child from Ainaro to Dili so he could attend civil servant training. They stopped in Cassa for a short rest:

It was 2 p.m. and we had just arrived, had lunch and settled down to rest when four armed militia members came with two weapons and called my husband. Two came to call for my husband and two were pushing our motorbike away. They took my husband to the village meeting house and beat and tortured him for four nights.

The next day Lucia was called to the meeting house. There was a crowd when she got there. The militia had killed her cousin, and her family was trying to find her body.

Once at the meeting house [the militia] ordered me to look at my husband. They had beaten him and kicked him until one of his teeth was loose, his face was swollen, they had burned him with cigarettes. The food I had sent him they had poisoned, and my husband had seen and didn't want to eat it. When I visited him, my husband asked me to throw the food into the river, he asked me not to take it home for the children or give it to the animals.

Her husband asked her to go to the Mahidi commander Nemezio's house to ask for help. Lucia was worried that if he didn't get treatment soon, he would die.

I thought if he sleeps like that, without treatment, he could die. So my husband asked me to go to Nemezio's house. I was so scared to go alone as the situation was really difficult, especially as a woman.... I walked alone into the interrogation hall.



There were so many people.... I saw the commander of Mahidi, Nemezio, and the village head.

...I approached Nemezio and told him "I want to tell you that us little people do not know anything, if you want to kill my my husband it is better they should just kill him rather than let him suffer". Nemezio told me to sit down.... I waited for a long time, I was so scared, many people left and I was alone with Nemezio and two soldiers.

Lucia waited until night, and then Nemezio told her to go tell a number of people to come and meet with him, including the traditional leader (*ketua adat*). The next morning Lucia and many others went to the meeting hall and they were ordered to make and sign a statement that Timor-Leste must remain with Indonesia. Her husband was freed and he went straight to Dili by bus, with Lucia and her children following him. She was forced to report to the district military commander on the way, and swore to herself they would never come back to Ainaro: "It is better to die in Dili."

Since independence, Lucia and her husband have managed to get their life back to normal. Her husband is a project manager and they mostly rely on his income. They own a large house, rice fields and gardens in Cassa and have six small children. Lucia also weaves *tais*.

I can live peacefully now, my husband has received a payment as a veteran. We built our house and even though it isn't perfect, we can live happily. The money my husband received is enough for our daily needs....

Before we couldn't live in peace because we moved from one place to another. Now I am relieved because we have a permanent house and are children can all go to school.

Chapter 14

Bobonaro: On the Border of Grief and Hope

Even before the full scale invasion, the Indonesian armed forces, working together with Timorese 'partisans', seized territory near the border and conducted air, naval and land attacks on the Fretilin forces.¹²² Civilians fled to the mountains, abandoning crops, livestock and food stocks. Many from the district capital of Maliana fled across the border to West Timor to the outskirts of Atambua, returning after a year to find their houses destroyed. As with the rest of Timor-Leste, the result of these attacks and the inability to farm was widespread famine in the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹²³

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s armed resistance continued, supported by the clandestine movement. The Indonesian military in Bobonaro district responded harshly, often targeting families and communities for collective punishment. Women were often the victims of this backlash.

Survivors from Bobonaro sharing their memory boxes.



In the lead up to the August 1999 referendum, the Indonesian armed forces began to mobilize local militia groups across Timor Leste. In Bobonaro a well-developed network of militia was established, with the support of Indonesian military and civilian authorities, under the command of Joao Tavares, leader of the elite Halilintar (Thunderbolt) paramilitary. Halilintar was first established in 1975 at the time of the Indonesian invasion, revitalized in the mid-1990s, and by 1999 had a membership of 120 men and the full backing of the Indonesian armed forces. Beneath Halilintar were several militia groups established in 1999 with at least one for each of Bobonaro's six sub districts. These groups included Dadarus Merah Putih (Red and White Typhoon) in Maliana, who played a central role in the notorious massacre at the Maliana Police Station.¹²⁴

This attack took place on September 8 1999 at the police station where hundreds of people had taken refuge after the vote. In full view of the Indonesian police, militia and soldiers in ninja masks used machetes and knives to kill 14 people targeted for their pro-independence stance or connections. A further 13 people were tracked down the following day and killed in the nearby village of Mula'u.¹²⁵

Violence by militia groups and the armed forces throughout Bobonaro district in 1999 left as many as 300 people dead, with many others beaten, tortured, and forcibly relocated. Sexual violence including rape and sexual slavery were also reported, and property destruction was widespread, with an estimated 13,000 houses destroyed.¹²⁶

One of the 13 women from Bobonaro who shared their stories detailed how she devoted her life to achieving independence, and has been recognized as a veteran, yet still faces discrimination in her own community. Of the 12 other women who participated in the research, 10 lost their husbands, and two lost children in 1999. The UN Serious Crimes Unit has interviewed six of the women but only one case led to a conviction and the results have been unsatisfactory to all. These women describe what it was like to look for the remains of loved ones, bury them, and then gather up their surviving children and muster the strength to move forward.

Even after independence, the women feel that for them, justice remains unattainable. They feel the punishments given to the perpetrators who murdered their family members are not commensurate with the seriousness of the crimes, and many perpetrators openly walk free today. Meanwhile, the victims of their crimes struggle to survive economically and to support their children. Some face the sting of discrimination from their husbands' families, who claim land and veterans payouts from their daughters-in-law who are viewed as "fallen women" because of their abuse.

In the face of this impunity and daily struggle to survive, the women have sought solidarity through *Nove Nove*, a widows group they set up and named after the date they lost their husbands (the ninth month of 1999). The group runs a cooperative in the Maliana market where members can meet for business or share experiences and talk.

IRIA MONIZ: FACING DOUBT AS A VETERAN



236

I'm sad and hurt. I suffered for this nation but the struggle of women is not valued by men.

Iria Boedasi Moniz was fifteen in 1975. Like many other young women, she was active in OPMT, cooking for the rebel fighters in the mountains and working for independence. As the invasion intensified, her family fled to the mountains around Marobo. She remembers carrying 12 plates and a liter of cooking oil. She also recalls seeing a guerilla being shot by the Indonesian military, and her father ripping off some of her clothes to stop the bleeding.

The military captured them in 1976 in Marobo. Two of her uncles were killed. The group was forced to walk all the way to the church in Maliana where they were held for five months:

It was difficult to find food there. Every day we ate taro mixed with leaves. Sometimes we had to go and look for cassava and taro leaves. Many people died because they got sick.

They were moved to a site where the Indonesians had prepared accommodation made from grass that leaked when it rained. They ultimately moved back to their village of Marobo, but life was still difficult due to lack of food.

Iria graduated from high school but remained committed to the resistance. She never married because she thought it would interfere with her ability to serve the cause. She recalls attending a meeting in 1993 with senior Falintil commanders on Loelaco Mountain where they ordered her to take charge of OPMT and gave her the code name *Santa Isabel*.



They ordered me to sew an emblem with the words “Falintil National Heroes Die for Timor Leste, Suffering of the Maubere People, Live or Die for Independence” as well as embroider 12 tais with the Fretilin flag.

In 1994 she spent five months in the mountains but was captured by the Indonesians. She was taken to the sub-district military command and later District Military Command 1636 Maliana. Over the next nine months she was beaten, kicked, given electric shocks, brutally tortured with lit cigarettes, sexually harassed, and raped. She was forced to clean the inside of a room and yard at the District Military Command in her underwear.

I lost count of how many times they kissed me. I lost count of how many times they put out their cigarettes on my nipples. I lost count of how many times they burnt my navel. They played with us like we were prostitutes.

She was released and arrested again in 1995 with 31 others, held in the Bobonaro sub-district military command for 15 days and questioned daily. In 1996 she was held and tortured at the district military command in Maliana and in 1998 she was detained in Marobo, held for 22 days and brutally gang-raped. At one point during the ordeal she thought about grabbing the gun of one of the soldiers, but thought about what could happen to her family and decided against it. She returned to the forest in April 1998.



Iria in front of her house.

Violence has had a profound and traumatic impact on Iria. She didn't vote in the 1999 referendum, preferring the safety of the forest.

In 1999 I didn't want to go near any Indonesian soldiers. I also stayed far from my family because I was so traumatized from what happened to me. I went with the guerillas to the mountains.

She evaded a group of militia on 15 September 1999 by escaping through a window. Despite falling and breaking her wrist, she made it to the forest and her Fretilin comrades.

Despite the sacrifices Iria has made for her country, she has found it difficult to secure work with the police force or the army:

I've applied for many jobs but I have been unsuccessful. I have no qualifications and people say you need them these days...It is important the state opens its eyes to the struggles that I face. I am still surviving, but my life is not good.

Iria faces discrimination from her family and community in Marobo, who dispute that she deserves recognition, saying she is only a woman and a rape victim, not a veteran:

I worked at the frontline of the clandestine movement to provide information and raise funds for Falintil. The Indonesian military knew what I was doing and captured and punished me. I suffered many things, detention and even rape. It was a long struggle until Timor-Leste independence. I organized my documents and the government recognized my suffering as an ex-combatant in the category of 8-14 years. The community in Marobo, especially one man, did not agree with the outcome and kicked me to the ground in front of many people. I reported the case to the police, local authorities and NGOs but I never received a verdict.

The women of Timor Leste should demand justice for their contribution to the struggle for independence. If there is no justice, it is like we are not recognized and our contribution is not seen as important.

Iria is committed to sharing her story openly and gave testimony at a public hearing of the Timor Leste Commission for reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) in Maliana in 2004.

In the face of discrimination and hardship, Iria forges ahead; she is enrolled at a university in Maliana. She supports herself and pays for her school with her monthly pension and through the sale of produce from her garden and rice field, raising pigs and sometimes weaving *tais*.

DOMINGAS MONIZ: A DOUBLE LIFE QUESTIONED



Domingas earns her living by sewing.

Domingas Moniz's husband was a soldier with the Indonesian military, based in Maliana. Members of his own battalion killed him in 1999 because he had been working for the resistance, distributing information, food and clothing as well as helping detainees by providing food and even helping them to escape. His colleagues had become increasingly suspicious. On 8 September a fellow soldier stabbed him:

He returned to our house badly injured, at that time we lived in the military boarding house. I cried and screamed when I saw the state he was in. I asked him what happened but he couldn't answer because he was finding it difficult to breathe.

Her husband died in Atambua before they could get him to a hospital. A day later his body was taken back over the border and buried in Aidabaleta village in Atabae subdistrict. Domingas spent three days there attending funeral ceremonies then returned to Atambua for one year, until she received his pension.

When Domingas returned to Timor Leste she had Rp. 250,000 (about US\$25) to open a small business selling eggs and kerosene, and sewing and selling second hand clothes to support her children. She also raises chickens and pigs. She owns her house and a garden. Her income is inconsistent, making it difficult for her to pay school fees. As a result, two of her five children dropped out of school. However, two of her sons finished senior high school and her daughter is at university.

Many people do not believe that her husband worked for the resistance. She heard people gossip when she organised the paperwork for her husband's Timorese pension, saying she shouldn't accept the money.

I don't think there is any justice. At first when I wanted to join the widow's group Nove Nove in Maliana, many people spoke against me and insulted me, saying my husband was pro-Indonesian. I have several witnesses who know about my husband's work for Falintil.

The widow's group now accepts her but rumors still circulate in the community. Domingas' hopes for the future are her children's safety and recognition for her husband.

I hope that there is no more war so my children can go to school and fulfill their dreams. I also hope the government recognizes that my husband gave his blood for this nation. Our suffering has to stop here.

**ANA PAULA XIMENES:
PERPETRATORS CONVICTED THEN FREED**



Ana Paula Soares Ximenes is from Baucau. She met her husband Augusto while studying in Quelecai. They moved to Lolotoe in Bobonaro district, where they worked as teachers and had two boys and two girls.

In 1999, when violence erupted after the referendum, the family went to hide in the mountains. On 15 September, Ana Paula and Augusto heard it was safe to go home:

That afternoon my husband called me over in our hiding place and said, "Let's just go home because Falintil are already there." At that time I was scared and didn't want to go but he said, "Eh, let's just go, what are we hiding for?" He called my nephew and my child, and I ended up carrying my young child and we all returned home. All my family was at the house, we cooked and ate together. We didn't see that the militia were hiding in an abandoned building spying on us. The information that we had received was not correct; Falintil had run and were hiding in the forest because they were scared. There were militia all over the town.

When they woke early the next morning, their house was surrounded:

My husband sat down and calmed himself, he did not say anything, and then he took a blanket to cover himself as he walked out of the house. The militia saw him and immediately asked for the motorbike key. My husband said, "Here is the key, but please don't kill me." They left on the motorbike. Some other militia pulled the blanket off and began beating his body, punching, kicking; my husband against them. Then one militia cut my husband. He tried to run away but they shot him from behind and he immediately fell in the coffee plantation.

Then the militia came into the house and started asking me about money: "Where is the money from Indonesia?" I said, "We have not received any money, there is no money." They tore all our things apart. A statue of Mother Mary and a cross fell onto the ground. One militia wanted to kill me, I held on to their legs and begged them, "Please do not kill us!"

They took Ana Paula and her children to the church where she overheard them saying they would kill her too. She seized an opportunity to escape with her children.

I heard them saying, "We already shot him dead. His wife has a big mouth, we should go and kill her." When they looked at me in the church, I ran with my children into the forest.

Her nine-year old daughter disappeared from her side but Ana Paula later found her in the coffee plantation.

I saw her crying and calling for her father to escape to the forest, but he was already dead, with blood trickling out of his mouth.

The UN Serious Crimes Unit later investigated her husband's case and she provided testimony.

I attended the trial in Dili; the people who killed my husband were sentenced to 10 years in jail. It hurt me when I heard their sentence. They should have received a longer sentence because they did something so wicked.

The perpetrators are now free. Ana Paula also feels sorry for her friends who have not yet received justice.

I hope that there will be justice for all my friends who also lost their brothers and sisters, children, and husbands during the 1999 conflict. I want the government of this country to take good care of all the victims of 1999 and their families, because they are just innocents who suffered because of the politics of the leaders.



Ana Paula with her children.

Ana Paula faces abuse and harsh treatment from her husband's family. When she received his veteran's payment that she planned to use for her children's education, her husband's family disputed her claim and insulted her. Ana Paula remains defiant that she and her children have a right to the benefit.

Some family members are OK towards me but others are not because of the money. From now I want to live free from all intimidation.

She also faces problems over land she and her husband were given when he was alive. His parents claimed the land in Lolotoe and Ana lost her rights to the land, having to move with her children to Maliana.

Even though my husband died I considered my husband's family my own and continued to live with them. They never speak directly to me, they always treat me badly and mock and berate

me. I'm really hurt and I cry because the family doesn't respect my children or me. We moved to Maliana and I continue my work as a teacher to support and educate my children.

Ana also tries to help other women in similar situations to her. She is active in the widow's group Nove Nove and also advocates for women in Lolotoe.

JUVITA SALDANHA: A DAUGHTER LOST



Juvita inside her house.

On 10 September 1999 after the referendum results had been announced, the militia and Indonesian military attacked Juvita Saldanha's village of Lourba:

The militia came from everywhere, burning houses as they went. We couldn't move; we had to steel ourselves for death; we were trapped. My two-year-old daughter was with my husband and oldest son and they were hiding in the forest. Lucinda, Afina and I were hiding in the garden near the house.

I held my children's hands as the militia chased us, and then one grabbed Lucinda's hair and stabbed her from behind, right through her chest. She immediately fell to the ground. I heard her cry out "Mama!" as I stood up and grabbed my Afina's hand. The militia came toward us and pulled Afina away from me. I was terrified standing in front of them, seeing my child already lying on the ground. I had a bag with me with sacred customary objects made of gold owned by my ancestors. I gave it to them

and pleaded with them saying, “Take this and don’t rape my child.” They refused saying: “Tonight we want to kill and eat you, we don’t want your things!”

Juvita grabbed Afina’s hand and ran for their house. The militia shot at them and Juvita was hit straight through her thigh. In the chaos she was separated from her daughter who ran to the rice field. Juvita had lost a lot of blood, so ripped her shirt and used it to bandage her thigh.

Juvita came out of hiding when she thought it was safe and went to her house to find Afina. She found her lying on the ground and thought she was dead, until she heard her call out “Mama”. Her face and body were covered in blood: the militia had cut her mouth with a knife.

We were scared so that night we lay down Lucinda’s body and covered her, as well as my sister and her husband who had been killed in their home, with zinc sheeting. Then we ran away to the forest. I pulled out the bullet in my thigh with my bare hands and used traditional medicine.

When INTERFET entered Bobonaro, Juvita came out of the forest to look for Lucinda’s body. She only found her skull, which she recognized from the hair, and a few bones. Juvita finds strength in prayer so that her children can sleep in peace and that those still alive can find happiness.

I get strength from praying to God, that my child is resting in peace, which helps us who are still living. I have tried to be strong but it is so hard to forget her.

Juvita’s husband died a few years ago from illness. She supports herself and her children with a small kiosk, which was supported initially in 2001 by Fokupers/ACbit. She brings items on horseback for sale to markets in Bobonaro and Hauba, and raises pigs and cows, but is too weak to work in her garden now and often falls sick.

Her daughter Afina has a scholarship from the Alola Foundation to attend UNPAZ in Dili, and the school in the village is named after Lucinda.



Juvita at Bobonaro market.

The case of her daughter's death was taken to court and the perpetrator was sentenced to eight years in jail, but Juvita never got clear information about the outcome.

I felt hurt when people from the UN Serious Crimes Unit came to transfer her bones and interview me without any results....We have had independence for 10 years already, but it is not clear about the perpetrators who killed my daughter. I don't know if he is in jail or he is free; no one told us. It's not fair because they were sacrificed for independence and they exchanged life for the flag. Xanana never asked about us. My family suffers and died for nothing. Even their names were put on the bottom of the pile and destroyed [referring to her brother's application for veterans assistance]. It's not clear. How do the people who killed my family just go free?

My life is ok, but I feel the loss of my family members. I am sad because they are dead. Why was my daughter killed like an animal, and my brother as well? There is no justice. I make myself busy to forget.

ANGELA: A FORGOTTEN HERO

I was raped by the militia in 1999. What hurt even more was that my uncle was one of the perpetrators. My husband knew about what happened and always supported me through difficult times. When I found it difficult to sleep because of the memories of that incident, he told me to not think of it anymore and let it go.

Throughout the occupation Angela Soares was working to support resistance fighters in the forest. When she went to her gardens she would hide ammunition and weapons in baskets of food, filling them up with firewood on her return to avoid suspicion.

On 16 May 1999, as tensions mounted, militia members walked around Angela's village in Lolotoe sub-district, shouting out to people to gather at the house of a man named Jacob:

The militia were also carrying weapons and they called me over and asked, "Who is named Luisa?" I raised my hand. There are people who call me Luisa. I surrendered then so that others would not be captured. The militia said to me "We have to prepare your clothes now because Commander Joao already knows your name and has ordered me to summon you." I was taken to Lolotoe, and then they brought Isabel and Laurinda.

The three women were locked in the office of PKK with 10 other men and women. They were held there from May to August, closely guarded and unable to talk freely. Some of the older men were beaten and one had his ears cut off. The women were verbally abused and feared for their lives. At one point the Red Cross moved them from the PKK building to the room of Jose Franca after they visited.



They separated the three of us. We whispered to each other, they wanted to shoot us, we could only submit. We stayed in one room all together. We stayed there two to three weeks. During this time one of us was forced to become the "wife" of one of the militia members to save her own life.

The perpetrators were men known to them. One of them was Angela's uncle, Fransisco, and another was the sub district military commander named Bambang. The women were told to attend a ceremony in Ai Asa. Fearing for their lives, they went with the men. They were taken to Atambua in West Timor where they stayed for three nights in a hotel. Each woman was matched up with a member of the militia:

The first night we were all put in one room. The next night they began to separate us and after that we slept separately. During the journey the three of us had each been paired with a man, Bambang with Laurinda, Isabel with Fransisco and me with Mouzinho. We didn't know what they wanted with us, whether they wanted to be our boyfriends or, I don't know....

Chico [her uncle Fransisco] said, "My sister, we are in a state of war. Whether you live or die you have to accept it. You are my blood relative, however in this situation, what can we do?" After he said that I was sad and cried. The situation was really tense. The three of us were guarded so closely by the soldier, Bambang. Once we arrived in Atambua we were terrified. I was so scared there and I cried but could only surrender to God Almighty as

long as I was still alive. I just whispered in my heart. I was not brave enough to speak. They all carried guns and pistols.

Before raping them, Fransisco administered contraception by injection to Isabel and Laurinda but Angela refused.

Before they gave the medicine they told us, "If we do something you will not conceive." We were helpless; if they meant pregnancy or not, we could only submit. We couldn't leave the hotel because we were tightly guarded. After we were raped for three nights, they took us back at night through Lebos until we arrived in Lolotoe in the middle of the night.

They were detained again at the PKK office in Lolotoe for 10 days then told to go home. To add to their pain, at home they faced mockery and rejection from some members of the community.

When we returned some people rejected us and some even cursed us.... Some told us we got what we deserved because we'd cooked and supplied food to the guerillas.

Despite what they went through, the women continued to bring food to those still in the forest. Although it was dangerous Angela felt she had nothing to lose because the women's names were already on a list of subversives that was displayed at the sub district military command in Maliana.

Just before the referendum, Angela recalls being forced by Indonesian soldiers to take an oath to Indonesia by drinking goat blood. Armed militia and soldiers began a door-to-door operation, burning documents from Falintil and destroying property. On 30 August, Angela voted and then went straight to the forest to hide.

Later, Angela took the bold step of sharing her story, leading to a UN-led investigation and ultimately a conviction of rape as a crime against humanity in the Serious Crimes Court in Dili. In 2003, the two Timorese militia members, Fransisco and Mouzinho, were convicted. However, they were granted a presidential pardon in 2008. The Indonesian commander remains across the border in Indonesia, out of reach of justice.

Ultimately Angela found happiness with a man who accepted her past. However, he already had a wife and she faced the judgment of her community again. They now have three children and together try to support them to go to school.

Angela often reflects on what happened to her and her friends.

I try and forget everything but it is very difficult. I tell the story to my children. I don't want this to be forgotten. I want my children to know the history of my suffering.

I was really sad when I heard that Isabel, my friend who was also raped, had died. I remember when we used to sit together, we would remember what had happened in the past and we would cry. We always gave each other strength. Now I just hope that the government will pay attention to victims who are still suffering.

BENDITA BUICAU: DENIED RECOGNITION

In 1999, the situation became increasingly dangerous in Bendita Buicau's village, Tunubibi. The *Besi Merah Putih* militia (Red and White Iron) militia were carrying out attacks and burning houses. Bendita, her husband and five children fled to Memo and sought refuge with the former district head.

On 7 September, Bendita's husband went to check on their house. When he didn't come back, the next day Bendita went to look for him. She met some militia members on the way who beat and kicked her, and told her they had burned down her house and killed her husband.

It wasn't until I returned to Memo that I learned they had stabbed my husband and then burned him alive... After three days I returned to Tunubibi to find his body. The land was empty but there were two militiamen patrolling. I got to the site of my house and really wanted to place flowers and burn some tobacco as an offering for him, but soon I heard the militiamen patrolling. I hid behind a tree near the well, but one saw me. They terrorized me. One brought his gun close to me and took off all my clothes. I tried to escape but he said, "We have killed your husband. Your fate now depends on us and you must do what we want." Then he raped me.

With her five children she escaped and hid in Turiscaï over the border in West Timor. She went home again to look for her husband's bones when INTERFET forces arrived.

Many people came to interview me. They took my husband's bones to conduct an autopsy. Priests and nuns came to ask me about my experience of sexual violence. I always think about justice, but I'm still waiting.

To make ends meet, Bendita works as a day laborer, breaking up rocks to be used in house construction. She also farms corn and rice, and sells eggs, kerosene and firewood at the market. Bendita did receive some money from the Veteran's Office, a one-time payment of US\$ 2000, but she feels it was not enough, considering she has five children to feed and educate.



I still cry when I think about what happened to me then. I feel sad but I can't do anything because no one wants to listen to me. To provide for my children I work hard to grow crops in my garden and break rocks until my hands are swollen. But the government has never asked about my difficult circumstances.

I was a victim for this country. I organized all my documents so I could receive compensation for my suffering. But many people didn't believe me; they even laughed at me and cursed me.

SANTINA MONIZ: WAITING FOR JUSTICE



Santina holding a photograph of her husband who was murdered by militia in 1999.

Santina Rica Maia Moniz's husband, Manuel, and brother, Rudolfo, were caught by the *Besi Merah Putih* militia in 1999. They were shot and tied together, then taken in a car and thrown off a bridge into a river while still alive. The militia then went under the bridge and hacked their bodies to pieces.

After that the militia called out: "We have already killed your husband and family. Don't hide, come and bury them!" We were so scared and just watched from where we were hiding, not too far away.

Santina was left with two young children and was heavily pregnant with her third child. They returned to Maliana from the forest when the violence subsided but without housing, food, or income they still faced many hardships. Her husband had

saved Rp. 500,000 (approximately US \$50), which Santina used to give him a decent burial.

Now Santina has a small business selling second hand clothes in the Maliana market, and receives her husband's veteran's benefits. However, Santina faces jealousy from her in-laws:

I am eligible for the government subsidy for family of war victims. I hope that this money will help me do something for my children's future. However, one constraint I face is the gossip and criticism from my husband's family. Even in public they put me down and say they want to kill me. They have even reported the case to the Veteran's Commission. They claim that I have no right to receive my husband's subsidies....

Women should have rights to the assets of their husbands, because if their husband dies, he leaves behind the children with his wife to care for. We have to fight for what is ours.

She is well known for her high spirits and motivates other members of Nove Nove, but does not feel any sense of justice for her husband's death.

The Serious Crimes Unit repeatedly came to conduct interviews and take photos. I hope that one day I will get justice. Timor Leste has already been independent for more than 10 years, but justice has never reached the common people.

VICTORIA DA SILVA: WITHSTANDING A STORM

Victoria da Silva has had to raise her four surviving children herself since her husband was killed in 1999. On September 2, 1999 her family sought refuge at the Maliana police station. They stayed there for seven days during which time the *Besi Merah Putih* militia burned down their house. On September 8, the militia and military attacked the Maliana police station. Her husband was taken out of the station and killed on September 13.

After they had killed him they came to me at 4 a.m. and said, "We have killed your husband and burnt him. Take your things and go to Atambua. You can come back later. Go and get him in Sagui." I fled with my children to Atambua.

One month later, once the Indonesians had pulled out, they traveled by ship back to Dili. They stayed there for three weeks then returned to Maliana. She collected her husband's remains, whatever she could find, and buried them in front of her home in accordance with tradition.

Things were really difficult then. We had nothing, not even a house. I received 18 pieces of roofing from the village chief to put a roof on my house. After that my children and I searched for old and broken iron sheets to fix our house and this is how we live up until now.



The condition of her house was so bad that at night her children would sleep with friends of family members. If it rained the house would flood. The strong winds that hit Timor Leste in July and August 2014 destroyed the house. ACbit recently helped her to access funds for a new house from the special presidents fund for civil society.



Victoria in front of her house.

Victoria has struggled to support her children. She borrowed a small amount of money to start a small business selling foods and home made cookies outside the Maliana High School to pay for her children's school fees, food and other daily necessities. She feels she has received no help even though her husband died during the independence struggle.

A team from the UN Serious Crimes Unit came and took my husband's bones for examination and interviewed me. They gave me the bones back to be buried again and I prepared a small grave in my yard. I received US \$40 from the Serious Crimes Unit at that time. No one helped me.

My husband died for this country but no one has really helped us, we live in poverty. When there is a campaign (election) we shout our Xanana's name but until now Xanana has not helped us.

JOANA DOS SANTOS MOTA: A DETERMINED MOTHER



Even if my life returns to how it was, I would never forget the bitter experiences I've had. Especially when we were in distress, when even our family turned away from us and made me feel that the world has no justice for me.

Joana in front of her house.

During the Indonesian occupation Joana dos Santos Mota's husband worked in the statistics and census office. But he was also working for the resistance, mobilizing students and youth. In Suai, when members of the local *Laksaur* militia and soldiers from the subdistrict military command kidnapped her husband and two friends, taking them to Kamnasa. They were ordered to stand in a line and were shot. Joana's husband and one friend were fatally shot, while the other pretended to be dead, and so survived.

Joana was left alone with two very young children, the youngest only two months old. Afraid and alone, she temporarily fled across the border to Atambua with everyone else in her village. After a month she returned to Suai to look for her husband's body, but people told her they had already buried it. Joana moved her family to Maliana where she had family and tried to move on.

Things were really, really hard. I didn't know how to restart my life, I didn't know how to sell anything, so after four years I decided to marry a man from Atambua. However, it didn't work out because he didn't support me or my children, and anything he earned he sent back to his family in Atambua. Sometimes he even left us alone without providing anything, even food....

It was not like I imagined. My husband didn't take responsibility and then he abandoned me and my four children. My whole family came to despise and blame me. I can only be patient and cry.

She sought help from the women's organization Fokupers and asked for a divorce under customary law, asking her husband to provide child support and sign an agreement. He never fulfilled his obligations, but being a single parent has driven Joana to survive and support her family.

The only path I can take is to be patient and strong for my children. With that in mind, I took out a loan with a local credit organization to start trading in the market and sewing clothes to earn a little bit to eat and drink with my children.

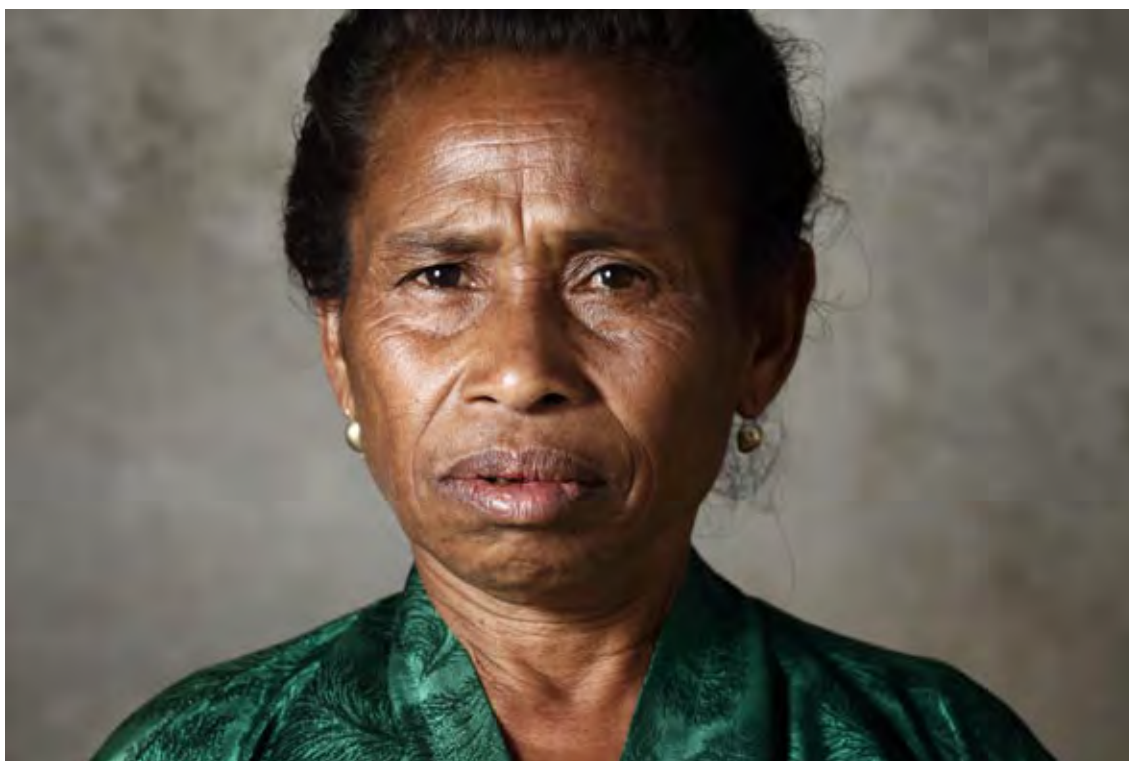
There was so much competition in the Maliana market that Joana learned to sew with the widow's group *Nove Nove*, while ACbit helped her buy tools and equipment. She can now make and sell clothes and *kebaya* (a traditional blouse), while raising pigs to sell and chickens to eat. She owns a house and some rice fields she inherited from her parents, and both children are in high school. Joana says:

I'm not sure what justice is, if it exists or not, I don't know. Although I share my experiences, there is no one who believes me. The only important thing to me is staying strong and healthy.

AGRIPINA DOS SANTOS: DREAMING OF HER CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

In 1975, Agripina dos Santos and her family ran and hid from the Indonesian military. She still remembers it was a difficult time, that she was sick and there was no food. They had to move around frequently to stay safe from the Indonesian planes that were dropping bombs and killing many people. In 1978 Agripina was arrested and taken to Maliana district military command, before she moved to Korluli where her family was. She stayed there three years then moved to Lolotoe, a remote mountain subdistrict of Bobonaro where she lives to this day.

In 1999, as militia groups stepped up their attacks after the referendum, she and her family again sought safety in the mountains:



On October 8, the militia came to where we were hiding and began shooting. We heard the gunshots and ran. My husband and oldest child ran west. I was carrying my three-year-old child and ran with my other children and hid in a small hole. That afternoon people called out to me “Agripina, your husband has been killed.”

That night, Agripina found and buried his body. With a heavy heart she fled into hiding again, feeling lost and shocked. Her uncle helped her hide with her four children. Her oldest child had survived because he was with a relative.

One year after her husband's death, the United Nations Serious Crimes Unit took his bones for investigation. Agripina also went to Dili to testify in court, but there have not yet been any convictions.

When my husband was killed by militiamen in 1999 I had to live alone with my four small children. We survived by gardening, it was difficult to find money. I asked my older brother to help finance the education of two of my children because I was unable to pay up to college. God heard my prayers and helped me; now two of my children have almost finished their university studies. I hope someday they can serve this country.

To earn money Agripina plants and sells coffee, corn and betel nut. She transports her goods on horseback and travels to other districts. Agripina hopes her children will continue their studies and that their lives will improve:

Life is difficult. I hope that things will improve. I also hope my children will succeed and help to develop this country.

TERESINHA: SOLACE THROUGH SOLIDARITY



Teresinha inside
her house

Teresinha Soares Cardoso's husband, Albino Marques Vicente, was at the Maliana police station when it was attacked by soldiers and militia men on September 8, 1999. Albino and 12 others were able to escape and hide in Mula'u nearby. However, a man tending cows saw them and rode his horse to District Military Command 1636 in Maliana. Soldiers and militia members came to Mula'u and shot the 13 escaped men, then hacked their bodies to pieces.

I was never ready to accept the fact that he is dead. It was the hardest thing in my life. It is such a burden that I have to look after my three children myself because he was always there to help me. With him gone I felt like I could not go on anymore with this life. I broke down.

Teresinha and her children fled across the border, but after a month returned to Timor-Leste, where she faced another tragedy with the death of her infant son just 18 months old because there was not enough to eat. Teresinha has found strength in her love for her surviving children. They became her hope for the future to continue the struggle.

I encouraged myself to face these difficulties, because my children's future is the only future I have left that will define who I am and what I can do to help my country. They need my assistance and it is my responsibility to lead them to a better future, no matter how hard the road is that I must travel.

She hopes the government of Timor Leste will pay attention to the children of widows, and those who lost both parents in the war, and give them the same opportunities for education and advancement as others.

Pay attention to them, as they are a part of their parents' suffering so that they can fulfil their aspirations and become something better.

Her sister-in-law gave her Rp. 1,000,000 (about US \$ 100) to start a business not long after her husband was killed. She felt very lucky because she was in a very critical condition.

After I started the business I felt lighter and my children were also happy. I borrowed some money from the bank and managed to make my payments on time.



Teresinha inside her kiosk

She opened a small kiosk to sell kitchen items and *tais*. In early 2009 her kiosk burned down, but she has picked herself up and started from scratch again. Another challenge she has faced recently is claims by her husband's family to her land:

My husband and I bought the land. It was not inherited from his parents. However, now my in-laws are secretly planting trees on the land without informing me so they can claim it, and also dividing up the land to give to their two children. When husbands die, women have no rights to land. If land is bought together by the husband and wife, then no other person, including the husband's family, has the right to take the land.

Another source of strength for Teresinha is the widows group Nove Nove. She is the official coordinator, and has a strong sense of loyalty for the other members.

After my husband died I was always looking for company and support. At that time Fokupers, an NGO, came and provided counseling training to victims of the violence all over Bobonaro district. We, the widows of Maliana, decided to establish our own group and we named it Nove Nove.

When we gather we share our experiences to try and forget the bitter memories. Sometimes someone will share a funny story and we will laugh and cry together. Time has passed and we are much older since first meeting together. Over time people have forgotten about justice for the victims, especially the leaders of our country. They are so busy with their positions. They don't care. It's never been addressed....

My expectations and hopes for this country lie on my children. I believe that this young country will rise and progress, all it needs is good quality human resources. Therefore I always encourage my children and the children of other victims to always study hard and move forward, no matter how many difficulties they face. Our struggle will continue for the future generations.

ANABERTA DOS SANTOS: FOR THE SAKE OF HER CHILDREN



Anaberta in front of her house.

Anaberta dos Santos's husband was brutally murdered by the *Besi Merah Putih* militia in Tunubibi. He was on his way to check on their house when he was captured and taken to Lesu River. They cut off his head and put it on a tree stump, then threw his body in the river.

When she heard what happened, Anaberta and her daughter went straight to the river. As they approached they saw many militia members gathered around. Scared, they crossed into Indonesia for a while. When she returned to Timor-Leste she went to find her husband's body.

I went to the place my husband was buried to collect his bones, but I only found a few because some had been eaten by animals. I wrapped them up and buried them in Tunubibi. Everything was destroyed, nothing was left. The militia had looted all my possessions.

Anaberta is very strong and tenacious in the face of adversity. She deals with her situation by working hard to support her children, selling what she grows in her garden. She works on the land of others, planting corn and rice and receiving a share of the crop. She also earns money by carrying very heavy loads from the border to Tunubibi. Despite these efforts, she was forced to send one of her sons to live with her husband's family in Suai. She rarely sees him.

ACbit is helping Anaberta to access the President's housing fund. She has also received counseling from Fokupers. But Anaberta does not feel she has received justice or assistance from the government.

I have never received any assistance at all, whether it is justice in accordance with the law or help from the government, maybe there is justice but I have never experienced it. My children and I are poor and destitute so we have to remain courageous, what power do we have to protest?

I try to respond to the difficulties in my life by working to find a way to support my children with the produce from my gardens, so I can survive and stay strong to give positive support to my children to realise their dreams.



Anaberta showing her resource map

CELESTINA: FORCED ACROSS THE BORDER



Celestina dos Santos Amaral remembers the violence the year the Indonesians invaded. On October 8, 1975, civil defense forces attacked Celestina's village of Builalu. Celestina was in a small group who had left the village to look for food. That night they were walking back past a river when they were captured. They were forced into the river and she was raped. Afterwards she could not walk, so was carried home. One of her sons was killed that night and his body thrown into a well.

Later that year, Celestina found out that her husband had a mistress so she divorced him and remarried. She suffered again in 1999, when she and her new husband were forced across the border with the militia:

We were herded into the yard of the village head and then the militia transported us to Turiscaí. Some of us were made to walk there. We were so scared of the militia. At night all the lights were turned off because they were patrolling and looking for the men they wanted to kill.

We were staying in a camp, and we were really scared of the militia. On the evening of October 9, all the small lanterns were turned off because they were conducting an operation, patrolling for the men they wanted to kill. I didn't know my husband had been kidnapped that night. I thought he'd gone out to go to the bathroom; it turned out the militia had taken him and killed him. I don't know what my husband did wrong. As far as I knew he was just a farmer and didn't know anything. I don't know where he was killed and I still haven't found his body.

Returning from Turiscaí she had no food, no home, and no way to support her children:

I started to collect water spinach to sell at the Maliana market. When it was harvest and threshing time, I approached landowners to ask for a ration so I could feed my children. And when it was time for milling the rice, I went to collect the leftovers to sell so I could get one or two dollars to buy some things for my children and other necessities.

Celestina has gardens and rice fields but does not own a house. She lives with one of her children and his family. She still does not know her husband's fate or where his body is.

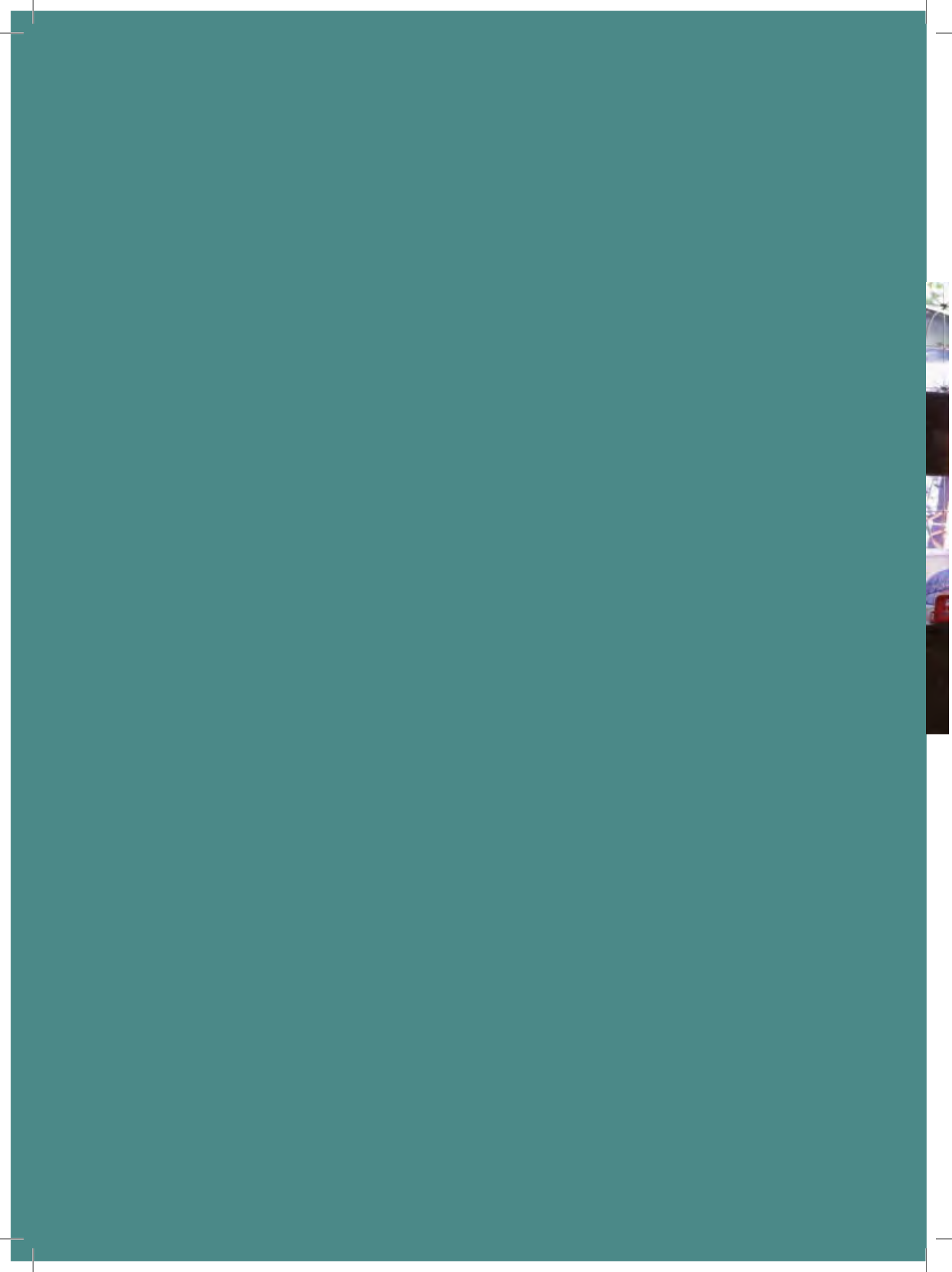
We don't know if he is dead or alive. I have looked for him, I have told everyone, the government, I have asked for justice because it still has not appeared. If my husband were still alive, it wouldn't be as hard as this, because we worked together, gardening and supporting our children. Now I am getting older and I can't do anything anymore. I am not strong enough to garden, and my house is also very old and in bad condition. I received an old age pension but I used it to buy corrugated iron to improve the homes of my children. My daughter is married but her husband is unemployed.

Celestina is elderly but strong. Even with her thin frame she can carry heavy loads from her village for about 10 kilometers to the Maliana market to sell. She is also very active in Nove Nove where she can share her joys and sorrows, supporting and encouraging each other to live their lives, as difficult as they may be.

Celestina's
memory box



Myanmar



Chapter 15

Myanmar: In Between Change and Stagnancy



Myanmar, also known as Burma, fell under British colonial rule in the 19th century, with irreversible consequences on its internal borders and ethnic divisions. In 1947, just before independence, General Aung San, father of Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, negotiated the Panglong Agreement with ethnic leaders, aimed at ensuring greater rights and autonomy for ethnic states in an independent federal union. However, Aung San and several of his ministers were killed and the promises of Panglong were never realized.

In the years following independence in 1948, ethnic groups took up arms in response to discrimination, oppression and a failure by the ethnic Burman-led central government to ensure their rights and autonomy. Among them, the Karen started an armed struggle in 1949 in one of the longest-running civil wars in history, formally ending with a ceasefire in 2012. The Kachin uprising started in 1961 and, despite a ceasefire between 1994 and 2011, fighting continues.

In 1962, a military coup d'état by General Ne Win opened the way to nearly 50 years of rule by a repressive and xenophobic dictatorship. Widespread popular pro-democracy demonstrations that took place in 1988, known as the *8888 Uprising*, were brutally repressed, with security forces killing thousands of protestors and arresting a massive wave of political prisoners. Elections in 1990 saw an

overwhelming rejection of military rule and a large victory for Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), and ethnic opposition parties. But the military refused to hand over power and instead imprisoned many democratic and ethnic leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi. In 2007, anti-government protests led by monks, called the *Saffron Revolution*, were again met with harsh repression.

In 2008, a new Constitution was passed through a controversial referendum in the wake of Cyclone Nargis. The regime's announced willingness to move to a "discipline-flourishing democracy" is seen by many as a move to remove sanctions and open the economy to international investment. In reality, while creating a "civilian" façade, the new Constitution contains provisions that ensure continued military dominance, such as a provision that reserve 25% of seats in parliament for the military. After the NLD boycotted the general elections in 2010, the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) declared victory and power was transferred to the new pseudo-civilian government, headed by President Thein Sein. Since then, Myanmar has drastically improved its international image, and sanctions have been removed. Space for civil society has started to open up, a nationwide peace process is underway, and initial steps for transition to democracy have been taken.

However, the government seems to be backtracking on the few reformist steps it initially took, and has failed to make any meaningful efforts to address human rights issues. Despite the release of many political prisoners, more are being arrested. Activists, farmers, workers, students, journalists and others are being imprisoned for peacefully demonstrating about social and rights issues such as land confiscation, workers conditions, education reform and press freedom. Violent crackdowns on student protests in early 2015 show the dark days of the dictatorship are not fully behind us.

The Muslim Rohingya minority continues to be persecuted, trapped in camps where they live in appalling conditions. Communal violence and hate speech remain unaddressed, with Buddhist nationalism increasingly used for political purposes. Human rights defenders and victims face intimidation and repression in their attempts to seek justice for violence perpetrated by state actors. The army threatens legal action against anyone accusing them of involvement in human rights violations, and most cases involving soldiers are handled by military courts with no civilian oversight. The civilian justice system also lacks independence and impartiality and is widely corrupt. A National Human Rights Commission was established in 2014 but lacks independence, is ineffective and has even explicitly stated they cannot investigate violence related to conflict.

Fighting continues in some ethnic areas, with a severe toll on civilians. After a long ceasefire, the army renewed offensives in Kachin and northern Shan States in 2011, displacing thousands of civilians, and leading to sexual violence, arbitrary detention, torture and killings. Early 2015 has seen the start of the fiercest fighting in years, between the army and a Kokang armed group in the northeast. In ceasefire areas like Karen State, land confiscation and increased militarization continue, tied to resource extraction and commercial development, while no safe solution for return has been found for the thousands of civilians displaced in the past 40 years.

The government has engaged in a peace process with ethnic armed groups, leading to preliminary bilateral ceasefire agreements with 14 of them. The government's Union Peace-Making Work Committee has held meetings since mid-2013 with an alliance of 16 ethnic armed groups to negotiate a nationwide ceasefire accord, which should be followed by political dialogue. However, it remains to be

seen whether the sides will reach agreement over key issues such as autonomy within a federal union. In addition, the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement being negotiated makes no commitment to address past and present human rights violations related to conflict. In this period of rapid change, accountability, justice and measures of non-repetition are not a priority of any of the actors. Until the undemocratic 2008 Constitution is changed and the military is placed under civilian control, the peace process will remain a sideshow and sustainable peace cannot be achieved.

Similarly, without meaningful changes to the Constitution, which institutionalizes military power, the upcoming national elections planned for late 2015 raise valid fears towards their legitimacy and fairness: there is a risk that they consolidate and legitimize the power of the current generals-turned-civilians undemocratic regime.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN MYANMAR

Traditional gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes dominate in Myanmar. Many people believe that men should assume leadership and decision-making responsibilities, while women fulfill the role of homemaker and mother. More than five decades of military rule and civil war have only exacerbated a culture of male domination.

Gender discrimination and inequality persist in the country's legal framework. Although the 2008 Constitution allows equality of rights for all its citizens and prohibits discrimination, it also contains language that entrenches gender stereotypes and protects "positions that are naturally suitable for men only." Myanmar has no specific laws on domestic violence, even as four controversial laws on marriage, religion, polygamy, and family planning are in the process of being adopted. The new draft laws reflect discriminatory attitudes and violate international human rights.

Women are denied any substantial role in the military that maintains control over the parliament and most political and economic places of power. Women's participation in political processes and governance bodies is extremely low.

As a direct result of gender inequality, violence against women is widespread, including emotional violence, economic abuse, sexual harassment, rape and physical assault. Domestic violence is pervasive, including marital rape. In addition, violence against women in rural ethnic minority areas by armed forces is prevalent. The impact of war on women is enormous and results from a wide range of violations, from protracted displacement to torture, killing, land confiscation, forced labor, trafficking, arbitrary detention and sexual violence. State-sponsored sexual violence in ethnic communities continues to be reported in 2015. Although they are one of the first victims of conflicts, women are largely excluded from the current peace process. This exclusion not only leads to neglect of gender and women perspectives, but also aggravates women's marginalization in post-conflict reconstruction.

Systematic efforts to address violence against women are lacking. Survivors of sexual violence tend not to seek support since cultural norms can lead to victim blaming, ostracism and discrimination. Support mechanisms for women are lacking in general, and women victims do not benefit from any assistance or support from

the authorities. Some civil society organizations provide support, but the level of need dwarfs their efforts.

The government has taken a number of initiatives to address violence against women, such as ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women and committing to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It has also released a National Strategic Plan for the Advancement Of Women in 2013 and signed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2014. However, the institutional framework and resources needed to realize their objectives are still lacking and they have not lead to any concrete change for women victims in accessing assistance, medical care or legal mechanisms.

A much-needed process of drafting new laws for the protection of women is underway, though it remains to be seen how effective the legislation will be at addressing violence against women in all its forms. Promoting gender equality and combating private violence might be an increasingly acceptable battle for civil society organizations to engage with authorities, but as long as the military retains power, calls for truth, justice and assistance for women victims of security forces will be met with intimidation and repression, especially with regard to state-sponsored sexual violence in ethnic communities.

Chapter 16

Kachin Women: Surviving Conflict and Violence

The Kachin started fighting for equal rights and self-determination over 50 years ago. Although the 1947 Panglong Agreement outlined principles of autonomy for ethnic minorities in an independent Burma, the Kachin continued to face discrimination and inequality. Their language was banned in schools, they had little opportunity for senior government positions, and as Christians they were a religious minority in a Buddhist-dominated state. After the 1961 military coup attempted to strengthen control over the ethnic border regions, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) were established. Initially wanting independence, they now seek autonomy over their rich-resource territory within the federal union of Myanmar.¹²⁷

In 1994, based on promises for political reform, the KIA signed a ceasefire which lasted until 2011 when the government launched an aggressive operation using heavy artillery and aircraft. Many human rights violations recorded in our research took place within the ceasefire period.

The conflict has involved systematic human rights abuses including forced labor, arbitrary detention, sexual violence, torture and killings. The army allegedly targeted civilians to curtail support for resistance groups, with Kachin women frequent victims of sexual violence. No stable, just judiciary exists within Myanmar to enable survivors to accuse perpetrators, receive justice and halt the culture of impunity.

As Kachin men volunteered to fight with the KIA, the agricultural labor force was drained, while hundreds of villages have been burnt down,¹²⁸ houses and property ransacked and food surpluses destroyed. Many have lost their livelihoods and over 100,000 people have been displaced¹²⁹ and now live in camps in Kachin-controlled areas along the Chinese border, as refugees in China, or in areas under government control. According to the Kachin Women's Association of Thailand (KWAT), the groups in Kachin-controlled areas and in China have received very little international support since the renewed hostilities in 2011, and the Myanmar government has blocked aid for internally displaced people.¹³⁰

The women survivors in this research suffer the prolonged effects of post-traumatic stress. Often the mental and physical suffering prevents a survivor from earning enough money to support her family. Through body mapping and sharing stress relief techniques in workshops, they supported each other through a group healing process and gained psychological strength from the process.

Considerable determination and courage was needed to ensure that survivors' workshops could take place at all in March and April of 2014. Some participants from camps in the KIO-controlled area were prevented from attending because fighting broke out, accompanied by arrests and renewed displacement. One survivor who had been invited to attend could not be contacted as she was on the way to the Chinese border without a mobile phone. Another had been threatened by the authorities not to attend.

At the beginning of the workshops, the survivors' faces expressed an accumulation of stress, worry, fear and tension. They were so used to impunity and remaining silent about injustices they had difficulty applying human rights concepts. But slowly, their tension turned into smiles as they encouraged one another to speak out about their pain and hopes. They built close, trusting relationships and by the end of the sessions they felt stronger and much more well-informed.

AH NAN: NOT GIVING UP ON JUSTICE

Ah Nan is a strong, resourceful woman with three daughters, the eldest of whom is 12, and a son who is six. She supports her mother and mother-in-law after her husband, a former KIA soldier, was arrested in 2013 for an offence related to drugs. A passionate woman, she is determined to fight for justice.

Soon after her husband's arrest, two men came to Ah Nan's house and raped her. She believes they were policemen, as the older one had a cap and blue pants like a police officer:

The two men came to my house. I had closed the door with an iron bar but they pulled it with all their strength. I asked who they were. At first I told them, I can't, I'm sick and I can't open the door. But, they continued to tell me to open the door. In the past, since my husband was the village chief, I had a lot of guests. I thought they might be someone in trouble, so I opened the door.

I couldn't see them well as there wasn't much light. Once they came in, I thought they might be the police related to my husband's case. They took the knife that I keep on the wall in the corner. Then they told me to take off my longyi. I had three layers



of underwear including tights. I told them, even if you want to check me, you shouldn't do that. But they didn't listen.

The senior person told the other to bring my motorbike from outside closer to the house. They threatened me and asked me if I felt pity for the six children in the family and said I could go to jail.

They asked me to follow them and talk quietly to protect my dignity. At first I thought I should follow them. But I was sick and weak and I thought they might kill me somewhere. So, I decided I would rather die here in my house if they were going to kill me. I begged them, saying that I was sick. I showed them the wound from injecting medicine which cost me 60,000 Ks. Then, they told me that I was like my husband, very stubborn.

The older man then threatened Ah Nan with a knife. He pushed her to the ground and raped her, while his accomplice held her arms.

I tried to shout but he hit me on my mouth with his cap and the pain was still there for the next four days. I prayed to God silently. Then, the younger one who was not more than 20 took his turn. After they had finished they saw the motorbike and asked whether it belonged to me, and took it.

When Ah Nan complained to the authorities and attempted to identify the perpetrators, she was met with contempt, threats and intimidation:

The [authorities] shouted "Where! Who!" But I wasn't scared and I tried to tell them what really happened. They were very angry.

The two perpetrators had threatened to arrest me using handcuffs. The [authorities] asked whether they were police or soldiers. I tried to tell them that they were wearing blue trousers and I did not know exactly whether they were police or not.

Ah Nan was particularly anxious to reclaim her motorbike, as without it, and her being in poor health, the family found it very difficult to farm the fields high up the mountainside.

They showed me all the motorbikes but ours wasn't there. Then they told us that an officer was using our motorbike. It's still new. We hadn't even used it. I really feel angry and sad when I think about my motorbike. It was very difficult for us to buy it...

In the past, our family was very happy, but we cannot farm on the mountain anymore. I will need to take care of my children as best I can. They are all in school. This year I had to buy rice as we didn't have enough for the family from our farm.'

Ah Nan's husband was sentenced to several months in prison and is still in jail. She is still looking for the two perpetrators but has been unable to locate them. She sent a letter of appeal to the authorities with the assistance of community-based organizations, but she has only faced intimidation as a result. She wants to seek justice for her case, despite the risks and difficulties.



Ah Nan with other Myanmar survivors at one of the research sessions.

Ah Nan took a great risk in attending the survivors' meetings as she had been warned not to go anywhere. She said that she had gained strength from hearing others' stories. To share her own story Ah Nan had to overcome cultural taboos and criticism for speaking out from some in her local community. When she spoke, she begged her fellow survivors not to judge her harshly. However, the Kachin women encouraged her, and she replied that she wants to tell the truth on behalf of others who have suffered from violence, and who are afraid to speak out.

YAW MYAW: THE TRUTH FOR HER DAUGHTER

Yaw Myaw is seeking the truth about her daughter. The army captured Sumlut Roi Ja on October 28 2011 while she was helping her in-laws harvest corn. Yaw Myaw and her family believe she was then raped and murdered, but they don't know for certain what happened.

After Roi Ja's disappearance, the family could not bear to stay at their farm. Yaw Myaw tries to make ends meet by looking after cows and doing a little farming. She is living between two villages while Sumlut Roi Ja's younger siblings do their best to survive in a camp for internally displaced people.

Yaw Myaw is very sad that they had to leave their house, farm and most of their belongings.

'Our family and Roi Ja's in-laws cultivated the paddy farm together in that year (2011) but when the fighting restarted, we fled. Now all of our wedding photos and family photos have gone. There's nothing left now.'



Yaw Myaw's husband pieced together in his mind the events on the day that Roi Ja disappeared. He recalled:

On the day of the incident, October 28, my daughter Roi Ja, her husband and father-in-law, went out to their farm to collect corn. Suddenly, the Burmese soldiers arrived and my daughter Roi Ja, her father in-law and her husband were caught. Roi Ja and her husband were forced to carry corn baskets and military backpacks to their post at Mu Bum, so it was difficult for them to run quickly.

When they arrived at a ditch, Roi Ja's father-in-law and her husband (escaped by) jumping over it. Roi Ja ran after them. But the soldiers were firing a gun after them and Roi Ja was left behind a clump of bamboo. She ran for her life but could not run fast enough and the soldiers caught up with her.

Yaw confided how she also worked out what had happened from different sources, including dreams. She took researchers close to the Burmese military post to point out the exact location where her daughter was captured.

On November 7, 2011, I heard the KIA soldiers from two military posts talking on walkie-talkies. These soldiers told us that Roi Ja came out from the post with two Burmese soldiers. After that, they heard a gunshot. This was at 4:30 p.m. Then they heard a second shot, followed by the sound of a girl crying. After that they heard the sound of the gun for the last time.

The next morning, I went to see a friend who told me that on the night of November 7, 2011, he dreamt of Roi Ja. In the dream,



she told him she had escaped from the soldiers who had tied her up with plastic. I also dreamt that she ran back home that same night. In the dream, she asked me, “Mother, was father crying and looking after the cows?” I hugged her and woke up.

We have heard many rumors about my daughter. Some people said she was seen washing some clothes on a rock. Some people said she had changed her clothes for an army uniform. After I heard about the gunshots, I did not believe anymore that she was alive. I believe that she was raped and killed by the Burmese army.

Yaw Myaw is devastated. After Roi Ja had not returned for some time, the family conducted a funeral, inviting local pastors to pray for her. She still hopes that one day her daughter will come back.



Yaw Myaw and her family

The family's living conditions are very tenuous. Yaw Myaw, her husband and their eldest daughter plan to do some farming, but it is difficult. If they are not living at the displaced persons camp, they don't qualify for rations. In 2013, the compensation from the KIA for Yaw Myaw's husband they received since 2002 has ceased, even though, as a wounded former KIA soldier he is entitled to help.

Roi Ja's younger sister lives in a camp with her younger brothers. They save their rations from the camp and if they can, they share with their parents. Occasionally, they're able to earn a little money from cutting sugarcane. She remembers:

'When my sister Aji was alive, she was able to help us a lot. She gave us a lot for school fees also. If my parents were sick, she was the one who looked after them. She encouraged me to study hard and complete my matriculation examination, as there is nobody in our family who has passed it. When Aji disappeared, it was very hard for me. I felt so sad I couldn't even finish ninth standard, but I tried.'

After talking with the other survivors from her region at the workshop, Yaw Myaw said that meeting them had given her the courage to keep going and search for more evidence. Her daughter's case has received some publicity thanks to advocacy by civil society groups, even reaching the Supreme Court, although it was rejected. Her husband said, "The only way my wife and I get relief from our sorrows is thinking she died for the sake of all Kachin people."

DASHI TAWM: IN SEARCH OF A LOST SON

273

Smart, educated and confident, Dashi Tawm used to be a teacher. Having been displaced many times, Dashi Tawm is living in a camp for internally displaced people and is struggling to survive without the major financial supporter of the family, her eldest son, who worked as a church youth leader. He disappeared in 2011, while doing some work for the KIA, although not a soldier.

He transported supplies to assist the frontline using his motorbike. While riding through a very dangerous area of Kachin, he became involved in a shooting incident. However, attempts to uncover what happened, or even find his body, have so far yielded almost nothing.

Dashi Tawm thinks of herself as lucky because her two other sons are still alive. Of her eldest she says, "I will never forget my son. He was very good, kind and supportive to our family. He worked hard for the family and we also depended on his income."

The incident involving her son took place during chaotic events in November 2011, when the Burmese military gained control of a nearby village on the KIA frontline. The next morning, the residents of Dashi Tawm's village were asked to leave quickly. Dashi Tawm last saw her son driving off on his motorbike with a heavy load. She told him to be careful on the bamboo bridge over the river.

When Dashi Tawm tried to find out from the KIA militia what had happened to her son, she faced many difficulties. Finally, she was told her son and a friend had crossed into the area that Burmese troops had taken. The KIA sent some



soldiers, including Dashi Tawm's other son, to investigate but they had to retreat as it was too dangerous.

It appears that the incident must have taken place on the other side of the river, after the two men had crossed the bridge. A KIA officer who was nearby told Dashi Tawm that he heard the noise of two motorbikes. A few minutes later, he heard a gunshot and then two gunshots. Dashi Tawm has not been able to search for her son's body. She is sad that she has not been able to learn the truth about what happened and that her son's death has gone unrecognized by the KIA.

All soldiers have an army identity number but my son does not because he was not a soldier. If a soldier dies, it is recorded in history as a sacrifice for our people. But my son was not acknowledged, even though he served until he died.

Dashi Tawm is also very sad that she was not able to get help with reimbursement for the motorbike.

As we were facing a lot of hardship, I asked the KIA officer to reimburse us for my son's motorbike even though my son had not returned from his duties. The officers responded to me very unkindly and rudely.

In the end, the family managed to gather some financial support together from various sources. In 2011, they received 1000 Yuan and some food from Karen Women Association. Later, they also received 200,000 kyat in donations, and then in 2013, the KIA awarded 20,000 kyat for each family who had lost a family member in the fighting. With these donations, the family had a small funeral service for their son and bought a motorbike to replace the one that was lost.



Recently, Dashi Tawm returned to her home and found that due to a landslide and looting, her house had been destroyed and the furniture was gone. Her schoolbooks and teaching materials were torn apart, and the family's clothes were strewn all over the floor.

Now Dashi Tawm feeds two pigs at a village close to the IDP camp and plans to grow corn at a friend's farm on the mountain. In another village, she found a small leather box that her son kept his belongings. "I do not want to destroy my son's things although other people told me to," she said. "I want to leave them just like that. I have his photos."

When Dashi Tawm participated in the healing workshop, she expressed a fervent desire for an end to the fighting between the Burmese and the KIA.

HTU BU: A SINGLE MOTHER STRUGGLING FOR HER CHILDREN

Htu Bu used to live in a camp for internally displaced people in Kachin State. She is now 41 years old with six children. When she was pregnant with her youngest son she struggled to look after the paddy fields and hill farm. Then twenty days after she she gave birth, her husband fell sick and died.

Htu Bu encouraged her children to carry on studying for a whole year, but one by one they had to drop out and now only two are still studying. She feels sad that she has been unable to educate them because of hardship. In many regions of Myanmar, there are still taboos surrounding a woman bringing up children alone:

I tried to forget my husband but I was always thinking of him. Sometimes, I would carry my bamboo container to the well and after only a few steps, I would forget where I was. I did not know how to live without my husband. I felt like I was floating in the air. I began to understand that people look down on the family if there's no husband. Although many people find a new partner when their husband or wife dies, I made up my mind not to find another.



However, Htu Bu found the strength to take care of her family including her aged, almost blind mother-in-law. She learnt farming techniques and helped make rice wine to sell. Then, in November 2012, fighting broke out close to her village. Htu Bu was forced to flee with the family and as many of their belongings as they could carry:

As I was so afraid, I was able to carry all the supplies.

I went back and forth five times. Then we heard the sound of bombing so we moved into the forest. I took my son, Ma Gun, and my mother-in-law, and showed them places to hide. We hid separately at different places. I told my mother-in-law not to be afraid but she was hyperventilating and shaking, so I told her that we would all stay together.



Htu Bu at a survivor's meeting in Pyin Oo Lwin.

As it was the cold season, we soon started feeling very cold. After we had settled my mother-in-law, my son Ma Gun, my daughter and I started to dig a trench for protection when a man called Bumrep Yaw saw us and took pity on us. He showed us a better place to hide. We hid out in the forest for one week.

Even though I am a girl, I can run very fast. I put on short pants and boots, and went back to the village with my brother-in-law to see whether the Burmese troops were still in the village or not.

They moved from place to place, until Htu Bu had no choice but to move to an IDP camp. There she sometimes earns money doing odd jobs such as cutting sugarcane for one or two days.

I left my farmland, cows, and paddy fields on the mountain. I have nothing left now. If I went back home, I don't know where I would stay. My daughter is living with others, helping their family with household needs. My eldest son is a KIA soldier. My sons Ma Tu and Ma Tang are still at school. One is at kindergarten and one is in standard one. My second eldest son, Ma Naw, is 16 years old now. Most of my children have grown up, they are able to earn money themselves. I feel very happy for them. I am proud of being able to bring them up to be strong and independent.

HKAWN SHAWNG: A GRANDDAUGHTER KILLED, CARING FOR THE FUTURE

277



Hkawn Shawng has experienced much in her life. She was shot and wounded when Burmese soldiers attacked a temporary jungle camp where she had taken refuge with other villagers. They captured her 22-year-old granddaughter, her 3-year-old great-granddaughter, and another woman and her baby. It is believed that both women were raped several times before being killed.

Badly injured, Hkawn Shawng managed to reach safety, and she was able to treat her wounds with herbs. She met some friends who shared rice and salt with her and provided two blankets. However, within a week or so Hkawn Shawng's wound was beginning to fester. When she finally reached the government hospital in Ba Maw, a doctor refused to perform surgery on the wound. Eventually she was treated at the clinic in an IDP camp.



Her son told us that due to Kachin taboos surrounding sexual assault, he feels very ashamed about what happened to his daughter. Members of the community say things that are unkind and untrue.

At 5:30 p.m. on December 6, 2011, we were hiding on Him Buk Mountain. It was a little bit dark since it was in the valley, and the women were taking care of their babies. Suddenly, there was a gunshot. My eldest daughter and my younger sister were shot in the waist and ankle from behind.

[My daughter] was captured. [The other woman], who had a child only one month old, was killed that night. Her body was found with knife wounds. We ran away. I was taking care of my mother since she was also wounded. At about six a.m., I heard a child crying so I went back to the place where they were taken. I saw the baby, Ma Pan, holding an instant noodle packet and crying. She was looking towards where her mother must have been taken away.

My daughter must have been raped near the place where we were taking shelter and killed on 7 December. It was a very unsafe situation, but we moved on as fast as we could and arrived at my

younger brother's house at 10 p.m. We finally made it to the IDP camp on 28 December.

Later, a shopkeeper told me that some Burmese soldiers from the area were bragging that they raped and killed a woman and looted villages. When the shopkeeper heard about that, she asked whether they still had the woman. They told her that they had buried her near the place where they took shelter. After I heard this, I asked other villagers to help me find the burial place. I also asked the KIA to help me find the place but they told me the situation wasn't good and we should do it by ourselves.

Eventually they found the grave:

She must have been asked whether she was Christian as they had made the cross with parts of a sandal on her grave. They did not bury her well. All the skin was destroyed. We wanted to know for sure whether the body was a woman or man so we dug it up. We could only see the bones, some hair and the clothes that she wore that night. The army tried to tell us they didn't touch her but the clothes were just thrown on her chest, she wasn't even wearing them. They just put a red blanket over her body. The grave was also not that deep.

Hkawn Shawng's son asked for help from a number of people, including church officials. Eventually he was able to borrow some money and on 3 November they retrieved the body from where they had hidden it in the forest. They held a ceremony for his daughter in the village where she died. Her grave is a long way from where the family is now, over rough terrain.

The community knows the perpetrators' military base, however, it has been very difficult to establish their identity or that of any witnesses. There was at least one witness that night: Hkawn Shawng's great-granddaughter remembers her mother being shot in the legs and crying all night. The soldiers gave her mother an injection, then later left the three-year-old alone and cold on the hillside. She was later adopted by relatives and no longer speaks of the incident.

In the IDP camp, Hkawn Shawng takes care of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her granddaughter's sarong is her most treasured possession. She told us:

I just gain strength from thinking that other people also suffer the same as me. I believe that when my children get older, everything will be better. I don't have anything now. I don't have any hopes for my property now.

My sons gave me some money and I was given 7000 Ks from IDP donations. I just bought a few things out of it. I live by what other people provide for us. I don't have any work now and nobody wants to hire us either.

Although Hkawn Shawng is worried about the future and feels very isolated in the IDP camp, she gained much from meeting other survivors to tell her story: "I feel inspired and have gained the strength to survive my difficulties."

HKAWN LUM: RELEASING HER SUFFERING

Hkawn Lum's family had been successful paddy farmers who lived in a teak house. It had taken them a long time to build the house, which they completed during the ceasefire in 2004. They also grew *sha gaw*, an important spice in Chinese cooking.

After fighting broke out again, her husband was injured while they were forced to flee. They left behind their rice milling machine, a motorbike and three hunting guns. They hid their possessions but Burmese soldiers found and took them all. They lost livestock, such as four pigs, three cows, three bulls and two horses and other family household equipment. Once the fighting had died down they headed home. Hkawn Lum remembers:

I injured my arm seriously on the day we went back to our house to rescue our belongings. My daughter in law carried five bags of rice and 5 kilograms of salt, and then we went to the charcoal burner's where we'd hidden the rest of our things. On the way, I tripped and my left arm ended up hanging on a tree branch with my legs not touching the ground. I was hanging on but my arm had a tear in it about 4 or 5 inches long.

Luckily, my son's wife had hidden her medicine at the farm since the conflict restarted, so she was able to stitch my wound. After that, we kept walking. It was so painful, I thought that I would die.

It was very difficult time for us. I could not work on the farm because of my arm. Our sons were all being soldiers and working for the KIO. My husband and I were usually the ones who did all the hard work for the farm. After three days we arrived at the paddy farmhouse, but my wound got worse and became swollen.

We fled twice and hid in the forest for 11 days using banana leaves and plastic covers for shelter. It was a very cold time. When we were working to grow paddy, my sons who were in the KIO came back and stayed until we had harvested the rice. After we had finished, they went back to their jobs.



People warned us to leave as we heard about terrible incidents of rape and murder by the Burmese soldiers. My sons also told me to leave, fast. But my husband and one of his younger brothers could not leave the village immediately. They remained to look after the paddy fields and cattle. My husband did not want to leave until he had finished the fencing.

We reached N.T.P. on 9 November, 2011. After 11 days we heard that my husband and his brother had gone out to another farm to investigate the situation and see whether it was secure.

On the way back to our farm, they were ambushed by Burmese army troops from Division 99. My husband was shot in the abdomen. When the villagers and relatives found his body, there was only one eye and ear. It seems the Burmese soldiers shot him, but he did not die immediately, so they used his own knife to torture him. The villagers said they found my husband's knife beside the body.

I could not think anything at all for about two months. I was very shocked and I didn't want to think about any work. I love him now even more than before.'

The villagers and relatives made a bamboo coffin for Hkawn Lum's husband and buried him there. Later, her sons rebuilt his grave and buried him in the forest, four miles from their village. Hkawn Lum still has pain in her arm from her injuries and told us, "I don't want to go back home where my husband is no longer and I told my brother in law and our relatives that I will die here in the IDP camp."

Picture of
her husband



Life is hard in the camp and Hkawn Lum keeps herself busy, working on a corn farm and taking care of pigs. After participating in one of our healing workshops, she reflected:

In 2011, I was not able to talk to anyone because of the sadness, especially when I would meet relatives. Now I have been able to release my sufferings a little when I heard about other friends' stories at the survivors' meeting. There are some friends who have lost two husbands after they married a second time. At least I only lost one.'

DOI RA: TWO SONS LOST, A FUTURE DEPRIVED



Despite all her suffering Doi Ra has a teasing sense of humor. The KIA conscripted all three of her sons, and two are now dead. The Burmese army had captured one during the ceasefire. Instead of handing him over to the KIA in a prisoner exchange as planned, they only handed over his clothes and gun, and it was later found that he had been tortured to death. This incident broke the 17-year ceasefire on 9 June 2011.

Her eldest son had already died in battle in 1994, and she found it very hard to cope with her young family and the farm.

I was so sad and empty. I tried to heal my pain by drinking four or five bottles of alcohol a week. I had to drink a bottle each night to be able to sleep well. The leader of the church came to tell me not to drink alcohol because it will affect my health. She also prayed for me.

Slowly, I began to realize that I should not drink, since some of my children are still very young and I knew that I needed to educate them.

After that, I tried to change. I spent my time praying day and night and tried to make myself feel better by saying that he died for his country and the people. He did not die from doing bad things such as stealing or robbing.

I felt like everything in my life was broken. But, I always pray that I will recover from the situation and be able to take care of my grandson and daughter. I feel a little bit calmer when I pray.



Doi Ra in survivors' meeting.

In the end, the KIA gave Doi Ra's son a proper funeral and she received 200,000 kyat as recognition for his death. She is very angry about the lack of justice for her son:

The Burma army cheated us and we Kachins always have to suffer like this. Both sides did not tell me exactly how he was killed, so I do not know who really killed my son. Even though I followed the news for days, I could not work out what really happened...

When we heard that my son's body had been found, I called the KIA official and told him not to bury him before my daughter and I arrived.

Doi Ra worked out that since it was the hot season, and her son's body was already decomposing, he must have been killed some days previously. She assumes that the Burmese army had attempted to hide the body.

Now, she grows corn and raises chickens and a pig for her family's livelihood. She also has a paddy farm but is unable to farm since her other son has a bad leg and his wife is not strong enough to work. Doi Ra suffers from abdominal pain and is grief stricken but was encouraged to carry on after meeting other Kachin survivors.



Picture of Doi Ra's died son.

NU TAWNG: JUSTICE FOR HER DAUGHTER



Nu Tawng, reserved and kind, has found it difficult to come to terms with the death of her 16-year old daughter. In 2007, during the ceasefire, the young girl was allegedly captured, brutally gang-raped and killed by Burmese soldiers.

Nu Tawng's husband can hardly speak of what happened. He showed researchers the clothes his daughter wore the day she was taken. While he was still looking for her, he had a vision:

My daughter shook the little tree and in my vision I asked if it was her. She shook the tree again. So I went up that way, past the tree.

First, I saw the sarong that my daughter wore. I tried to look for her in many places, all the way to N.S.P. Although I looked everywhere, I couldn't find her. I even tried looking in the water.

Then, in my vision, she showed me the way they took her and where they hid her sarong. She tried to hold on to the tree but they pulled her too hard. I looked carefully at the trees and the footprints. It looked like she might have been dragged from there. I found her basket there and a package of rice.



Nu Tawng feels very sad because of her daughter's death

Nu Tawng and her husband were able to find out the name of one of the two perpetrators and reported the crime to the authorities. There was a trial in the local military court, after which Nu Tawng and her husband were told that one of the perpetrators had been sentenced, but they don't know whether he was sent to prison or not. They were made to sign an agreement and accept an informal financial compensation of 500,000 Kyats (approximately US\$500). They used the money for expenses related to the death of their daughter and the case. Nu Tawng and her husband do not feel they have gotten justice for their daughter.



Nu Tawng and her husband are currently living in a camp for internally displaced people (IDP camp) after being forced to leave their village because of renewed fighting. Before the survivors' meeting, Nu Tawng felt very alone, and had given up hope that anyone would be interested in her daughter's case. She appreciated the opportunity to meet new friends: "They listened to my painful memories and now I feel like telling them has halved my pain."

ROI BU: WITHOUT A HUSBAND I FEEL SMALL

Roi Bu was displaced many times, lost her husband in the conflict, and is still under threat of relocation as fighting continues in her area. When her home village was attacked and bombed in 2011, she had to flee fighting.

We already heard the invasion of Burma army. But, we did not expect to be this serious war. We thought that we might have to flee one or two nights and we would be able to return home.

We stored some rice, salt, oil and diesel for lights, and the Burmese army invaded our village. My children had already gone to the church, and one of my children came back to me and told me that the Burmese army invaded our village. As she came back running, there was already the sound of gunfire. I told my children to flee quickly. As we heard the sound of the gun, everyone ran across the village. Some could not carry anything with them and they just ran empty-handed.

Some women with children went ahead first. Half an hour later, we passed through a farm, and we heard the sound of guns. It sounded like Burmese guns. There were about ten shots. After that, we heard the sound of guns from the KIA side. We were thinking that the gunfire sounded like guerrilla warfare.

When I reached China, I felt really sad. When I was still on the other side of the border, I forgot I should cry. The people from the Chinese side came to pick us up with a truck. After that, I was



Roi Bu inside her shelter
in a border IDP camp.

crying incessantly. Other people were united again with their families, but our family was not. They came to pick us up with the three trucks. I was in the camp for one month. In January 2012 we fled from China because they chased us away.'

Her husband had stayed behind to protect the village with other men and he was killed by the Burmese army.

My husband is not a soldier. They stayed there because the men from the village were stopped from passing through the bridge.

I only found the body of my husband on 6 February, exactly three months since we fled our village on 6 November (the year before). Since it had been three months, we only found the remains of his bones.

Even as I took care of the body, I felt sad. I felt so small. Nobody told me what to do. I did not have any relatives. I told the village head to hold the funeral for my husband several times, and they held it after that.



Roi Bu's shelter
where she lives now.

After these difficult events, Roi Bu had to survive with her children in camps at the Chinese border and in Kachin State. The last camp where she lived was attacked in April 2014, while she was taking part in this research. She describes this terrifying attack by the Burmese army, her evacuation to another camp, to the border, and back again:

After we had the first meeting [with other survivors], I was able to farm for about two weeks. After this we also wanted to cultivate the sugarcane farm. Three of us were about to leave so we could go there but the camp leader told us to come back as there was a security alert around the village.

When we had finished cooking, we could hear the sounds of the guns towards the sugar cane farm. The Burmese had burned the KIA military bases. The fighting had also left the forest burning.

After that, there was heavy artillery falling towards us and we planned to run away. But since he had realized that we were about to flee, the camp leader closed all the gates. They told us to first listen to the sounds so that we would be able to flee safely.

Although there was heavy fighting, they did not tell us to flee. They told us only when people were dying, so that we could ask for help from foreign countries. They tried to organize everyone. They told us to stay where we were.

During the constant fighting, the Catholic preachers arrived and after they prayed, they told us to go to M.W. They carried our beds on motorbikes.

I was worried about my son who was on a motorbike. I was carrying stuff on my back and head. I followed the convoy, worrying about my son. After that, we heard the sounds of the heavy artillery again. While we were praying, we could see the bombs from the artillery.

Eventually, the church members welcomed us with sticky rice and candles. We separated our groups into Upper camp, Lower camp, and Church area. I wanted to cry a lot at that time. Many women were crying. We stayed in M.W. for six days. It was very crowded with a lot of people, not enough beds, not enough water, and it was very hot.

When we returned to the IDP camp, the leaders were still there. They told us to come and take our belongings otherwise the evacuation would be in vain. We went to collect our things and stayed there for one or two days, but we were very scared. That's why we all moved to the border with China. We stayed there for a day. After that, our woman leader told us to return or else we would lose our place in the camp.

Roi Bu enjoyed sharing her stories with her friends, but she risked a great deal to attend the meetings with the other survivors, as the Burmese army and the camp leaders were restricting the movements of the displaced.

Chapter 17

Karen Women: The Impact of Forty Years of Displacement

The Karens are one of the largest ethnic groups in Myanmar, numbering around 7 million.¹³¹ The Karen people lobbied for an independent state from the British. However, along with other groups, they became ethnic and religious minorities within Burma. Discrimination and attacks against Karen increased in the wake of independence and in 1949 the Karen National Union (KNU) was formed, and their armed struggle began. For the past three decades, hundreds of thousands of Karen have fled across the border to refugee camps in Thailand,¹³² and many others are internally displaced within Karen state and other parts of Myanmar.

After 60 years of fighting, a ceasefire was signed in 2012. Although the KNU initially demanded independence, currently the KNU seeks increased autonomy within the federal union of Myanmar. Conflict has at times erupted again in some areas, compromising the security and disrupting the livelihoods of civilians. Recent human rights abuses have included forced labour, forced displacement, and looting, all in the context of increased militarization and restriction of movement and without the provision of humanitarian assistance.¹³³

The Karen women who participated in the research have been displaced within the country for several decades. They report no justice for murders or violations, leading to an ingrained fear of retaliatory abuse and the silencing of survivors.

The research found that the majority of human rights violations occurred during two main periods. The first began in 1974 as a result of the Burmese army's Four Cuts Policy. The Four Cuts doctrine was designed to deny non-state armed groups access to food, finances, intelligence, and recruits by driving civilians from areas where they could offer support.¹³⁴ Villagers were also forbidden to travel without permission or farm their own lands. They were forced to build shelters and fences for the army or act as guards. Between 1980 and 1990, villagers also had to give rice to the KNU army as a levy and pay other kinds of taxes.

The second key period for human rights abuses began in 1990 when a commando group led by the notorious Shan Pu, a Burmese-military officer of Shan origin, tortured and killed many victims. They used a variety of brutal methods such as tearing the skin with a knife, repeatedly drowning victims, and removing their tongue. These methods were usually employed while villagers were being investigated, often within full sight of young and old, resulting in widespread post-traumatic stress. Women in the study said that rape was used casually and punitively. In addition to the abuses documented below, the survivors knew of at least eight other murders, one involving torture, three cases of rape and three of arson. Members of the security forces have never been prosecuted.

In addition to taking care of their families, many women found themselves taking positions of village leadership as the men were away fighting.¹³⁵ In trying to earn a living in the rice fields or by trading, they faced the constant threat of sexual violence. Whenever a village was taken by the military, the men would flee, leaving

the women to do harsh forced labour on their behalf. As a result, many of the women suffer joint and nerve pain, chronic headaches and knee injuries.

All ten survivors whose stories are included in this book live in southeastern Myanmar, in seven different villages hosting internally displaced people. Many thousands of Karen have been forcibly relocated by the armed groups during the conflict, and even the IDP camps themselves have been relocated, one (Maung Oo) as many as four times. Many IDPs wish to return to their home villages, and require help to claim compensation, obtain counseling and address health concerns. The children require education and the villagers need technical support, such as landmine clearance and machinery, in order to be able to farm successfully again.

Traditionally, Karen women have been able to own property but not land, unless their husband had died. However, they now have the right to own land. Before relocation, the Karen women had houses, paddy fields, orchards and livestock but now, they have lost their ability to make a livelihood. Things have slightly improved since the most recent ceasefire between the KNU and the government, but the participants said that women are not allowed to sleep at the farm, go out at night or use a torch. The fields where the IDPs grow rice and peanuts are situated some distance away from the villages, and farming is extremely hazardous as a nearby river is prone to flooding. The KNU allows them to forage in the forest once a year.

Malaria and dengue fever is widespread within the IDP villages, which do not have proper sanitation. At least two people are bitten by venomous snakes each month and medical help is often unavailable. There is little screening of women's health and many are afraid of contraceptive injections. Children often die because their parents are not told about vaccinations.

The Karen Women Empowerment Group (KWEG) visited the farms, villages and forests around the IDP villages in order to study the area where the survivors live and work. They also organized three workshops in order to learn, understand and hear the voices of the women, to document their stories and to develop healing methods. The seven tools developed by AJAR were used for this purpose.

Some of the women had heard rumors of retaliation if they were found to have attended the workshops. They overcame their fears, but were sometimes reticent to give a full account of the abuses that they had witnessed. The survivors' names have been changed for security reasons.

PAW POE: A DREAM OF PEACE

Paw Poe lives in a village for internally displaced people, in southeastern Myanmar, with her children. Although she has suffered a great deal throughout her 52 years, she has kept her sense of humor.

Ever since she was a child, Paw Poe has been forced to flee from conflict. Her earliest memory of the civil war is from the 1960s, when she heard a plane flying over their village as a small child and her father blew out the candles immediately.

Since then she has been displaced many times. In 1970, she was relocated from Ko Ni village to Tae Nar Oo Toe Lo village, and then sent to Ta Kaw Paw. She attended school up until the 3rd grade, when she had to stay with her mother and look after her siblings.



At the beginning of the Four Cuts Policy in 1974, soldiers came to Paw Poe's village, arrested two of her brothers and detained them for questioning. The Burmese army claimed that the family harbored rebels, and destroyed her house. Paw Poe's family had no choice but to leave their village and hide in a cave with very little to eat. They were so hungry that they ate weeds from the river. As they fled from one hiding place to another, Paw Poe took care of her siblings and her elderly aunt.

Between 1960 and 2003, she remembers everyone had to provide 25 tins (or 9 gallons) of rice as a tax for each acre of farmland, or else give the Burmese military money. Villagers also had to put their rice together at the Burmese military camp, a practice they called "collective rice". Villagers were not allowed to keep their own rice at home, but had to go to the military camp daily to get it. From 1974 to the early 90's, the villagers were also forced to work for the Burmese military as porters, construction workers on military camps, or security guards.

Once the Burmese army captured Paw Poe, they detained her illegally and interrogated her. She was subjected to torture because her husband, a former KNU member, was suspected of hiding guns and being a spy. Paw Poe worked as a trader and maintained good relationships with army personnel from both sides. Suspecting that Paw Poe had useful information, military officers tortured her,

keeping her locked up in their office for 15 days: “I said, ‘I don’t know’ every time they questioned me. I was terrified that they would rape me at night.”



Finally, Paw Poe was released. However, her husband was arrested by the KNU because he was accused of being a government spy. After being questioned, he was found not guilty and released. On another occasion, while she was on her way to sell some local goods in order to earn a livelihood, a member of a local armed group, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), attempted to rape her. However, she is very reluctant to speak of this, saying, “I feel so ashamed I want to die.” Many sexual violations remain undocumented due to strong cultural taboos.

In 2004, her family had to move again when Paw Poe had just given birth to her youngest son.

We had to walk as we did not have a cart. I carried my child who was a week old. Both I and my son had seizures. They relocated us in a field next to the road, on the edge of a forest. That’s why we moved to this village and we have never been asked to move back.

Now, Paw Poe looks after her four children. One child is mentally disabled due to a serious brain disease she suffered a few months after she was born. Her daughter underwent medical treatment in Yangon in 1990, but later suffered brain damage.

Paw Poe suffers from low blood pressure herself. She has not been able to afford to send any of her children to school. Her hope for the future is for lasting peace so that she can return to her village and send her youngest three to school: “To go back to our village, we need a school, a church and a medical centre. We badly need these things.”

PI PI: RETURNING HOME SOMEDAY



Born in 1944, Pi Pi is the eldest of the Karen survivors' group. When she was young, she passed her school exams every year, and with enormous curiosity, she always wanted to continue her education. But life did not turn out that way.

The Burmese army attacked her village, Tat Kong, in 1972. Pi Pi's house was burned while she was hiding inside with her family. They escaped to witness the Burmese military looting the smoldering remains. Everyone from the village was forced to leave within three days.

Pi Pi remembers another incident, in 1999, when government soldiers attacked the village where she lived. She said the soldiers wanted the women to go with them. Pi Pi watched as villagers were killed and houses were burnt until they agreed to let some of the village women accompany the soldiers.

Pi Pi has been forcibly displaced many times. After her husband passed away, she faced difficulties simply surviving and protecting her children. She had to work extremely hard, farming the paddy on her own, so that she could provide for them and her mother.

Now she has access to a garden and rice fields, and raises chickens and ducks, although the birds often get sick and feeding them is very expensive. Her children have now grown up and Pi Pi is helping raise her grandchildren. In all her time as a displaced person, she has not received any support or help. Due to her hard life, she has a swollen knee and suffers from persistent pain in her lower back, but does not have enough money for treatment. Pi Pi's dream is to return home: "I just want to go back to my village and live freely and peacefully."



HTAY HTAY: A PRISONER'S WIFE

Htay Htay has six children, and her faith is very important to her. When she was young, her home village was burned and her house was looted. She has been forcibly displaced many times since then. She regrets the fact that she could not attend school and receive an education. Two of her brothers were murdered during the conflict by the KNU because there were false rumors they were spying for the Burmese.



Htay Htay was wary of talking openly because her husband was unlawfully arrested in 2008 and is still in prison. She was pregnant when he was arrested, on suspicion of involvement in a suicide bombing, even though he was with his family when the bombing took place. When she heard that her husband had been sentenced to 50 years in prison for something that he did not do, she lost her unborn baby from shock. After this, Htay Htay struggled to survive. "Other people encouraged me to be strong," she said.

Now, after many years of working hard to provide for her family and pay levies to the army, she suffers from headaches due to post-traumatic stress, and takes medication for body pain. Although she is now supported financially by two of her children, Htay Htay is worried because her husband is still in jail. She also fears having to move again to another village.

HTOO HTOO: LIFE ON THE RUN

Htoo Htoo is a very friendly, community-minded member of the Karen survivors' group. She was blessed with a happy marriage and three children. Since childhood, she has been displaced several times because of the conflict, and now looks after animals on a small farm.

Htoo Htoo remembered when her village, Nei Ko village, was attacked in 1975 by troops: "We had to leave the village when I was eight and we lost everything – our house, cows and buffaloes. We had to leave our churches."



The family relocated and Htoo Htoo had to earn a living working in others' fields with her siblings:

The fields where we had to work pounding rice were on the other side of a stream, so at least we could catch fish and frogs. But the army ordered us not to use a boat. I had to swim back home after work every day. My parents were very afraid to lose me whenever I swam back because I was their only daughter.

The Burmese army had told them that they had to move out of their village within three days. Once they had packed a few belongings, the army told them that if they didn't burn their own house down, they would burn it down for them. Htoo Htoo remembers how the soldiers torched the whole village.

In 1999, the family was told they had to buy land in a new village if they wanted to live there. Around this time, Htoo Htoo's father was tortured and died of his injuries, and her husband was tortured whenever the Burmese military came and wanted them to serve as porters. She suffers from serious post-traumatic stress as a result of witnessing so much violence.



Now, Htoo Htoo and her family live in a village for internally displaced people. They have suffered constant relocation, devastating the local economy. They have no shop and have to live in someone else's house. They face discrimination from some in the area and cannot afford to buy a piece of land, even if there was any for sale.

In order to get her daughter through 8th grade, Htoo Htoo had to sell the small piece of land that she had in her home village and borrow money with interest. Life is very hard working on the farms. Snakebites are a constant menace for farmers in those areas: "Every month, at least two people die from snakebites. Doctors do not pay



attention to those who cannot pay the cost.” The snakes have proliferated because of the huge rat population in the villages. Even though they wear boots in the fields, this doesn’t prevent the snakes from biting them.

One night in 2012, a snake bit her daughter but they did not realize what happened as the village has no electric lights and her daughter was too young to explain. She lost her daughter and husband from snakebites.

Htoo Htoo’s three remaining children are all grown up now. She is sad that they had to grow up without all of the basic things they needed, and hopes her grandchildren will have better chances in life and be able to go to school.

Htoo Htoo enjoyed drawing pictures of her husband and her family for the other Karen survivors and sharing her story in an atmosphere of warmth and happiness. The workshops gave her additional knowledge and the hope that she could recover from her pain. However, she is very sad that she had to sell her farmland because after 40 years, she still hopes to live in her own village once more.

NYAR SI: FATAL SNAKEBITE



Nyar Si has been forced to move several times since childhood. She is now 50, with six children, and lives in a village for internally displaced people. She is confident but carries a deep sadness within her.

Nyar Si watched her family’s house as it was burned and looted in 1974, at the time when the Thaw-Ta-Gu villagers had to move out from their village:

We were so young at that time. Our parents told us that the Burmese army had given orders that we had to move from our village. The army told us to burn down our houses within three days. If we could not bring ourselves to burn it within the allotted time, we were forced to leave our property behind.

Three members of our family managed to complete the journey. We did not know where to live when we finally reached the new village and we did not have any food to eat. However, as I was a child, I made friends fast and played with the children in the village. I asked for food from them and they fed me. After a while, my friend's parents let us stay under their stairs.



Nyar Si has been living in an IDP village for many years. Her most painful memory relates to her daughter's death due to a snakebite. Nyar Si was unable to get her treated in time, as the clinic was six miles from the village. They called in a traditional medic who used a tube to suck out the venom, but her daughter did not survive. There is an anti-venom treatment but it was very expensive, far beyond the means of most people. This is a very common occurrence in these villages, and even those who recover from snakebites often cannot do heavy work afterwards.

Although she suffers from headaches, Nyar Si's hopes to return to her village:

If we can live there again, I believe we can get by. We can do anything if our health is good and the weather is good for farming...I hope those who drove us out from our village will build proper houses for us. I wish we could have our church, our school, and a hospital. We also wish for a doctor so the villagers can lead a peaceful life and be well...

Due to the lack of justice, we cannot go back yet. However, as we have a modest ceasefire now, we feel that we could go back to our own villages and work there. That makes us so happy.

Despite the government's promises, Nyar Si is still living in one of the IDP villages and has not yet been able to return to her home village.

NYAR HTO TUE: VOICE OF COURAGE



Nyar Hto Tue passed away early 2015. She had suffered from ovarian cancer since 2009 but was not able to receive proper treatment. She used to say to her friends, "I am just waiting for a call from God."

During the war, Nyar Hto Tue's family had to run away from their village, and their possessions were looted by the Burmese military. Around this time, her older sister was accused of being a spy and sentenced to six years in prison. She returned to her village, but later died from ovarian cancer.

Nyar Hto Tue did not live in a village for internally displaced people, even though her village was within the conflict zone. She was married and lived with her husband and mother.

Nyar Hto Tue witnessed many human rights violations during her life. She saw villagers being beaten, tortured and killed during the conflict. At one time, she became a victim of forced labour, forced to help build military camps and roads, and carry food and weapons on the front line.



As a Christian missionary, Nyar Hto Tue would advocate for people who had been captured and forced to do work by the Burmese army. Both the Burmese and Karen armies threatened her and accused her of spying.

She believed that if “there is no truth, [there is] no home to live in.”. Even though she could forgive, she could not forget what happened in the past. Nyar Hto Tue also felt strongly about women’s access to health care:

Since 1974, the health care system is very poor and there is a lack of knowledge about women and their health. People are afraid and don’t get children vaccinated. Women are scared to have contraception injections.

In addition to having cancer, Nyar Hto Tue also suffered from a number of health issues, such as lung disease, heart problems, and digestive problems. Despite feeling that she did not have long to live, she felt that the workshop helped her to gain strength and not to be afraid. In spite of her poor health, Nyar Hto Tue continued to work hard until the very end. “My feet and hands are my strength,” she said. May she rest in peace.

MU DAH: A YOUNG WOMAN DISPLACED



Young, playful and diffident, 22-year-old Mu Dah was born during the war, the youngest daughter in her family. When she was only a baby, her family was displaced from Kyee Pin Ehi village and lost all their property.

Constantly moving, Mu Dah's mother did not have access to health care during pregnancy and died soon after giving birth to her. Without milk and proper nourishment, Mu Dah almost died herself.

When she was a young girl, Mu Dah witnessed and heard of many human rights violations, particularly during the period of Shan Pu and the actions of a government military officer of Shan origin, who was leading a commando that used brutal and public torture to create a climate of fear and repression among villagers. However, she has blocked out many memories of those times in order to survive. She does not wish to speak of them. Instead she focuses on remembering the happy time when she was very young and received attention.

Mu Dah has five family members and works extremely hard in the fields. She is strong but faces many difficulties in meeting her family's basic needs. She regrets that there are so few work opportunities nearby: "We need better transport so we can earn money in the mines."



She is afraid to talk about the past, even though there were issues that she wanted to discuss. Many young Karen women are in a similar position. Trauma has been passed down through the generations, silencing the young as well as the old.

TAR THUE: DREAMING OF PEACE AND EDUCATION



Tar Thue is only 15 years old. She is very shy and is the youngest of the Karen survivors to participate in this study. Back in 1999, when she was just a baby, Tar Thue and her family were forced to move from her village because of the war. She would like to forget how the Burmese army tortured her father, and still finds it very hard to speak about how he was cut with a knife, burned, stomped on, and almost drowned. Her father is still alive today despite the grave injuries, and suffers from serious trauma.

Thar Thue's uncle, a KNU soldier, was killed while fighting the Burmese military. One of her aunts died from snakebite, as there was no access to proper medical treatment in the area during the conflict.

Now, Tar Thue works for a small daily wage in a farm. Although she is young, she complains of aches from work that is both repetitive and demanding. She also looks after her younger sibling, helping her father and mother who have to struggle for daily basic needs. One of the things that she is saddened by the most is that she was forced to drop out of school in the ninth grade because her parents could not afford to pay for her schooling. "I am sad that I could not continue my future study. I want lasting peace. I do not want wars."



NYAR EH KHU: FOR MY CHILDREN

The daughter of Karen resistance fighters, Nyar Eh Khu was born in the forest while her parents were running away from the Burmese army. While they were on the run, Nyar Eh Khu's mother could not breastfeed her young daughter because she was very ill. She remembers drinking honey as a baby instead. Childbirth during the conflict carried much risk, and her older sister later died in childbirth, unable to deliver her baby.

In March 1999, when Nyar Eh Khu was getting her teaching certificate, Shan Pu came to her village. The commandos killed many of her neighbors, and another sister died from a landmine. These events deeply affected her, and she doesn't like to speak of what happened to her.

Now 39, she and her family live with her mother and her elderly father, once a KNU general. Nyar Eh Khu had to have an operation to remove her ovaries in April 2007. She finds it hard to lift heavy items, but still works on the farm. Recently, Nyar Eh Khu stopped her own medication so that she could pay for her child's schooling instead.



Whenever she remembers the violations that took place, she suffers from headaches and pains in her joints. She says, “I have so many heart problems. I always hide my face.”

NYAR BWE: OUR OWN PLACE



In 1990, only ten days after giving birth and still in her 20s, Nyar Bwe became chief of her village. As village chief, she sometimes had to leave her own children and siblings at home. When the villagers had to toil in the fields as forced labour, she went to the military camp to negotiate their return. She was also interrogated and tortured for 15 days by the Burmese military, accused of supporting the Karen armed group, and of having a gun.

Now aged 58, she has two sons and two daughters. She has been displaced for more than 40 years and lost all her property. She survived difficult times, taking care of six siblings and some of their children. Nyar Bwe has witnessed extreme violence against her family. A cousin was shot in front her eyes, and her sister was killed by a landmine. When her sister died, Nyar Bwe looked after her children as well as her own. They often only had little rice, onion, and salt to eat.

Now that the political situation is better, Nyar Bwe lives and works on a farm that is far away and owned by someone else. She works hard although she suffers from a great deal of pain. She is worried about her husband who is older than her, and doesn't want to leave him alone. The only financial support she has received was 30,000 kyats from UNICEF.

Nyar Bwe is determined to return to her birthplace. She is impatient with the authorities and feels that she has long outstayed her welcome in the IDP village:



The Burmese have asked us to live in [this village]. In summer, it takes us four or five hours to reach the farm, but in the rainy season we have to cross water. Sometimes, the water level is very high, but we have to travel, even if there is flooding.

We heard the Burmese government would let us live in our village again but this has not happened yet. We are staying in other people's village. We are living on other people's land. It's been a long time now. We were relocated when I was young and now even my children are married. We are still living on land that does not belong to us...

We should have been guests for about three days only, but now it's been 40 years. Unbelievable! That's why we wish to go back to our place.'

Many of Nyar Bwe's friends were afraid for her safety when she told them about attending a workshop with other survivors. According to Nyar Bwe, many of her friends also want to talk about human rights but dare not due to fear of reprisals.

Chapter 18

Imprisoned for Their Belief in Social Justice

Strong. This is the word that always comes to mind when describing this group of former political prisoners. Many of these women were arrested as young activists in 1988, and some during the social protests led by monks in 2007. Before they were detained, some ran businesses, and many are well educated and resourceful, with a great deal of political knowledge.

All these women believe they have been illegally arrested and detained in retaliation for their social or political activism. Military courts applying treason laws indiscriminately summarily tried some of the women. A number were sentenced to incarceration for life, simply for being political or social activists. Prison life was particularly difficult for those sent to a remote area too distant for family members to visit or send food.

In detention they faced different types of violence and abuse, such as sleep deprivation, severe beatings, solitary confinement and sexual harassment. While in prison, they continued to protest unjust treatment and sometimes received even harsher beatings as a result. The women noted that incidents of torture reduced significantly after 2009, when the transition to a quasi-civilian government started.

Since being released, some of the women have suffered from trauma and stress. They are also resilient and optimistic about the future. Some feel that they have been stigmatized as a result of a habit of talking too loudly, a legacy of their efforts to communicate with other prisoners from solitary confinement, or of talking to themselves. One is suffering badly from pain in her legs as a result of torture and is receiving hospital treatment. As they have little money the women rarely have access to expensive health providers and their families often become locked in poverty.

All of the women have suffered socially and economically, whether through the loss of their livelihood, being forbidden to work, having to take care of family members or from being ostracized by fearful families and fellow activists. However, most continue to be involved in the fight for democracy and peace. Many are highly effective leaders in the democratic movement. Although they have suffered greatly in the past, their desire for political change is undiminished. In most cases, imprisonment has radicalized them further and strengthened their determination.

The women were able to find an outlet to share feelings, and to form new groups by joining this action research. They were comforted by other women who were able to understand what they had been through, as well as been imprisoned in the same period with whom they could share their feelings. This knowledge gave them courage and the will to maintain their political resolve.

The 'flower and stone' discussion was useful in creating an atmosphere of trust. Participants could talk openly, especially those who face criticism from family members for seeming to put politics before their children. Some family members

would shut down any talk of the past. For the 'Memory Box' activity, few of the participants had photographs, although they had kept small items that they had made or that had been given to them in prison. Many had lost or did not have access to personal items.

All the violations documented below have so far been met with impunity from the authorities.

KHIN MI MI KHINE: LAND FOR FREEDOM



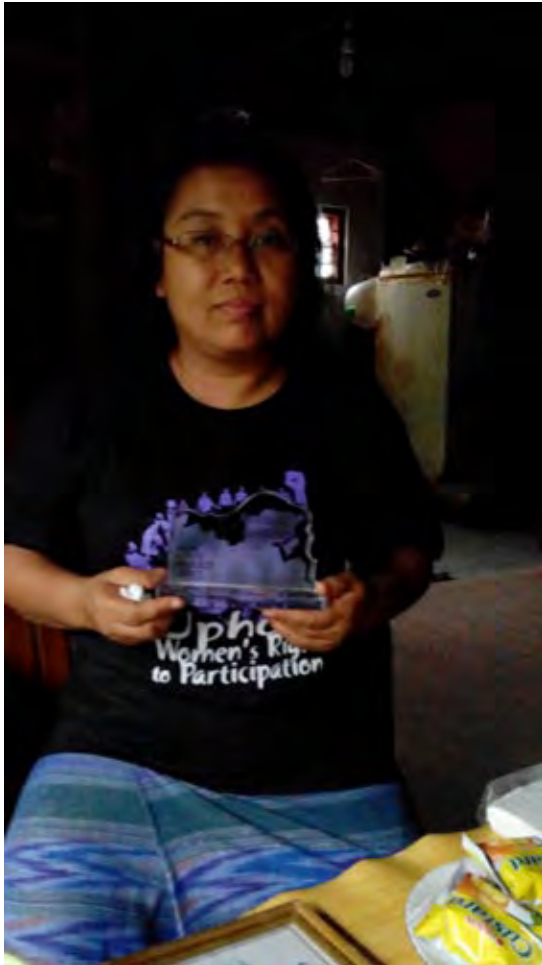
Mi Mi Khine is an advocate for land and farmer's rights. She has been detained four times, during which she suffered various abuses, including physical and psychological torture by sleep deprivation and being forced to eat rotten food leading to stomach problems.

A determined and resourceful person, Mi Mi Khine worked as a youth leader for NLD during the 1990 elections. She was first detained for 12 days in September 1997 at the police station in Dagon Myotit. In September 1998 she was again detained this time at the notorious Insein prison and released in January 2000. During this second detention, Mi Mi Khine's father passed away. She was arrested again in April 2000, and most recently on June 11, 2013, while defending farmer's rights, before being released that December.

In prison, she stood up for prisoners whose rights were being violated. She spoke out on behalf of those who were refused water, and those who were forced to use

the same bottle for both toilet and drinking. She defended the right of having water to bathe, especially when women are menstruating. In 2013 she received a Social Activist Award for her work.

I feel as if my 25 years of political life were recognized for the first time through this award. Even though our families and our communities wish to help us to restore justice, they do not know how to go about this process. From my point of view, no systematic rehabilitation process has been carried out yet. We have begun to set up workshops to assist with the healing process for trauma.



When gifts were sent to all the women in her building of Insein prison by the NLD, Mi Mi Khine did not receive any. She felt she was ignored, even though she had stood firm and loyal through many difficult situations.

This incident happened in the year 2000 and was one of the saddest things I suffered during that time. While everybody received a package from NLD as encouragement, I came to realize that my leader and my comrades had no desire to encourage me. That made me very sad. I was traumatized by the way my political colleagues treated me.

In 2013, when she was in prison, she feels she was denied recognition as a political prisoner by the Former Political Prisoners Society: “Even though they are working for all political prisoners, they only regard well known people as political prisoners, and not those who are underground.”

In prison, Mi Mi Khine was questioned non-stop for four nights and five days, blindfolded and subjected to sleep deprivation. She recalls suffering from hallucinations during her time in prison:

There was a wall. I did not know what was behind the wall but I could hear everything that was happening. I assumed it was a hostel, so I felt safe. But after two months, when I had a chance to go to the clinic, I saw that there was nothing there. This place I had thought about so often did not exist. I later learned that people were killed there, so it might be spirits. I'm not crazy, I could really hear those people.'

Before the uprising in 1988, Mi Mi Khine lived a simple life with her family. Her parents were keen to provide an education for her and her siblings so that they could finish school, get a degree, then work for a government ministry and hopefully become a civil servant.

However, all of my purposes, goals, my life style, values and my ways of thinking changed after the 1988 uprising. The only thing I wanted to do was gain as much knowledge as I could and try to be a good citizen.

After cyclone Nargis in 2008, Mi Mi Khine volunteered as a social worker. Lately, she attended trauma healing workshops as part of her involvement in AJAR's projects. She applied what she had learnt and found it very helpful:

I have some knowledge and experience in facilitating the trauma healing process from 2008-2009, when we performed psychosocial support in the areas affected by cyclone Nargis. However, the types of emotional wounds which we have can get worse over time. Sometimes, I can't control my anger when the political situation frustrates me; but I can gradually lessen the level of its intensity. The existence of so much political and social discrimination can open up old wounds.

Mi Mi Khine has requested and received counseling sessions from various sources. She suffered from acute anxiety and mental trauma while imprisoned, and has developed a hearing problem. When asked how she found the strength to overcome the sadness and trauma from physical and mental violation, she reflected:

The first strength we have is our political belief. Being Burmese, I am not the only person to endure these kinds of difficulties, as the whole population of around 60 million has had to survive the same situation too. I tend to develop my understanding of the overall situation first, so that I can put the hardships that we go through into perspective.

Secondly, I have received a lot of encouragement from my community and this gives me the strength to get through difficult times.'

Mi Mi Khine has stopped teaching in the face of the arrests and is now involved in community development. Her main hope for the future is to have a political system where all citizens feel secure enough to sleep well at night, where there are no guns, and people are happy and free to sing and dance as they wish.

HNIN HNIN HMWAY: UNBROKEN SPIRIT

A highly educated and dignified woman of 46, Hnin Hnin Hmway has been arrested twice. She was a lecturer and tutor, but the government will not allow her to resume her career.

On 19 August 1989 she was arrested and sentenced to three years imprisonment from the Thar-kay-ta military tribunal. The authorities accused her of displaying a political party flag during the 1988 uprising. The prison authorities suddenly received large numbers of women political prisoners, many from the students' unions. The facilities were inadequate and rations were insufficient.



We were only allowed three bowls of water each, so we collected used water to do our laundry. Cooked rice was delivered from the men's prison in a barrel and they gave us one small portion each. Often the food was more like what pigs eat – solidified, smelly, with husks, larvae in the nga-pi and pests in the boiled beans.

If the prison authorities discovered poems or letters, the prisoners would be kept in isolation, forbidden from having visits, exercising or even washing.

We heard about the 1990 general elections while we were in prison. In the election, the Military said that they would go back to their barracks, and transfer power to the winning party but they did not keep their word.

There were strikes in prison to protest against the unfair and oppressive treatment of political prisoners. But the guards broke the strike cruelly on 25 September 1990. My friends and I were beaten harshly, and forced to stay out in the sun until we suffered from heat exhaustion. They cut us off from any communication with other female prisoners.

Hnin Hnin Hmway was one of five women prisoners who were tortured and moved to Tharyarwaddy prison for taking part in the strike.

Many of Hnin Hnin Hmway's friends had fled to the border area after her party, the Democratic Party for a New Society, was declared illegal. When she was released in 1992, Hnin Hnin Hmway visited friends inside the war zone.

We had to run away when a column of Burmese soldiers started operations. We slept on leaves. We survived on rice, plants and fruits that we found in the forest. I only experienced this for a month. But the villagers who had to flee experienced this kind of thing for most of their lives.

In 1997, Hnin Hnin Hmway was arrested for a second time and interrogated at Insein interrogation centre. After months of interrogation, they sentenced her to three years for contact with what the authorities deemed as an illegal organization.

When they brought me in for interrogation, they asked me mainly about my trip to the camp in the forest, whether I brought back weapons, or whether I was trained to blow things up. I told them that I had no interest in using violence as a political weapon, or hurting other people.



Conditions were harsh and Hnin Hnin Hmway's glasses were confiscated. When she was released, she discovered that one of her pupils had become defective.

In 1999, when she was about to be released, the ICRC visited the prison. The prison workers were ordered to paint the building where the 10 women prisoners of the 5 (J) block were kept and locked in with a padlock from the outside: "They closed all the doors and windows, claiming our building was a store house. As it was the hot season, we almost suffocated."

Hnin Hnin Way feels it was unfair that political prisoners did not receive any reduction in their sentence, as most regular prisoners did. She calculated that the time for reducing her sentence was overdue and when the director general from the Ministry of Prisons visited to check prison conditions, she demanded to be released. Within a week, she was free.

For me, the most important thing for justice is that human beings treat each other with respect. Do unto others what you would wish done to you. We are working towards a new society through the Thakin Kodaw Hmaing peace network. One of our key aims is that we need peace in which among you, me and the general public, no one is hurt.

I don't want the terrible things that happened to us to happen to the next generation. The ethnic minorities in IDP camps should be able to live in their hometowns peacefully. There needs to be equality with no discrimination based on race, religion, skin or gender, a true federal united country of freedom and peace. If not, there will still be civil war; and people will still have to go through difficulties.

I will work for these things as long as I live. The government does not realize that sending us to jail only increases our motivation to be politically active.



Hnin Hnin Hmway has always been engaged in politics. She participated in the Saffron Revolution in 2007 and continues political activities today. She has been involved in setting up former political prisoners associations, and has been actively campaigning for the rights of political prisoners and their release. She is now working as a member of the central committee of the Democratic Party for a New Society and she is devoting her time to political reform.

Although she was tortured in many different ways, her resolve remains firm. She gains strength from a song by Ko Mon Aung:

Storm

Fly, fly, red peacock in the storm, to the sky
 Fly, fly, red peacock in the storm, to the sky
 Building a new world, in our time red revolution flowers
 Ever bringing human rights to the people with our
 strength, we will work
 To create our noble history; flags of peacocks fly in unity.

NI MOE HLAING: FIGHTING WITH WORDS



Playful and full of humor, Ni Moe Hlaing used to be a teacher and now works as a journalist. Her younger brother works for the Red Cross, her father was a government employee and her mother was a seamstress. Ni Moe Hlaing's political involvement started early, and she joined the NLD to work on the rights of youth, workers, and farmers.

In 1998, she was charged under Article 10 of the 1975 State Protection Act, which grants the government the power to imprison people for up to five years without a trial, and sent for two years to Insein prison. In 2008, she was arrested again and sentenced to seven years in Tayet Prison, Magwe division.

When she was arrested, Ni Moe Hlaing suffered from periods of relentless interrogation involving sleep deprivation.

Most of us were questioned one by one, changing the officer but continuing to ask questions the whole day and night. At end of the day we were tired and falling asleep, and an officer would come and say it's not time to sleep, and continue to ask questions. Sometimes we were questioned non-stop for two or three days.

Ni Moe Hlaing also experienced sexual harassment from guards and from a prison doctor while she was in jail.

In total, Ni Moe Hlaing spent five years in jail. During that period, she also had to cope with the loss of her much loved youngest brother, only two years old, and her elder sister. She was finally released in October 2012, when many prisoners were released.

I realized that I was happy only after that event. I had no idea whether I was happy or sad at the time, as I had to leave Ni Lar behind. But I was happy about what the movement had achieved, that our country was moving forward. The release of student leader Ko Paw, along with Ko Min Ko Naing, Paw Oo Tun, was a great relief, as he had been sentenced to 65 years in prison.

I think around 100 of us were set free on that date. Nearly all who consider themselves as 88 members were released at the same time on that day, together with the Burma Students Union members. Politicians from across the country were released. An event such as this had never happened in our 50-year history of struggle. We thought that all the political prisoners would be detained in prison till they died.



Ni Moe Hlaing does not have a child of her own, but she has high hopes that her nieces will be outstanding in the field of politics and good leaders of the country.

Ni Moe Hlaing has suffered greatly from her experiences and her private life has also been difficult. She often suffers from anxiety as a result. While Ni Moe Hlaing continues to look after her nieces, she feels that there is no justice, even within the family. She feels that family members judge her harshly for sticking to her principles, but this has made her even more determined to fight all kinds of injustice:

Sometimes the trauma we get from conflict with our colleagues and family can be more severe than the trauma we get from the authorities.

TIN TIN CHO: MY SON, MY FUTURE



Tin Tin Cho was a young woman when she was arrested in a coffee shop after the Saffron Revolution. She was detained, interrogated and sent to three different prisons. At Lashio prison, she met many women who had been making a living however they could, some even by drug running. She feels strongly that if the government created more jobs for women and housewives, there would be no reason for them to perform such actions in order to scrape out a living.

The youngest of four, Tin Tin Cho often feels that her father and mother still treat her like a child, even though she is 43. She used to live in Yangon with her husband and son. She smiles often and, as well as being politically active and running a publishing business, she is devoted to looking after her mother.

Tin Tin Cho recalls being proud when she passed 10th standard and went to the University. She married and had a son, who was in first grade at the time of her arrest, disrupting his life greatly:

I was not worried to be sent to jail, but I was worried about my son, wondering whether he would get home or not. My son was so young that time. He was six and a half years old then and did not know how to find his way back home. The fact that I could not pick him up from school caused me great distress.



Imprisoned for four years for having contact with an illegal organization, Tin Tin Cho was subjected to emotional and physical abuse. The guards would enter the women's cells without respect for their dignity, trying to provoke their anger. They accused her of sleeping with students even though she was married, a terrible insult and deeply humiliating to a Burmese woman.

There were three men in each team to question us and we did not have a chance to sleep or rest. We had to sit on a plastic stool under a very bright light bulb from the ceiling, enduring its heat for 24 hours without being able to wash.

On the fourth day of interrogation, I developed an allergy; and when I could no longer stand it, I screamed very loudly. Finally, the prison wardens let me take a bath. They gave me medicine and let me rest for half an hour.

Somebody had to hold our hand out to the toilet, so we could feel where it was, as we were blindfolded. If we used the toilet four times a day, then we were blindfolded four times as well. I asked a policewoman,

“Sister, please let me have some privacy. I’m uncomfortable using the toilet in this way.” But we were forced to keep the door open while the police woman hid behind the door. I was constipated for those four days and was able to take medication for my constipation only when I was moved to prison.

By the time she was released in 2011, her marriage was broken:

My mom and my elder sister told me nothing about him getting remarried while I sat on a chair and drank water. Then my son came to welcome me at the top of the stairs. I hugged him and cried so much out of happiness.

I did not have even five cents when I got back home. My ex-husband took the vehicle I owned and we had nothing that we could sell. I think if other women were in my place, they would

have gone crazy. But I thought, what will happen to my son if I collapse? I cried only when my son was asleep in bed.

In prison, Tin Tin Cho met a lot of young, single women, ethnic women and Muslim women. Her experiences prompted her to take up her present role as an activist for women's rights.

We still hear that women can achieve nothing in our community. This is discrimination and totally unfair. I experienced discrimination first-hand in my marriage. My husband made me stay at home and I was not allowed to go out to look for work. He always said women who worked outside were those not provided for adequately by their husbands. He treated me as if I couldn't do anything by myself.

There's a 10 year age gap between me and my husband and it's like a gap of an era as things have changed so fast. He always tried to control me, and although he claimed he encouraged me to be active in politics, he did not want me to go out. How was I supposed to get involved in politics if I couldn't leave the house? I had no choice but to do many things secretly.



Tin Tin Cho divides her time between her activism, running a publishing business, and caring for her mother. Now that her son is older she feels that he understands more. She wishes she didn't have to leave him, but she still has to travel a lot for work.

Right now, I feel that we are not free, even in our homes. I am treated differently because instead of doing housework and cooking, I am involved in politics. I've been criticized for being in jail and being away from my family. But on the other hand, there are also people who support me.

CHO CHO AYE: ENDING INJUSTICE



Cho Cho Aye is 50 years old, a member of NLD and a women's rights activist. Married with two daughters, three granddaughters and one grandson, she struggles to support her family on what she earns from selling merchandise.

Cho Cho Aye participated in the 1988 uprising and explained why she first became involved in politics: "I entered into politics not because of understanding politics, but because I wanted to end injustice."



Cho Cho Aye holding a leaflet for a gathering to pay for the release of Aung San Su Kyi

In 2004, she held prayer ceremonies every Tuesday at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda to call for the release of Daw Aung San Su Kyi and other political prisoners. She also demonstrated in front of the United Nations office to urge them to take action, instead of simply making hollow statements in condemnation of Prime Minister Soe Win and his regime. Soe Win had been responsible for organizing the killing of dozens of unarmed members of the National League for Democracy on 30 May 2003 at Depayin, where the prime target was Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Cho Cho Aye campaigned with the 88 Generation group, which was founded in 2005. The group takes its name from the student-led protests in 1988 opposing the military rule of Ne Win.

During the Saffron Revolution in 2007, Cho Cho Aye was beaten and ever since suffers from serious lower back pain that was not cured by recent operations.

She was arrested and detained in 2009 for participating in a march in support of the monks on the two-year anniversary of the Saffron Revolution. She was sent to prison and suffered physical and psychological torture, including sleep deprivation. Very harsh conditions in prison affected her health badly, and she had to struggle hard to remain strong:

I could have died and if I died, they would know only when they came to open the door in the morning. No one would know. So I could not die. I will let them defeat me only once.

They sent us to prison as we offered food to monks, so we assumed they are evil. These evil ones treated us unfairly and if I died because of this, I would be lose. They would win and I would be more than a loser. I could not stand this. I controlled and gathered myself: "I should not die. Being alive is a kind of fighting against them." It's a kind of fighting back at them, if we stay alive.



After being released, Cho Cho Aye continued her political involvement. She has been involved in demonstrations calling for a proper investigation into the 2012 massacre of NLD members. She also set up the Women Peace and Democracy Network (WPDN).

Cho Cho Aye has received very little support herself as a former political prisoner and said she is not aware of any opportunities to receive assistance.

THET THET AUNG: TORTURE SURVIVOR STARTING OVER

Thet Thet Aung is a highly articulate labor activist. She is 38 and the mother of three sons. She is second in charge of the Labor department at the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, a prominent former students group. She is also a coordinator at a center working to defend political prisoners, the Future Light Centre.

Thet Thet Aung's parents divorced when she was one year old and so she was brought up by her mother. The family ran a successful tea shop that students used to frequent, but they were forced to close it down. In 1988, when she was 11 years old, she had to cross the main street in Myenigone on her way home.

I saw the bodies of many, many bloodied schoolchildren wearing white shirts and green lower garments. They were covered with tarpaulins but strong winds were blowing them aside, exposing their bodies. It was a very sorry sight and I don't think I will ever forget it in my life.

Then my brothers, aged 10 and 11 were arrested. One of them was kept in isolation for 45 days in darkness. The other was



beaten until he was unconscious. When he got home, he had no idea where he was, while my other brother just gazed at the morning sun.

As a young girl, I began to realize what it means to be terrorized. When I was in 7th grade, my mother was arrested in front of me. Every night, for a month I stayed awake waiting for my mom to come home.

I will never forget the sight of my mother's homecoming. She could no longer walk. We had a hard time nursing her back to health. They had released her because they feared she would die in prison. All through this time, I suffered great pain.

After she graduated, Thet Thet Aung started a business with her sister-in-law making cloth diapers she designed as something she would want her own newborn son to have:

We created and sold diapers made from fabric from Ministry of Industry. We smoothed out one side of the fabric while we tried to have the other side as flannel. Then we steamed the fabric to be suitable for children, and packed them so that customers could use them right away after unpacking them.

Escaping gunfire during the Saffron Revolution, she and her friends slept in safe houses. The next morning they continued to organize while secret arrests were made during the nights that followed. Her husband was arrested on 8 October 2007, and her mother and mother-in-law were arrested two days later. Thet Thet Aung immediately went into hiding. She was told that if she gave herself up, they would release her mother and mother-in-law who were being held hostage.

I felt so sorry for my mother, my mother-in-law and my boys. The youngest was only a year old then. Who would look after them? It was truly a difficult time for me. I considered giving myself up, but that would have encouraged the authorities to try the same strategy with other comrades. I fled to the countryside and knew that just one small slip and I would fall into their clutches.

Then on 18 October, Thet Thet Aung was arrested with her aunt, her younger sister and two comrades. Her mother-in law was released the same day but her mother had to endure 10 more days of interrogation. Thet Thet Aung was also interrogated:

I was handcuffed and forced to kneel. They told me that if I didn't answer their questions, I would be deprived of sleep. After some hours, we were taken to Insein prison and interrogated incessantly for three days without sleep. If we started to doze off, they would bang the table.

In 2008, she was sentenced to 65 years imprisonment. The prisoners would often keep up their strength by singing 'Don't give up soldier' and Wine Wine's song 'Comfort', while clasping the bars of their cells. Thet Thet Aung was released in 2011. Her business is gone, and her family has no savings and little income.

Thet Thet Aung thinks that now is the right time to make the truth known and fight for justice as a transition to democracy. Her dream is to be able to take a peaceful vacation with her family.

I'd like to travel with my whole family to beautiful places but I still have not had the chance to do this. I thought about this all the time while I was in prison. I thought when I was released I could make it happen. I have been travelling a lot but I've not had the opportunity to travel with my family.

She is determined to restart their lives in Yangon but worries there will never be peace, and worries about the many political prisoners still behind bars:

I am not afraid to start over, from the beginning, but I am worried that citizens will never be able to live their lives freely.



MAR MAR OO: WORKERS' RIGHTS ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR PEACE



Mar Mar Oo is the Deputy Coordinator of the Labour department of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society organization and a highly respected activist due to her strength of will and character. She has been imprisoned three times, spending a total 17 years in prison.

As a young girl, Mar Mar Oo lived in Mandalay with her parents and loved to study. Her mother passed away when she was three and her father did not remarry. A skillful writer, he turned his hand to opera, plays, and songs. In 1989 her father was arrested and sentenced to 3 years in prison.

That same year 1989, Mar Mar Oo became a member of National Political Alliance Party and took charge of the youth propaganda division. She was arrested while circulating a leaflet from the Burma Students Union in support of Daw Aung San Su Kyi at the Mandalay market.

During my three months interrogation, they did not allow me to see my father. I was brutally beaten. One guy hit me from the front and one from the back. I had a lot of bruises and scars back then.

My head was put into a bag. If I could not answer their questions, they pulled the bag so tight that I lost consciousness. They would also slander me, saying I lived with a monk, or with

students. I was young at the time and I talked back to them angrily. For this, they beat me until I fell down. Once, I fell from a chair and the arm rest cut my hand. They didn't treat my injury straight away, but only after I lost consciousness due to excessive loss of blood.



After that, Mar Mar Oo did not receive food for three days. The guards would eat their food with deliberate relish in order to torment her.

Over three months I was often deprived of food. It hurt my stomach and even now, I have stomach problems. My face and hands were purple and so badly swollen from beatings that I could not bend my hand. When there was food, I had to eat like a dog, licking my food.

Mar Mar Oo was tried in a military court and sentenced to three years hard labour. She recalls one particularly brutal beating:

After being repeatedly kicked in the back, my periods stopped for six months. The intelligence agents from Mandalay informed my father that they had no idea who I was having relations with, to become pregnant in prison. When he told me what the prison authorities had told him, I put him straight.

As a result of her father's help, Mar Mar Oo received treatment but for many years after, she suffered from acute period pains.

Two aunts who dared to come to the prison to visit were punished by taking away their means of livelihood:

My aunt's business was completely destroyed. It was difficult for them to survive, and it was no longer possible for them to visit us in prison.

When I was released from prison in 1992 after three years we mortgaged the house and land where I used to live with my father so we could survive. We lost our house and land when we were released.



When she was released, Mar Mar Oo earned a living as a tutor, and later continued her university education. However, she was arrested again and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment in Insein prison due her involvement in the Hle-dan student's uprising in 1997. There she was subjected to mind-altering substances and mental cruelty.

They would make me hungry, then they fed me, and gave me tea to drink which had been drugged. The guards seemed like very large people in my eyes and I thought of myself as incredibly small. I tried to control my mind using the meditation techniques my father had taught me.

Mar Mar Oo survived Insein prison for over 9 years and 8 months, and was released during a prisoner's amnesty in 2005. She joined the White Campaign, where supporters dressed in white, the symbol of Burma's many martyrs, to demand the release of political prisoners. She was arrested for a third time and sentenced to 65 years in prison, later increased to 70.

After she was moved to Ba Maw prison, Mar Mar Oo heard that her father had passed away. Suffering from high blood pressure and heart disease, when he heard that Mar Mar Oo's prison sentence had been extended, his health declined rapidly. She was unable to attend the funeral.

I feel so sad that I did not have the opportunity to take care of my father while he was ill. However, monks visited the prison so I could offer alms on the seventh day after my father's death, the same day of his ceremony in Yangon.

In 2012, Mar Mar Oo and many others from the 88 groups were released from prisons all over the country. However, as family members came to celebrate their release, she felt more alone:

I missed my father so much right then. It was hard to endure the grief. On the night of my release, my friends came to pick me up but I just wanted to see my father's face.

Mar Mar Oo is living in temporary accommodation. She trains workers from around the country on labour laws and issues.

It's important for me to be instrumental in the development of our country. I can write, and I am writing now, articles for the Workers Union and about my experiences in prison. I want to share my knowledge. When I am old, I can live in a shelter and write in peace.

SAN SAN MAW: A DAUGHTER OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Although born into a political family, San San Maw is uncomfortable being called a political prisoner. As the wife of a politician, she was sentenced to 38 years in prison, then put on trial again and sentenced to a further 27 years. Although she was not tortured physically, her family suffered greatly due to her imprisonment, and she endured a great deal of trauma and stress. Her husband was also arrested and badly beaten: "My husband's whole body was covered with black and blue bruises when he was brought down from the mountains by Intelligence."

When San San Maw and her husband were detained, her mother and her husband's father (then 70 and 74) were also locked up as hostages. They pleaded for their parents to be freed, saying they would only answer questions once they had been.

Even through this hardship, my father-in-law still found time to comfort me with a smiling face. I can still hear his voice now. My mother was the same. She calmed me. All the while both of them were still in their old, dirty clothes from the lock-up.'

Their captors took ten days to free their parents, only to put them, and San San Maw's little daughter, under house arrest. Their family business, a student hostel and a successful bamboo business, rapidly disintegrated leaving their parents in a difficult situation. They were old, frail people and found it difficult to cook by themselves.



Even though they were in a miserable situation with regards to food, the authorities forbade those who tried to give food to our parents from doing so. I think my mother almost starved during that time.

After three months of house arrest, San San Maw's father-in-law was sent to Yangon to stay with her brother-in-law. He lived there for about a year while San San Maw's case was heard and the court made the decision. Her father-in-law passed away soon after.

As San San Maw is an only child, there was no one to take care of her mother who was struggling with the couple's daughter and visiting them in prison. Later, San San Maw was moved to Insein prison from Tharyarwaddy.

My mother had high blood pressure. They said that when she got that news at around 11 in the morning that I would go to Insein, she had a stroke and passed away. It makes me so sad. Your parents are irreplaceable in life. I feel terribly sorry for them as they had to go through this situation because of us. I feel like I failed to take responsibility for them.

Whenever I am very depressed and sad, I try to comfort myself by saying that many people like us have gone through similar situations. But it is a lie if I say I am comforted by such thoughts. I always have to reassure myself that we are destined to experience tragedy in life. I will never have my parents back.'

When San San Maw was released in 2013, she experienced mixed emotions. Out of seven friends arrested together, only five were freed. San San Maw was not allowed to see her daughter for another three months.

She feels that she is the victim of false beliefs that those who join openly political movements are respected politicians whilst anyone who has contact with an armed group is a 'terrorist'. In prison, people were told that San San Maw was a terrorist and they ostracized her.

I was so stressed out when I first went to prison, I could not find the words to explain how I felt. During that period, I tried to explain to those who could understand things what had happened and I tried to stay peaceful and calm through prayer.

Somehow I found the emotional strength to survive. I could see my husband every two weeks and I asked him about things I didn't understand. He explained and encouraged me a lot even though he was in prison at the same time. He gave me emotional strength and taught me how to deal with people.

In the past, San San Maw would house around 40 people in her hostel, making around 7,000 Kyat per student in a year. The family could live for the whole rainy season on the profits from selling bamboo. She was released from prison two years ago, but she has not been able to find work.

I can't do anything right now. My family life is ruined and I do not have any investment to begin a business. I only know how to run my own business. I don't have the confidence to work for others, my qualifications are inadequate. It is not easy to go outside to find work. I have ideas for my own business but I don't have any money, so I don't have any income at the moment.

I can't avoid this situation, so I try to be happy while caring for my husband. We all have our own worries but we just hide them and pretend to be happy. The only thing that I ever got to help me heal was a poem my husband wrote for me in 2010. It was called "Don't cry Mi Shay."

OHMAR: SEWING TOGETHER A TORN NATION

A skillful seamstress, Ohmar is 48 and lives in Yangon. Ohmar became a member of NLD in 1989 as a youth representative for Thin-gan-kyun Township. Later, she was forced to move and transferred to the South Dagon branch of the party. In 2000, Ohmar was detained for being a youth organizer. She was forbidden to see any of her family, and could not even receive parcels in prison for over ten months. Later, with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross, her family was given permission to send her food. However, by the time she received the parcels, all the food inside had gone bad. Conditions for all the prisoners were very hard. Ohmar made empty water bottles into cups and bowls, and even had to use one for the bathroom.

After she was released, Ohmar was unable to get new projects for her machine-made embroidery work as people did not trust her anymore. Six months after her release, her father passed away. Then, during the 2007 Saffron Revolution, she was



detained again. Her older brother's family continued their activism, and later fled to the Thai border to avoid arrest.

After Ohmar was released from her second stretch in prison, Myanmar was hit by cyclone Nargis. She travelled to affected areas, however, the authorities arrested her three times for her humanitarian work. Ohmar was taken in for interrogation whenever the political situation became unstable.

For me, justice is concerned with human rights. We are born with rights and according to those rights, we are free to talk, to express our thoughts, to get married, to worship, write, march and make speeches. These are basic human rights. When we lose these rights, we lose justice.

Ohmar takes care of her elderly mother in Yangon. She likes to sing a song about a daughter who has gone away.

The song is about the youngest daughter who misses her mother's home after she gets married. For me, I'm in politics out of choice and I missed my mom's home a lot when I was in prison. I don't need to change the lyrics as it means a lot to me the way it is.

I think Mom loves me more as I am the youngest of my brothers and sisters. Even though I was a little naughty in an endearing way, under the care of my parents, I didn't have any worries. Then, when I found the one I loved in this world, I wanted to live together with him. The song says, "Beloved daughter, she misses mom's home only, and struggles for life. When having someone to love in this difficult life journey, you remember the warmth of

your mom's love and gratitude. Beloved daughter misses mom's home only."

I am looking forward to peace for our country in the future as it will be developing, becoming prosperous but only if at the same time there is peace. We can hope for nothing if we don't have peace. I simply want to have the chance to sleep well with my family without any worries.



MA THANDAR: DETERMINATION FOR JUSTICE IN THE DARKEST HOURS

Ma Thandar is a 45 year old poet and writer from the Irrawaddy region. Her pen name is Ma Ni and she is well known for her article, *Ma Shwe Kyaw's success from the crack of the prison wall*. Active in politics since 1988, the military government banished her from her home region, forcing her to move to Yangon. In Yangon, she has been arrested and detained many times.

In 2006, she was arrested without a warrant due to her involvement in politics. Interrogated incessantly for nine days, she was kept without food and water, and deprived of sleep.

I was harshly beaten in many, many ways by men. We told them to call the women wardens to beat us because the men would hit us on all parts of our bodies, some of which were completely inappropriate. We could not endure the ferocity of the beating. When we told them ask police women to beat us instead, they did not listen. Many men would gather round and beat a woman mercilessly.

After interrogation, Ma Thandar was immediately sent to prison. She was denied access to a lawyer, as she would be tried under a military tribunal. Consigned to solitary confinement in a dark cell for nine months, she was prevented from communicating with family members.



Without permitting us to see anyone, we were sent before a court of law, a special court of law which was outside the prison. First we had to go from the inner wall to the outside wall of the prison. Then we were transported to the military tribunal by big trucks, which were covered with black plastic sheets so that people could not see us.

At that time we were very doubtful that we were still considered to be citizens of our country. The people who ill-treated us were our fellow citizens. Why did they treat us so badly? We were not prisoners of war. However, being a citizen and a woman at that, the males gathered and sent me to a court of law without allowing me any opportunity to defend myself. The court of law quickly issued the official verdict and sentenced me to a life sentence plus 19 years and a 1000 kyat fine.

Due to her experiences of being politically oppressed and sexually assaulted, Ma Thandar believes there is no justice:

All along, I have been active in politics and remained faithful to my political beliefs. What we really and truly want is justice through democracy. The reason why I have had to suffer is because there is no justice. I, a citizen and a woman, had to suffer shame and torture through the brutal actions carried out by a group of men. I have suffered so much that I consider their actions to be sexual assault.

Now we are no longer in prison, we need to fight for just laws that will fulfill the needs of citizens. To do this, we need a government able and sincere enough to do it. The law will be worthless if the people prescribing it are insincere, ignorant, and lacking in goodwill. Furthermore, if the law prescribed is right, we will still need honest legal procedures as well as sincere and able officers to execute law enforcement. The system must be free of bribery and corruption. We need good laws passed by a good government. We need the public to abide by the law. Only then can we have the justice we have all been hoping for.



During her time in solitary confinement, Ma Thandar was forced to spend many months alone in almost total darkness. She was given a longer sentence for writing poems in prison.

We could do nothing except make a sound by ourselves. So I sang once in a while. However, I was never able to sing the whole song through. So instead, I composed poems by speaking aloud. The charge against me is writing an article criticizing the State Peace and Development Council. Because of that I was handed a life sentence! The poems I wrote in prison were poems to encourage and lift the spirits of those who read them. When I read them, I read them with my heart and soul. When I do this, I feel the renewal of strength and spirit within myself.

A day after meeting with other survivors during a gathering for this project in September 2014, Ma Thandar learned that her husband Ko Par Gyi, a freelance journalist, had disappeared while covering the conflict in Mon State. One week later, she discovered that he had been tortured and killed by soldiers from the Burmese Army. Ma Thandar filed a case to prosecute the soldiers responsible for his death, and she continues to fight for justice and to expose the truth about what happened to her husband.

Ma Thandar gave a copy of the poem below, about the lives of political prisoners, to a group of youths who were outside the prison. The poem was reproduced with a picture of Daw Aung San Su Kyi, and the title 'Ma Shwe Kyaw's success from the crack of the prison wall'.



Victory

By Ma Thandar

Walking bravely through the flames to uphold our beliefs
Are we walking for justice through thorn bushes without
faltering
Are we Comrades!
Uphold the flag. Let's plant it on the prison walls!
We who were involved in political activities consider prison
As our mother's house.
Our lives were spent going in and coming out.
We suffered oppression of many kinds.
However, our faces showed no discouragement in front of the
prison guards.
A single teardrop never fell down.
When we wanted to cry, we waited till we got into our
mosquito nets
And only then we cried, silently.
This is our strength, our force, our power

Chapter 19

Key Findings and Recommendations

What did we discover after sitting down with 140 women survivors of violence in three countries, listening to their stories, disappointments and hopes? This chapter outlines our key findings based on the patterns we discovered and presents recommendations for governments and the international community, as well as researchers, donors and advocacy groups and other civil society actors.

Our research was not intended to be quantitative nor was the sample selected randomly. Instead, we asked researchers and survivors to find women close to them, with similar experiences of violence and impunity. Facilitators used guidelines to collect qualitative information, but questions were open ended. Participants were encouraged to share what information they were comfortable with. Some participants were speaking openly about their experiences for the first time, some wanted to share every detail while others were much more guarded.

Despite these limitations, clear patterns emerged, allowing us to identify 12 key findings from the information provided by 140 women in 12 communities across three countries.¹³⁶

ONGOING VIOLENCE AND IMPUNITY

1. Women continue to experience systematic, conflict-related violence despite international efforts to prevent it.

In the 1990s conventions and declarations began to call for an end to violence against women in conflict,¹³⁷ putting the issue firmly on the international agenda. Most recently, Indonesia, Timor Leste and Myanmar all signed the 2013 Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict.

However, women spoke of their experience of violence over a period from 1965 to the present day in spite of international momentum to halt it. Almost half of the 140 women had been arbitrarily detained (66) and suffered torture or ill-treatment (65). Forty-eight women reported sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, forced nudity, threats to rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage.

Experiences of sexual violence are notoriously difficult to disclose. Barriers to disclosure include shame, fear of stigma and judgment from family and the community, concerns about confidentiality and safety, and uncertainty about the criminal justice system. In Aceh, under a local Shariah-based law, women who disclose being raped risk accusation of adultery if they are unable to prove their claim. Such cultural norms that blame the victim become disincentive to speaking out. Indeed, many women mentioned the shame and discrimination they experienced from their family and community due to sexual violence. Many of the women also shared stories of directly witnessing or hearing about rape and other

sexual violence, noting that many women are too ashamed or afraid to talk about their own experiences

Women did not speak of discrete and isolated events but of ongoing and repeated violations over a prolonged period of time extending beyond the cessation of active conflict. Importantly, the violence experienced was not limited to sexual violence but included violations of economic, social, and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. The impact was felt by their children and grandchildren, with the continuity of violence, and even the compounding nature of violations, continuing in spite of high-level international and national commitments to end violence against women in conflict.

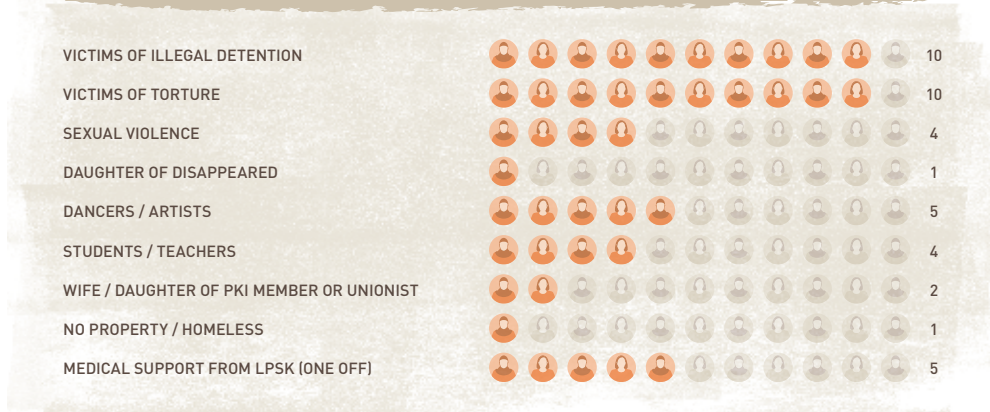
We must move away from the prevailing, limiting and sensationalist focus on sexual violence. A wider lens to gather information can improve the response and the design of assistance and redress, discussed further in Key Finding 4.

The stories from Indonesia stretch across the vast archipelago, from the mid-1960s to the present day. Of the 19 participants who suffered violations in connection with the 1965 anti-communist purges in Yogyakarta and Kupang, most had been unlawfully detained (three for over 13 years) and tortured because of suspected links to PKI. Eight reported sexual violence including forced nudity and sexual harassment. Four others described extreme poverty and discrimination due to the incarceration of their fathers and husbands. The eight daughters and wives of former political prisoners in Buru survived violent religious riots in 1999 while enduring years of discrimination.

YOGYA

AGES DETAINED 14-25 • AGES NOW 59-70 • LENGTH OF DETENTION > 1-13 YEARS

11 WOMEN



KUPANG 1965

8 WOMEN
AGE NOW 53-79



FATHER DETAINED		4
HUSBAND DETAINED		3
REPORTED SUFFERING DISCRIMINATION		6
TORTURED		4
ILLEGALLY DETAINED		3

BURU

8 WOMEN
AGE NOW 45-78



FATHER DETAINED AND SENT TO BURU		5
HUSBAND DETAINED AND SENT TO BURU		2
SENT TO BURU THEMSELVES		7
REPORTED SUFFERING DISCRIMINATION		5
VICTIMS OF ILLEGAL DETENTION		0
VICTIMS OF TORTURE		0
SEXUAL VIOLENCE		0

In Aceh, Indonesia, all 11 participants experienced torture and inhumane treatment during heightened military operations between 2002-2005. Six also experienced illegal detention and torture during the 1990-1998 military operations, highlighting the protracted nature of violence against women in conflict. Women were targeted because their husbands, fathers, brothers or uncles were suspected guerrilla supporters or members, and one woman was accused of being a combatant herself. Six women reported sexual violence, including forced nudity, sexual humiliation, threats to rape, rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment at the hands of the Indonesian military.

ACEH

11 WOMEN
AGE NOW 22-65



HUSBAND / FAMILY MEMBER KILLED OR DISAPPEARED	6	6
HUSBAND / FAMILY MEMBER DETAINED AND TORTURED	3	3
ILLEGALLY DETAINED	7	7
SEXUAL VIOLENCE	6	6
DETAINED WITH THEIR CHILD	3	3
SEPARATED FROM CHILDREN WHILE DETAINED	4	4
PROPERTY DESTROYED	6	6
FORCED TO SELL LAND TO SURVIVE	3	3
WIDOWS	4	4
VIOLENCE WHILE PREGNANT	3	3
REPORTED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PRE OR POST CONFLICT	2	2

In Papua, Indonesia, on-going conflict between the Indonesian government and the Papuan people has taken place since the 1960s. The 11 women from Papua spoke about violence from 1968 up to the present. Two experienced violence after participating in a demonstration in Biak in 1998. Five reported their village being attacked as part of military operations and three were explicitly targeted because of their husbands' or their own suspected affiliation with the rebel group, OPM. Six had been unlawfully detained and tortured. Five reported a husband or family member killed or disappeared, three reported sexual violence, including rape, and three reported attempts by Indonesian soldiers to shoot and kill them.

337

PAPUA

11 WOMEN
AGE NOW 40-63



HUSBAND OR FATHER KILLED OR DISAPPEARED	5	5
INDONESIAN MILITARY ATTEMPTED TO SHOOT THEM	3	3
ILLEGALLY DETAINED	6	6
TORTURED	6	6
SEXUAL VIOLENCE	3	3
DISCRIMINATION	6	6
PROPERTY DESTROYED	5	5

For many women in Timor Leste, their experience of violence started with the invasion of 1975. Many fled to the hinterland with their families, living for years under threat of violence while facing starvation and sickness. During the 24-year occupation the women experienced unlawful detention, torture, rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage. Many were forcibly displaced, particularly during the violence around the referendum in 1999. Out of 51 participants more than half (28) were unlawfully detained, just under half (23) experienced torture and inhumane treatment, and 26 experienced sexual violence. Seven women were used as sexual slaves or forced to marry members of the security forces.

KUPANG 1999

11 WOMEN
AGE NOW 30-74



DISPLACED IN 1999		11
EVER RETURNED TO TIMOR LESTE FOR A VISIT		1
PROMISED LAND AND HOUSING		11
CURRENT INADEQUATE HOUSING		11

MARABIA

10 WOMEN
AGES DETAINED 12-29 • AGES NOW 46-67 • YEARS SPENT IN ATAURO 3-4



ILLEGALLY DETAINED		8
TORTURED		5
SEXUAL VIOLENCE		6
SENT TO ATAURO		6

BAUCAU

11 WOMEN
AGE NOW 41-65



FORCED MARRIAGE/SEX SLAVE		4
ILLEGALLY DETAINED		7
TORTURED		7
SEXUAL VIOLENCE		8
HAS CHILDREN BORN OF RAPE		4
HUSBAND OR FAMILY MEMBER DETAINED		8
WIDOW		5

AINARO

8 WOMEN
AGE NOW 34-73



ILLEGALLY DETAINED	5
TORTURED	5
SEXUAL VIOLENCE	4
WIDOW	3

AINARO CASSA

8 WOMEN
AGE NOW 39-74



ILLEGALLY DETAINED	6
TORTURED	4
SEXUAL VIOLENCE	5

BOBONARO

12 WOMEN
AGE NOW 50-78



WIDOW	11
SINGLE MOTHER	11
HUSBAND KILLED IN 1999	11
HUSBAND OR FAMILY MEMBER KILLED OR MISSING	12
CLAIMS BY IN-LAWS FOR LAND OR BENEFITS	3

In Myanmar, women in ethnic areas spoke of violence throughout their lives, up to the present. Of the 19 women living in ethnic areas, one disclosed experiencing sexual violence herself and three were seeking justice for daughters and a granddaughter allegedly raped and murdered in 2011 and 2012, respectively. Two women had been detained and three suffered torture and ill-treatment, while most endured long periods of displacement with no prospect of a safe return. Of the separate group of 10 former political prisoners in Yangon, nine women experienced torture and inhumane treatment and three reported sexual violence in detention since the mid-1990s.

In all the areas we researched, women experience violence repeatedly over time. Without redress, it continues to act as a source of trauma, impoverishment, and social stigma.

KACHIN

9 WOMEN
AGE NOW 35-64



KAREN

10 WOMEN
AGE NOW 15-71



YANGOON POLITICAL PRISONERS

10 WOMEN
AGE NOW 45-51



2. Women victims experience an atrophy of justice.

The absence of justice exacerbates these persisting problems. Impunity is the norm for most women victims of armed conflict and state violence, including victims of sexual violence.

KEY FINDING

WOMEN VICTIMS EXPERIENCE AN ATROPHY OF JUSTICE.

OF 140 WOMEN,
ONLY 10 ATTEMPTED
TO SEEK JUSTICE
IN COURTS.

ONLY 8 GOT JUSTICE



In all three countries, women believed that seeking justice or redress will only bring new problems and suffering upon them. This fear is reinforced by the failure of law enforcement and the judiciary to investigate or prosecute perpetrators. As impunity, stigma, and discrimination persist, women's confidence and capacity to articulate the injustice they experienced decrease. Like a wasted muscle, women victims lose the capacity and energy to even imagine how to demand the righting of a wrong. Some relegate justice to the after-life, unable to see how to get justice in this life.

Out of 140 women, only 10 attempted to seek justice through the legal system. Six were widows who participated in the criminal trials of the militias who murdered their husbands in Timor-Leste. One case from Timor Leste and all three from Myanmar were for sexual violence. In Timor-Leste, the court convicted three men for rape as a crime against humanity in 2002, but six years later all prisoners received a presidential pardon.¹³⁸ Only one case in Myanmar was tried in a court, with the outcome unsatisfactory to the victim's family.

Despite the appalling record of impunity, some women still expressed a desire for justice. Although disappointed and weary, they still wish to know the whereabouts of their disappeared family members, the reason for their illegal detention and torture and they questioned why perpetrators of violence are living free from punishment.

In Indonesia, none of the 60 victims were able to access justice. In Aceh, women found government development assistance funds for victims of conflict difficult to access. Claiming it too difficult to prove rape, officials sidestepped sexual violence as a criteria for benefits. Other victims felt that those with connections to the new government have siphoned off benefits. In other parts of Indonesia, the lack of official acknowledgement of the events of 1965, or of the validity of grievances by victims and advocates in Papua, have blocked access to justice for survivors of violence.

In Timor-Leste, only seven out of the 51 women were able to access a court, in this case the UN- supported serious crimes investigations and trials. That process only focused on the crimes of 1999, despite jurisdiction extending back to 1975, while the majority of the women in this study experienced violations during military operations in the 1980s and 1990s. Of the seven cases in which women accessed justice, six were trials of former militia members guilty of murdering husbands or family members of women in the study, and only one case involved rape as a crime against humanity. It is the only conviction of sexual violence as a crime against humanity in the Asia Pacific post-World War II.¹³⁹

Most survivors live in very poor conditions, and continue to experience discrimination and exclusion. A trust fund written into the statute of the serious crimes court was never established.

In Myanmar, three women, all Kachin, out of 29 spoke of attempts to seek justice that led to further harassment and other problems. Two were unsuccessful and the third was unsatisfactory, as a military court awarded a family minimal compensation for the rape and murder of their daughter by soldiers. One perpetrator was reportedly sentenced, although the family does not know if he was ever imprisoned. In one of the unsuccessful cases concerning the daughter of a research participant who was abducted by the Burmese armed forces, the Supreme Court rejected the case without hearing the testimony of the victim's husband. In the second, a survivor of police violence sent a complaint letter to the authorities, leading only to her being investigated, threatened and harassed by the police. Recent attempts to open a case have been unsuccessful as the police claim their inability to identify the perpetrators.

A significant difference to the two other contexts, women in Myanmar maintained a strong desire for justice, with several of the political prisoners in Yangon protesting inhumane conditions while in detention. Once released, most continue to fight for democracy and peace, and many are effective leaders within the democratic movement. In many cases, imprisonment has radicalized them further and strengthened their determination. As the transition in Myanmar is still taking place, their hope and determination for change has outweighed the disappointments around justice.

3. Women act locally, but remain peripheral in formal negotiations and peace building

The impact of conflict on women and their families is severe and undeniable. Further, participants frequently mentioned their desire of peace for themselves and future generations. However, none of the 140 women were engaged in formal peace processes, despite the 15-year-old UNSCR 1325 urging countries “to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.”¹⁴⁰

However, some participants *have* taken action for peace informally at a grass roots level in their own communities, such as trauma recovery, human rights and peace promotion work, and recognition and memorialization of sites and dates of significance. These efforts forge a way for their suffering to be recognized and their communities to accept them.

All of the 27 women affected by the 1965 atrocities in Indonesia have participated in public hearings, media events, dialogue with local officials on services for victims, and book launchings focused on seeking truth and demanding recovery, rehabilitation and compensation. Five women from Yogyakarta participated in a national hearing where survivors spoke about their experiences and demands for justice and acknowledgment. One woman on Buru Island became a teacher and now works on promoting peace.

In Aceh, although women played a major role in mitigating conflict, providing humanitarian support, monitoring human rights violations and advocating for peace, only one woman from the rebel group participated in the official peace process. None of the 11 research participants were involved in peace-building efforts although all expressed a desire for peace. In Papua, a long-time civil society push for peace talks between indigenous leaders and the central government had minimal women’s participation. None of the Papuan research participants spoke of formal peace processes but all expressed their desire for peace, and two participated in gatherings of victims organized by NGOs and the church.

The conflict in Timor-Leste was not resolved by a peace process, but through a referendum supported by the United Nations as agreed by Indonesia and Portugal and the arrival of peacekeeping force. Timorese women took an active part in voter education, provided humanitarian care for victims of violence, and in peace building during the transition towards independence. Women were involved in the interim government, writing the constitution and eventually, in parliament and elected government. Of the 51 women involved in the research, seven gave statements or spoke at public hearings facilitated by the CAVR (2002-2003) and Indonesia’s civil society truth-seeking process (2013), and three mentioned assisting fellow victims through community-based organizations and NGOs.

In Myanmar, women victims in ethnic rural areas, in particular women most affected by conflict and displacement, do not have substantial understanding or knowledge of the peace processes taking place in their name at the political level. Some participants are involved in local, informal human rights and peace promotion work, but none are involved in formal peace processes. Grassroots women’s organizations and civil society organizations representing women’s interests are excluded from meaningful participation in the peace process, and there are almost

no women at the discussion table.¹⁴¹ Study participants expressed doubt, distrust and skepticism as to the outcome of the process.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VIOLATIONS

4. Despite their resilience and innovation, women victims' struggle for economic survival affects their access to justice

The majority of the 140 women and their families were subsistence farmers or small traders, with little to cushion them in times of crisis. Typically, they experienced violations of civil and political rights together with violations of their social economic rights. This combination increased their vulnerability, often leaving them preoccupied with simply struggling to survive in the wake of violence. The loss of family (especially husbands, fathers or sons), destruction of property, lack of access to land and livelihoods, and exclusion from educational and employment opportunities and basic services, all undermined their socioeconomic wellbeing. The impact has often extended over many years, if not decades. This crucial finding, clearly emerging as a persistent and urgent thread running through most of the stories in this report, demands specific assistance to effectively address social and economic needs.

KEY FINDING

THE STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL
AFFECTS WOMENS ACCESS TO JUSTICE.

OF 140 WOMEN

NEARLY HALF

HAD A FATHER/HUSBAND/SON DISAPPEARED OR KILLED

NEARLY HALF

HAD A FATHER/HUSBAND/SON DETAINED

OVER A THIRD

LOST PROPERTY TO THEFT, DESTRUCTION AND FORCED SALE

THE MAJORITY

WERE DISPLACED OR FORCED TO FLEE



Loss of family members

Almost half (60) of the participants reported a husband, father or son killed or missing, and 54 reported them detained, increasing their social and economic vulnerability. Many became sole caregivers and providers for their children and younger siblings. Losing a son also led to economic hardship, with women reporting lost labour and monetary support. Others described how ongoing illness and trauma suffered by male family members increased the caring burden on the women themselves.

In Aceh, Papua, Timor Leste and Myanmar women spoke of the pressures on them to survive and raise families after the loss of male breadwinners and subsistence farmers due to conflict, related illness, displacement or detention. Many Indonesian survivors of 1965 described the impact of their fathers being detained for long periods or killed. Oldest sisters in particular took on responsibilities beyond their years, earning money to feed and send their younger siblings to school and maintaining subsistence crops, often sacrificing their own education and limiting their future employment opportunities. When their own mothers were breastfeeding or pregnant these responsibilities increased. One survivor spoke of foregoing marriage to focus on raising her younger siblings.

Loss of access to land, property and livelihoods

Many women mentioned losing land, property and means of livelihood as a direct or indirect result of conflict. A total of 42 women spoke of having their homes, possessions, gardens, livestock, merchandise or farming equipment destroyed or stolen by military and militias, directly impacting on their ability to survive. Many described starting from scratch with no capital and few resources.

Sixteen women spoke of having to sell or pawn their land, or losing their land through disputes. Others found their land and homes occupied while they were detained or displaced, further increasing their vulnerability. In Aceh, three women reported that their family had to sell or mortgage land at unfavorable prices for economic survival or to pay hefty legal fees.

One survivor of 1965 from Yogyakarta reported that her home was occupied while she was detained for 13 years. Another reported that with the arrest of her father, her mother had to sell their land and used the funds to invest in livestock. Another woman from Kupang told the story of male relatives who accused her father of being a communist and claimed his land because he only had daughters. She hopes the local government will issue a land certificate to verify her own family's ownership. In Timor Leste, two widows in Maliana are dealing with claims from their in-laws for their husbands' land (discussed further under Key Finding 5). In Myanmar, displaced women spoke about losing access to land and political prisoners told of losing their livelihoods and properties while in detention.

Displacement, either internally or across international borders was reported by 90 of the women. Many women in Papua, Timor Leste and Myanmar fled active conflict to survive, some living in the forest or in camps for years, limiting their ability to maintain their regular farms and gardens and forcing them to survive on leaves, wild flowers and fruits. In these settings, women also reported restrictions on their movement, for example having to have a mandatory travel pass to move around freely, and also the risk of capture and sexual assault if encountering military or militia. Other women were exiled to Atauro Island in Timor Leste, living in terrible

conditions for up to four years, forced to abandon gardens and livestock. Active conflict and restriction of movement also hampered access to markets. Eight of the 1965 survivors were exiled to Buru and forced to start their lives from scratch, while in Myanmar 17 of the 19 Kachin and Karen women are still displaced. (Displacement is explored further under Key Finding 7.)

Economic hardships erode women's strength to think about justice and attempts to heal. Asked whether they felt that justice had been done, women's answers were largely negative, revealing a concept of justice that went beyond a wish to see perpetrators punished or the state acknowledge their status as innocent victims. They also expressed a need to be given back what was taken, in particular their land for displaced women, and the belief that a state must provide equally for their citizens without discrimination, ensuring a decent standard of living and basic human dignity.

Current survival strategies

The research also highlights women's tenacity and resilience, creativity and strength in the face of adversity. They told incredible stories of survival in the face of losing major economic resources and support networks. Despite pain and suffering, the 140 women in this research have found the strength to carry on, making sacrifices, taking risks and working extremely hard. Their status as survivors moves from the static "women as victims" paradigm, towards one that recognizes them as strong, resilient, capable, and skilled, and so able to adapt, negotiate and support their families and be involved in their communities.

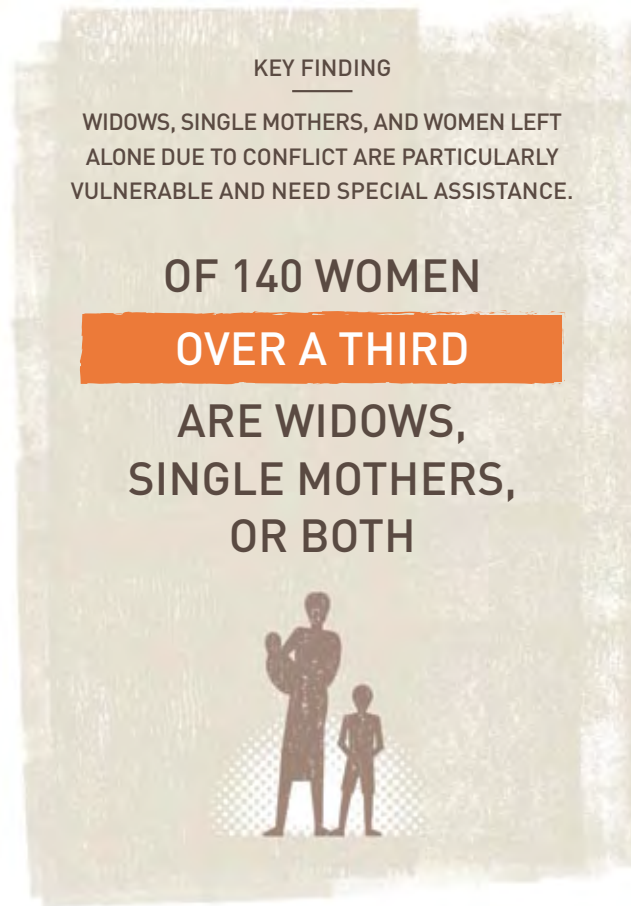
With limited education and capital, many of the women grow vegetables and fruits to consume, selling any surplus. One woman in Bobonaro told of carrying heavy loads and walking 10 kilometers to the market to sell vegetables. For those without access to farmland, some provide agricultural wage labour, doing the back-breaking work of hoeing, planting, weeding, harvesting, threshing and winnowing, or working as day laborers on construction projects.

A small number earn wages through extremely diverse activities such as teaching, dance and drama performances, preparing corpses for funerals, rental income, working abroad, informal businesses or midwifery. Others demonstrate a remarkable innovation in home industry and entrepreneurship, such as weaving clothes and handbags out of discarded plastic, selling plants and flowers, hand sewing hairpieces from natural hair, processing soybeans, selling second hand clothes and collecting *kapok* fiber to make pillows just to name a few. Many women run small kiosks selling daily necessities, while others utilize their sewing, embroidery and cooking skills to make small cakes and snacks to sale at the market, corner stores, or in schools. Many Timorese women weave *tais*, a traditional cloth. Only a few women had enough capital to open small businesses: a dry goods shop, a laundry, and a hair salon. A number of women joined or established self-help groups and other initiatives to improve their lives.

5. Widows, single mothers, and women left alone due to conflict are particularly vulnerable and need special assistance.

Of the 140 participants, 47 are widows and 37 are single mothers (31 are both). Widows are defined here as a woman who lost a husband or partner during active conflict or to trauma-related health complications in later years. Single mothers are defined as women raising children alone, including survivors of rape, and those

abandoned by husbands after experiencing sexual violence. Being a widow or single mother *and* a survivor of human rights violations makes women especially vulnerable and in need of targeted support.



Widows often suffer from discrimination and stigma, as well as rejection from their partner's family. This endangers inheritance rights to land or pensions, and hampers access to social and economic capital. Single mothers are often socially maligned and occupy marginal positions in their communities, and women with children born of rape are particularly stigmatised. Widows and single mothers are often unable to provide opportunities for education to their children, constraining their ability to break out of the cycle of poverty.

Many of the women have separated from their husbands due to the frequency and duration of their detention. Some were abandoned after suffering rape and sexual violence. Three of the women felt they had never had the opportunity to marry, losing their youth to detention or to raising and supporting their younger siblings.

6. Children are trapped in violence and poverty, but also provide the inspiration for women to strive for a better future.

The research is a reminder of the intergenerational impact of conflict, demanding a programming and policy response to the trauma, psychological and socio-economic effects especially on children. Thirty-nine participants were under the age of 18 when they experienced torture, detention, forced displacement, the detention or murder of a parent, and many others witnessed violations as children.

A total of 11 women spoke of experiencing torture or inhumane treatment while pregnant, including three who were raped leading to one miscarriage. Three women told heart-breaking stories of the murder of their children, including a nine-year-old Papuan girl who was shot dead running alongside her mother, a Timorese teenager murdered by a militia, and the gang rape and murder of a 16-year-old Kachin girl by Burmese soldiers. Others lost children due to illness, malnutrition, or lack of health care as indirect consequences of conflict.



Women's roles as primary care givers resulted in their children witnessing and directly experiencing human rights violations. Nine women were detained with their children as they were still breastfeeding upon arrest or had no family or friends to look after the children. One woman in Aceh described how her child heard interrogations and torture while they were detained together, and two of her children directly experienced torture themselves. Women in Timor Leste, Kupang and Aceh tell of their children being deprived of food while in detention and a woman in Papua tells of being arrested and tortured until she lost consciousness while carrying her infant daughter.

For some women, one of the most heart wrenching experiences of conflict was forcible separation from their children. Children stayed with their fathers, grandparents or other relatives while women were detained, sometimes for years. Women tell of feeling like they were abandoning their children and facing discrimination from their community or family when they were finally released. One Timorese woman shared a story of being taken by an Indonesian soldier at the age of six, and was mistreated and abused throughout her childhood.

Without one or both parents, children's vulnerability is heightened. The loss of the primary provider increases the risk of poverty and dropping out of school. In patrilineal societies, it increases the risk of losing rights to their father's land, further examined below.

In Timor Leste nine women reported that they had given birth to a child conceived in rape, including from forced marriage and sexual slavery. These children lack both economic support and social status and often face discrimination from their communities, making them vulnerable to violence and exploitation.

Conflict has also resulted in lost opportunities for children. Women survivors often had to drop out of school due to intolerable discrimination, unaffordable school fees, the need to contribute to the household income and support their siblings. Displaced women in Tuapukan and Myanmar noted the ongoing lack of educational opportunities for their children.

Over a dozen women explicitly mentioned the stigma and discrimination they faced as children, or the struggles their own children now feel. Particularly for survivors from the Indonesian atrocities of 1965, the lack of official recognition has caused many families to keep their stories of detention and torture a secret confined only within their family. Some women have internalized impunity, or sought to protect their children, by never disclosing to them what they had been through. Through the course of this research some of these women decided to tell their children the truth. A participant from Aceh had tried to protect her eldest daughter by pretending to be her aunt, maintaining this story right up until 2013. Though the Stone and Flowers research methodology, her daughter began to understand why her mother had taken such drastic measures.

A related and positive finding showed women's own children are an incredible source of inspiration and strength, often giving them their sole reason not to give up. The majority of women articulated their first priority was to provide education for their children and grandchildren, and of the great sacrifices they made to do so. Their children and grandchildren continue to inspire them to strive for peace and justice ensuring the violence of the past is not repeated.

7. Displacement disrupts livelihoods and increases women's vulnerability.

A total of 90 women participants were displaced by conflict, either across international borders as refugees or internally displaced. Following the referendum in Timor Leste, hundreds of thousands of Timorese were forcibly deported to camps in West Timor. Many brought only the clothes on their backs and have never seen the relatives they left behind again.

Other Timorese survivors from Bobonaro and Ainaro were also sent across the border to Indonesian West Timor but when they returned, they would often find their houses burned down and looted, their livestock slain and their fields neglected. Seven other women from Timor Leste were sent to Atauro Island in the 1980s, and survived deplorable conditions for as long as three years, forced to labour on road projects.

KEY FINDING
DISPLACEMENT DISRUPTS LIVELIHOODS
AND INCREASES VULNERABILITY.

OF 140 WOMEN
TWO THIRDS
WERE DISPLACED
DUE TO CONFLICT,
BOTH INTERNALLY
AND ACROSS BORDERS



Of the survivors from 1965, eight were sent as young women from Java to Buru Island in the northeastern province of Maluku to join their fathers and husbands who had been incarcerated there. These women spoke of the challenges of starting a new life and establishing a livelihood in extremely harsh conditions.

As mentioned under Key Finding 4, women in Aceh, Papua and Timor Leste all described fleeing to the hinterland to survive, some living in the forest for years. Others mentioned restrictions on their movement during military operations, which prevented them from accessing their sources of livelihoods and markets. In these locations during periods of backlash against the independence movement, the Indonesian military inflicted collective punishment on communities believed to support the resistance by destroying gardens and killing livestock.

In the ethnic areas of Myanmar where armed conflict has been waged for decades, women experienced extremely long periods of displacement resulting in loss of livelihood and opportunities, with little prospects of a safe return. 17 of the 19 women from Kachin and Karen communities involved in the research have been displaced and are living in IDP villages or camps. Most have been repeatedly displaced. Those who are not living in formal IDP camps have not been accounted for and therefore do not have access to humanitarian assistance, increasing their vulnerability.

For women displaced in the ethnic conflict zones the research shows that being allowed to return to their villages *safely* is overwhelmingly their first demand. Living in displacement leaves women feeling insecure, fragile and exposed to further violence, distanced from their land and sources of income, unable to farm or to develop businesses, unable to provide adequate housing for their families, and unable to travel freely and build their social links and livelihood opportunities. There is currently no prospect of safe return for these displaced populations in Myanmar. Further, if able to return, many would find their land has been confiscated during their absence. In addition their houses, possessions, farming equipment and livestock would be lost, and their property sewn with landmines.

8. Women victims are vulnerable to new forms of violence including domestic and community violence

Most of the women in the research did not experience a discrete incident, but rather a continuum of violence. Conflict and violations increase the vulnerability of women and the likelihood of domestic and community violence, and other forms of violence that are ongoing and compounding. For example, many women found their already precarious economic situation was worsened by being socially ostracized as victims or as children of targeted political or ethnic groups. They found their land taken away, homes occupied, and their own families rejecting them out of fear or suspicion. Participants experienced domestic violence, violence over land disputes, discrimination and stigma from their family, community and from the state.

In Indonesia, several Acehnese women shared experiences of domestic violence from their husbands and in once case from a father, due in part to the men's own experience of trauma. Without ongoing support services for both male and female trauma survivors they are left in a cycle of violence. In Papua two women spoke of being stigmatized and later abandoned by their husbands after being raped by soldiers. Others spoke of being seen as separatists in their communities and being treated with suspicion and contempt, which they believe has hampered their access to state assistance and their ability to engage in social activities.

In Buru Island, women who were brought as young girls to the prison island to accompany their detained fathers were attacked again during the 1999 religious conflict that swept the province of Maluku. Other victims of the 1965 violence often recalled stigma and discrimination from family members, the wider community and government officials.

In Timor-Leste, several widows reported that since their husbands were killed, their in-laws contested their claims to their land or husband's pension. Others faced discrimination from their community or rejection by husbands following rape and sexual slavery.

In Myanmar, the omnipresence of soldiers and army posts near IDP camps or villages in conflict or post-conflict areas exposes women to further violence, in particular sexual violence. The unstable political and military situation increases the level of uncertainty, isolation and insecurity. Often, women political prisoners are not supported by their families and remain isolated. Several women who were invited to participate in the research project were forbidden to attend by their husbands.

RECOGNITION AND LONG-TERM SUPPORT

9. Recognition of women's experience of violence must be integrated with long-term support.

All 140 women articulated the need for their sufferings and sacrifices to be recognized, and demanded a genuine commitment from society and the state to eliminate on-going stigma. However, recognition through ad-hoc mechanisms, while significant, is not enough. The women described long-term needs for medical, psychological, economic, security and legal support. Recognizing a survivor is not the end of the process but a beginning that must be supplemented with longer-term government and civil society programming and support services. Failure to follow through with multisectoral support after women disclose the violence they experienced at tribunals or at public hearings, or even to researchers, is simply unethical.¹⁴²

Women experience a continuity of violence before, during and after conflict. To address the underlying causes of this violence—the prevailing attitudes and practices of gender discrimination in a given society—new approaches must be designed to eliminate violence against women that spans from conflict to peace. This includes development approaches that are sensitive to the impact of conflict on women, long after the cessation of fighting to transformative reparations and rehabilitation programs directed to this issue.¹⁴³

Women survivor's groups have used the space provided by this research to identify more strategic needs. The widows in Maliana are talking about the need to scrutinize women's inheritance and property rights under customary law. Women in Aceh are talking about transforming the notorious former torture center, Rumoh Geudong, into a public memorial and space to teach younger generations. Most women want their governments to acknowledge their suffering, but also, where relevant, to appreciate their active contributions to the various struggles for independence – not merely casting them as victims but as active contributors.

Timor Leste is the only country in the study where victims have been officially recognized. However, the lack of on-going support for victims has tinted victims' perceptions. Some women expressed bitterness that they had been asked to recount painful stories in public by the truth commission or serious crimes court, only to be forgotten again. A trust fund for victims, provided for under the law establishing the UN-supported serious crimes court in 2000, was never established. As a result, the victim whose case led to the only conviction of rape as a crime against humanity lives in extreme poverty. The lack of any support or assistance to escape the cycle of poverty and discrimination negates any positive views victims have about transitional justice mechanisms.

Importantly, women in Papua and Myanmar also demanded freedom of expression in order to be able to safely push for recognition. Security is primary for these women and recognition means nothing unless they have adequate protection.

Indonesia and Myanmar have yet to extend official recognition to victims. However, civil society initiatives help fill the vacuum created by governments that continue to deny the mass violations. In Myanmar, this demand for recognition extends to local ethnic political and armed groups, in the case of women living in conflict or post-conflict areas. For example, local ethnic leaders recognize and compensate for men killed in fighting but not for victims of sexual violence. Organizations of ex-political

prisoners often overlook women who were unlawfully detained and persecuted for their political activism.

In Indonesia, civil society groups, churches, community groups, and human rights institutions are finding creative ways to acknowledge victims through unofficial truth seeking and documentation.

10. Women victims lack basic services, and need specialized programs to deal with health, trauma, reproductive health and aging to complement the social networks they build and rely on.

Women often remain invisible in post-conflict settings. Their label as survivors of violence is time-bound, and their particular needs are not often considered in the development of longer-term policies and planning.

Health Needs

This research has clearly demonstrated the long-term impact of violence against women in conflict and the consequent multi-sectoral needs which must be addressed. Many of the women had acute and unmet needs in the areas of primary care, sexual and reproductive health, mental health and aged care support.



Nearly one third of the women mentioned are facing physical health challenges. A number of women mentioned severe violence at the time of the incident; while others mentioned ongoing chronic complaints such as sleep disorders, headaches and general pain, and other clinical conditions associated with violence. In terms of reproductive health, two women reported a miscarriage at the time of the incident and one reported an ongoing menstrual disorder. Further, nine women disclosed that they conceived a child as a result of rape, while not one articulated any reproductive health issues. This is an area where further research and support is needed.

Twenty-two women mentioned trauma or related problems such as anxiety, difficulty sleeping, shame, guilt, depression and isolation, and many of the former political prisoners in Yangon show signs of trauma. Some have received basic counseling support from women's organizations, which has been greatly appreciated, but this is an area requiring further support.

The declining health and aging of survivors exacerbates the impact of violence: 39 were aged 60 years and over during the research phase and four have already passed away from ill health. However there are no specialised health programs for elderly survivors of human rights abuses. Where services exist, stigmas and other social consequences noted above pose a major barrier to disclosure, isolating women from the services they need most.

Health Services

Despite the clear needs of victims, the research showed that access to health services is extremely limited or non-existent, in both rural and urban areas. For most victims of sexual assault their reproductive health needs have been ignored. Mental health services are also inadequate, including peer-to-peer support for trauma, leaving women no opportunities to talk about the violations they endured and their suffering.

Where services such as Indonesia's national agency for victim and witness protection exist, few women have had the knowledge and physical access to take full advantage (just five of the 60 participants accessed this fund). In Aceh, a local government program to support widows of the conflict through *diyat*, an Islamic form of compensation to victims excluded victims of sexual violence. Out of the 11 Acehese women who participated in this research four were able to access this compensation scheme due to the deaths of their husbands, not their own violations.

In Papua, the political climate has obstructed specific support or assistance programs for survivors of conflict-related violence. In Timor Leste 42 out of 51 victims have received one-off assistance, from government or NGOs, including seven who received psychosocial assistance from the NGO Fokupers, and eight who receive an old age pension. ACbit support others to access government support or with direct economic assistance.

In rural ethnic areas of Myanmar, where many people die of common health issues due to poor conditions and lack of basic health services, no participants received assistance from government institutions. Eight received small material or financial support from local organizations or from armed groups, but in most cases this was for the death of a male relative, not their own violation.

In the absence of formal mental health and social support services, women in some areas are supporting each other through friendships and informal social groups. For example one woman in Papua mentions the support of fellow activists after she was violently raped in Biak. One woman in Dili reflected on the vital support she received from the NGO, *Fokupers*. Women in Maliana noted the importance of the widow's group *Nove Nove* that sprang out of connections *Fokupers* fostered through trauma counseling with widows from all over the district. *Nove Nove* was important to these women as a place to meet share stories and support, and to learn new skills and gain confidence. *Nove Nove* plans to open a guest house and restaurant, as well as a space to commemorate and remember the past.

In Myanmar, this research process provided the first opportunity for most of the participants to speak about their experience and focus on their needs. Women came to know people with similar experiences and made supportive friends. The project brought together the three groups of women, Kachin, Karen and former political prisoners from Yangon, for a week-long opportunity to practice self care and share experiences with others from different backgrounds, and build solidarity between groups that normally live in isolation. A Kachin woman who was raped by police felt so supported by the meetings that she plans to organize meetings with other victims, with support from the Kachin Women's Association Thailand.

11. Women victims of violence and their children face discrimination in securing the rights of citizenship, such as obtaining identity cards and birth and marriage certificates.

Women survivors face discrimination and exclusion decades after violence takes place, weakening the social supports and assistance they seek to survive. Even their children experience public stigma and discrimination in their ability to access employment and schooling, and their ability to process basic government citizenship documents such as ID cards, birth certificates, and marriage licenses.

In Timor-Leste, some women faced difficulties getting a birth certificate for their offspring conceived as a result of rape, unable to name the biological father, even though the law allows for having "no father" on a birth certificate.

In Indonesia, daughters of political prisoners in Buru Island were married to former political prisoners in a mass wedding organized by the military in 1978. Their marriage certificates stated their occupation as "prisoners from the September 30 communists movement." Local officials have apologized and have produced new certificates after it was discovered during the research. Some former political prisoners had no ID cards at all, preventing them from applying for the new national health insurance.

In Myanmar, some displaced women could not produce an identity card as they had either been lost or destroyed with no access to administrative authorities. This problem impacts their freedom to travel, to exercise their rights (such as voting in upcoming elections) and to access services. Some women ex-political prisoners still face official discrimination, such as access to employment.

12. Unmarked sites of violence entrench impunity for violations against women.

Women survivors feel the sting of impunity every day living near sites where violence took place. When their community makes no acknowledgement of the violence and blood split on the land, it sends a message to survivors that what happened is accepted, that survivors deserved what happened to them, and that it may happen again.

One important step towards justice is the official recognition of sites and dates of collective violence. In some locations, events or dates of generalized violence are officially commemorated. However, in none of the research sites were women's experiences of violence specifically and officially marked. While women spoke of sites and dates of violence that were significant to them, many locations have been abandoned, destroyed or converted to another use.

In Aceh, women want to transform sites of torture to places where people can remember and learn about past events so they will not be repeated, such as playgrounds and libraries. From 1989-1998 Rumoh Geudong was a torture center notorious for sexual violence; it is now abandoned, a silent witness to past atrocities. Research participants spoke of their wish for a museum or monument listing the names of victims. At the irrigation canal in Aron, Cot Baroh, where people were tortured and bodies disposed of women hoped for a memorial and recreation area.

In Timor-Leste, women belong to a national association of victims that organize local commemorations of massacres. There is a memorial and annual commemoration of the 1999 massacre at the Maliana police station on September 8, and a commemoration of the 1980 Marabia incident of June 10. However, the notorious Hotel Flamboyan in Baucau has been converted back to a hotel, effectively erasing the violence that occurred there and reinforcing impunity.

In most areas studied, there remain significant obstacles to commemoration. Attempts by Indonesian 1965 survivors to organize themselves or commemorate events still provoke reactions from authorities and vigilante groups. In Papua, the lack of recognition of claims for independence, and harsh crackdowns by security forces, makes it extremely difficult for official commemoration of sites of violence. In Myanmar, the absolute lack of recognition by the government of the violations in ethnic areas, the length and in some cases continuation of the conflict, gives women a sense that violence is the norm. Military dominance over the political institutions and failure to end repression of dissent, means that women ex-political prisoners not only lack recognition of their past experience, but continue to be at risk.

Recommendations

After looking deeply into the lives of 140 women affected by conflict, we conclude that our actions are lagging behind our own global rhetoric.

We must improve ways to ensure women's access to justice, assisting them to rebuild their lives during and after conflict, and recognizing the violence they endured and its impact. Our approach must be transformative and long-term, looking to the future and trying to promote change in the underlying structures and conditions of discrimination and inequality that shape women's experience in conflict. We must look to address violations of civil and political, as well as social and economic rights. Finally, any kind of intervention must ensure the meaningful participation of women victims. They must be actively involved in identifying and advocating for their own needs and priorities and in developing solutions.

General recommendations for each of our key findings are outlined below.

KEY FINDING 1: WOMEN CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE SYSTEMATIC, CONFLICT-RELATED VIOLENCE DESPITE INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO PREVENT IT

- The **international community** must re-affirm its commitment to end violence against women during and after conflict, and *end impunity* for crimes against women. This must include support for innovative approaches to access justice and uphold the rights of women victims, and also focus on long-term solutions to transform the root causes of conflict and violence.
- **Transitional justice mechanisms**, be it truth commissions or courts, must establish *parallel programs for protecting and empowering victims that continue* after the closing of these mechanisms, and are led by civil society and government agencies. Constitutional provisions, social assistance and building societal movements are critical to ensuring the rights of women victims. Strengthening women victims should be seen as part of the national goal to facilitate citizen's participation in a new democracy.
- **ASEAN's** human rights mechanisms and commissions on women and children, ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), must *take a stand to combat impunity* for violence against women during conflict and affirming the United Nation's Impunity Principles, ASEAN mechanisms and countries should take special measures to ensure that victim's rights are upheld as part of building a peaceful and secure ASEAN community.

KEY FINDING 2: WOMEN VICTIMS EXPERIENCE AN ATROPHY OF JUSTICE

Governments, political actors, international agencies and civil society must:

- Support innovative programs to strengthen *women's access to justice* in conflict and post-conflict settings, working with community-based organizations that are supporting women victims' social and economic projects. Legal assistance must focus on a range of issues from protection against discrimination, land rights, to support to a safe access to justice for serious crimes.
- Develop *new approaches* to ensure women victim's access to effective remedies that do not rely on the establishment of adhoc transitional justice mechanisms. Victims right to justice, truth and repair must be integrated into social programs and nation-building efforts to eliminate violence, promote health, education, and sustainable livelihoods. These efforts must also symbolically honor victims, include community-based efforts towards documentation and memorialization, restore the rights of victims and annul discriminatory regulations. There needs to be close collaboration with civil society and women victims must directly participate in a meaningful way.
- Support victim's networks or groups to become strong sustainable organizations, with *links to broader movements* for gender justice and human rights at local to national levels, and to be able to take part in regional international advocacy efforts. This may mean adding resources for interpretation and other efforts to facilitate genuine participation.

KEY FINDING 3: WOMEN ACT LOCALLY, BUT REMAIN PERIPHERAL IN FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE BUILDING

Governments, international agencies and civil society must:

- Support efforts to empower *women victims to take up leadership roles* and work to motivate their peers and communities to participate in building peace.
- Ensure that peace talks and negotiations involve the meaningful participation of women victims.
- Strengthen the capacity of women victims and their organizations to *conduct research on their own situations* and to produce simple tools for advocacy and processes to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of peace building efforts from their perspective. This may include training and technical assistance, as well as the use of participatory research methods. It is critical that the production of knowledge on these issues include women victims in a genuine way.

KEY FINDING 4: DESPITE THEIR RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION, WOMEN VICTIMS' STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL AFFECTS THEIR ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Governments, international agencies and civil society must:

- Increase women's access to information to improve their social and economic standing in order to reach for justice. Resource innovative ways to provide information relating to a range of topics including: new and efficient technologies for agriculture, small business development and entrepreneurship, legal rights and legal aid, human rights and civic education, political awareness, peace building processes, local history, availability of services, government planning and budgeting processes and strategies for self care and support for other women victims.
- Assist women victim's groups to establish community-learning centers as a platform for accessing information and services, and also for sharing and documenting their stories, conducting training, advocacy, and research.
- Fund and support job creation, skills training and micro credit programs for women victims as a critical part of emergency response and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

KEY FINDING 5: WIDOWS, SINGLE MOTHERS, AND WOMEN LEFT ALONE DUE TO CONFLICT ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE AND NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE.

Governments, international agencies and civil society must:

- Review and change *discriminatory legislation and customary laws* in areas affecting the rights of widows, single mothers and single women such as land, property and inheritance rights. Ensure that women heads of households have access to legal assistance to protect their social economic rights.
- Women heads of household need *access to funds* so they can expand or open small enterprises. Micro credit and micro finance projects for both individuals and collective groups of women victims can help meet the need for access to capital and at the same time build solidarity among them.
- Budget and implement programs for awareness and behavior change work around *stigma faced by widows, single mothers and single women*. Strengthen social movements fighting against their discrimination.
- Provide special assistance for women refugees and IDP's who are elderly and/ or without family members.

KEY FINDING 6: CHILDREN ARE TRAPPED IN VIOLENCE AND POVERTY, BUT ALSO PROVIDE THE INSPIRATION FOR WOMEN TO STRIVE FOR A BETTER FUTURE.

Governments, international agencies and civil society must:

- Support and fund programs targeting *assistance for children of victims*. Call for and support more research on the intergenerational impacts of conflict related violence on children.
- *Review policies and programs which discriminate* against children of victims e.g. processes to apply for scholarships and public service positions. Identify and overcome barriers to accessing services, including health and education.
- Provide *specialised services* for children of victims such as: school and tertiary level scholarship programs; skills training; psychosocial support and health services.

KEY FINDING 7: DISPLACEMENT DISRUPTS LIVELIHOODS AND INCREASES WOMEN'S VULNERABILITY

Governments:

- Should allocate and grant *land ownership certificates* to women refugees, who have settled permanently to enable them to qualify for assistance, build a home and develop their livelihoods.
- Must facilitate access to humanitarian assistance for displaced ethnic minorities & create the conditions for the safe and dignified *voluntary return* of all conflict-affected displaced women and refugees to their communities, in consultation with them and assisting them with resettlement, livelihood and right to housing and land.

Civil society groups:

- Must develop creative programs to strengthen livelihood skills and resources of women victims living in displacement, making use of appropriate information technologies.

KEY FINDING 8: WOMEN VICTIMS ARE VULNERABLE TO NEW FORMS OF VIOLENCE INCLUDING DOMESTIC AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

Governments, international agencies and civil society must:

- Provide *long-term rehabilitation* through appropriate services and support for women victims combined with community-based education in order to overcome deeply engrained discrimination and challenge social norms. Support should also be provided to family members of victims, including spouses and in-laws to transform attitudes that blame and stigmatize victims.
- Engage religious organizations and other influential social groups in the broader community to promote non-discrimination and protect women victims from violence.

- Link efforts to eliminate domestic violence with support for women victims of conflict. Empower women victims of conflict to become part of a peer support network, or mentors for victims of domestic violence.

KEY FINDING 9: RECOGNITION OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE MUST BE INTEGRATED WITH LONG-TERM SUPPORT.

The international community must:

- Support on-going and long-term empowerment programs that *strengthen the voices* of women victims and their families during and after conflict. Resource and support participatory methods that involve women victims to build knowledge, document and share information on women's experiences of violence
- Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development approaches must include support for women victims both as *urgent responses and as a long-term development goal*.

Governments and civil society should:

- Strengthen women victim's networks to provide *psychosocial support* and mobilize women to share information and learn new skills. It is important that these circles include a diversity of women, reaching out to both older and younger women, different ethnic and religious groups where applicable, different classes and castes, disabled and able bodied women and also including children of women victims.
- Support women victims to develop *small business and entrepreneurship* initiatives. These pursuits are especially needed as women age, for those who are physically unable to do farm labor, or for women in urban settings. Learning circles can provide a forum to deliver training on these topics as well as a space to share information on markets such as market prices, product demand, competition and transportation conditions.

KEY FINDING 10: WOMEN VICTIMS LACK BASIC SERVICES, AND NEED SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS TO DEAL WITH HEALTH, TRAUMA, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND AGING TO COMPLEMENT THE SOCIAL NETWORKS THEY BUILD AND RELY ON.

Governments, international agencies and civil society must:

- Develop and support programs that map *available services* for women victims and build the capacity and quality of response services (health, legal/justice, psychosocial), as well as the referral pathways for women victims of conflict related violence.
- Establish *survivor-focused units in government agencies* to help channel information to women victims about available services, training, benefit opportunities, and provide assistance with filling in forms and procedures necessary to access available services.

- Plan and budget for *capacity building initiatives* on working with victims of violence in a range of sectors including health, social services, security and legal justice.

KEY FINDING 11: WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND THEIR CHILDREN FACE DISCRIMINATION IN SECURING THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENSHIP, SUCH AS OBTAINING IDENTITY CARDS AND BIRTH AND MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES

Governments must:

- Remove barriers or *discriminatory practices in issuing basic citizenship* documents such as ID cards, marriage and birth certificates to restore victim's trust in state institutions.
- *Review and reform* discriminatory regulations as well as implementation practices. Re-issue any discriminatory legal documents and socialize any regulations (including to government bureaucrats and other providers) that are not being followed as intended, for example for children born out of rape, or former political prisoners and their families.
- Provide assistance to *reissue* identification documents to women and their families who lost papers during conflict.

KEY FINDING 12: UNMARKED SITES OF VIOLENCE ENTRENCH IMPUNITY FOR VIOLATIONS AGAINST WOMEN

Governments, international agencies and civil society should:

- Support the commemoration of events and/or *the mark the sites of violence*. This is important to educate citizens on past atrocities and prevent repetition. These initiatives can be driven by civil society but ultimately states have a duty to preserve the memory of crimes against women. Women victims themselves must be involved in the planning and implementation.
- Facilitate *symbolic measures* such as formal apologies for the failure to protect women from conflict related violence, guarantees of non-recurrence and public acknowledgment of the sacrifices and contributions. These are all an important part of building a better future.
- Acknowledge the *special role of women victims* in remembering systematic crimes against women and campaigning for a future free from violence.
- Promote *learning about memorialisation* from other sites across the country and region.

¹ Special Panels for Serious Crimes (District Court of Dili), Timor-Leste, *The Prosecutor v Joao Franca da Silva alias Johni Franca*, Judgement, Case No. 04a/2001, 5 December 2002.

² UN Human Rights Commission, *Promotion and Protection of Human Rights: Impunity, Report of the Independent Expert to Update the Set of Principles to Combat Impunity*, E/CN.4/2005/102 (8 February 2005) <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/109/00/PDF/G0510900.pdf?OpenElement> Although these principles are not formal legal standards, they have been widely referenced and affirmed by international criminal tribunals, human rights treaty bodies, and commissions of inquiry.

³ Impunity Principles, E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1 (2005) 7.

⁴ Five years earlier, in 2000, UN Security Council affirmed importance of pursuing justice for women victims of rape to strengthen efforts to promote peace and security, stating "... the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls..." UNSC UN Doc S/RES/ 1325 (2000.) Follow-up resolutions include UNSCR 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), and 1983 (2011).

⁵ UN Doc E/1993/22/Annex III, paras 5 and 7, cited in Steiner, Henry J. and Philip Alston. 2000. *International Human rights In Context: Law, Politics, Morals*. Second Edition. Oxford University Press. p.238.

⁶ Trials currently on-going in the the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia looking at crimes of humanity of forced marriage and rape and sexual violence within forced marriage. 'Transformative Reparations for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia: Reflections, Recommendations and Next Steps, Report of the Workshop', 28th November 2014, Australian Human Rights Centre and the Asian International Justice Initiative, UNSW, p.8. In 1948, a Dutch court in Batavia (now Jakarta) convicted Japanese personnel for rape as a war crime. See Kelly Askin, *War Crimes Against Women: Prosecution in International War Crimes Tribunal*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1997, p.85

⁷ <https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice>

⁸ <https://www.ictj.org/publication/derailed-transitional-justice-indonesia-fall-soeharto-report>

⁹ UN Human Rights Council, *UN Human Rights Council: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences on Intersections between Culture and Violence against Women*, 17 January 2007, A/HRC/4/34, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/461e2c602.html> at 30 August 2015.

¹⁰ See Naila Kabeer, cited in Working Bibliography on Gender Mainstreaming, Geneva, 1997, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/news/gender.htm> at 18 September 2015.

¹¹ [G]ender based violence against women shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately[...] (Art. 3 d, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence) "[V]iolence against women" is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life[...] (Art. 3 a, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence)

¹² See AJAR's companion manual, "Unlearning Impunity: A Women's Guide to Understanding and Action," AJAR, 2015.

¹³ See *Menemukan Kembali Indonesia: Memahami Empat Puluh Tahun Kekerasan demi Memutus Rantai Impunitas*, KKKP, Jakarta, 2014. For information on the Year of Truth visit www.kkpk.org

¹⁴ Presidential Decree No. 18 of 2014, to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, commits Indonesia to support research and programs for women and children affected by conflict, although implementation remains to be seen.

¹⁵ Saskia E. Wieringa, "The Birth of the New Order State in Indonesia: Sexual Politics and Nationalism," *Journal of Women's History*, 15.1 (2003) pp. 70-91.

¹⁶ Josepha Sukartiningih, "*Ketika perempuan menjadi tapol* [When women became political prisoners]," unpublished paper, undated.

¹⁷ A Fact Finding Commission, led by Major-General Sumarmo in 1965, resulted in the figure of 78,500, a figure disputed by some members of the Commission. A year later, the KOPKAMTIB (The Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order) conducted a survey that resulted in a figure of a million killed. *Komnas Perempuan* cites five hundred thousand

killed, in *Komnas Perempuan*, "Gender-based Crimes against Humanity: Listening to the Voices of Women Survivors of 1965," p9.

¹⁸ See Saskia Wieringa, "The Birth of the New Order State in Indonesia: Sexual Politics and Nationalism," *Journal of Women's History*, 15.1 (2003) pp. 70-91.

¹⁹ *Komnas Perempuan*, "Gender-based Crimes against Humanity: Listening to the Voices of Women Survivors of 1965," (2007) pp 6-12.

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, *Indonesia: The War in Aceh*, 2001, p8.

²¹ *Ibid*, p23.

²² Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*), *Sebagai Korban Juga Survivor: Pengalaman dan Suara Perempuan Pengungsi Aceh tentang Kekerasan dan Diskriminasi* [As victims, also survivors: experiences and voices of displaced Acehese women concerning violence and discrimination], 2006, <http://www.komnasperempuan.or.id/2010/08/pelaporan-khusus-untuk-aceh-sebagai-korban-juga-survivor/sebagai-korban-juga-survivor-english-2/>, at?

²³ See www.thejakartapost.com/.../insight-treating-papuans-citizens-instead-targets-indonesia-s-killing-field.html

²⁴ Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965 Coup in Indonesia*. Ithaca (New York: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1971), pp. 46-53.

²⁵ John Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Suharto's Coup d'État in Indonesia* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), p. 54.

²⁶ Baskara T. Wardaya SJ (ed.), "The Grand Scenario: The 1965 Tragedy in the Eyes of a Catholic", in Baskara T. Wardaya SJ (ed.), *Truth Will Out: Indonesian Accounts of the 1965 Mass Violence*, Monash University Publishing, Clayton, 2013.

²⁷ "Studi Kasus 17: Kekerasan terhadap Tahanan Politik di Kantor CPM Yogyakarta", Narrative of 1965-2005 Human Rights Violation Cases, Database of KKKP, *Menemukan Kembali Indonesia: Memahami Empat Puluh Tahun Kekerasan demi Memutus Rantai Impunitas*, KKKP, Jakarta, 2014, p.75.

²⁸ John Roosa, Ayu Ratih & Hilmar Farid (eds.), *Tahun yang Tak Pernah Berakhir: Memahami Pengalaman Korban 65*, Elsam, Jakarta, 2004.

²⁹ Antonius Sumarwan SJ, *Menyeberangi Sungai Air Mata: Kisah Tragis Tapol '65 dan Upaya Rekonsiliasi*, Kanisius, Yogyakarta, 2007, pp 57.

³⁰ Ayu Ratih, B.I. Purwantari, dan Th. J. Erlijna, "Perempuan Korban Menggugat Senyap: Sebuah Catatan Pandangan Mata", <http://www.langitperempuan.com/tukar-hati-perempuan-korban-tragedi-1965-tuturan-baru-sejarah/>, at 17 November, 2008.

³¹ See *Menemukan Kembali Indonesia: Memahami Empat Puluh Tahun Kekerasan demi Memutus Rantai Impunitas*, KKKP, Jakarta, 2014, pp.10.

³² Gestapu is the Indonesian acronym for the 30th September Movement.

³³ Kadmiyati is one subject in AJAR's documentary "Stone and Flower," which can be viewed on www.asia-ajar.org.

³⁴ CGMI or *Concentrasi Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia* was a student organization associated with the PKI. Donald Hindley, *The Communist Party of Indonesia 1951-1963*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1964, pp. 196.

³⁵ Pemuda Rakyat or People's Youth is a youth organization affiliated with the PKI that used educational and social activities to interest young people.

³⁶ Lubang Buaya, or "crocodile's pit", is the site of the murder of army officers during the coup attempt. The Lubang Buaya myth accused Gerwani and Pemuda Rakyat of torturing, performing sadistic sexual acts upon, and finally killing the six generals, which led to the reprisal killings of 1965.

³⁷ In response to high inflation, the government created a redenomination program that literally cut-off three zeros from banknotes in 1965, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/08/05/insight-rupiah-redenomination-a-step-right-direction.html>

³⁸ Gantyo Koespradono. *KICK ANDY: Menonton dengan Hati*. First Edition, Bentang, Yogyakarta, 2008, pp. 269-271

³⁹ The decree is part of Indonesia's commitment to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

⁴⁰ *Amnesty International Annual Report, 1968-1969*, p.9

⁴¹ *Amnesty International Annual Report, 1969-1970*, p.8

⁴² *Amnesty International Report, 1978*, p. 163

⁴³ See Hersri Setiawan, *Diburu di Pulau Buru*, Galang Press, Yogyakarta, 2006.

- ⁴⁴ See Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Nyanyi Sunyi Seorang Bisu*, Lentera, Jakarta, 1995.
- ⁴⁵ The transmigration program was a government strategy to change forest areas into areas of large-scale colonization projects. The transfer of population from Java and Bali to the outer islands through was closely correlated with a national resilience policy through food self-sufficiency and the provision of labor for the forestry industry. See Coalition for Justice and Truth (KKPK), *Menemukan Kembali Indonesia: Memahami Empat Puluh Tahun Kekerasan demi Memutus Rantai Impunitas*, Jakarta, 2014, pp. 156.
- ⁴⁶ *Juklak Kopkamtib* [Implementation Guidelines of Commander of Security and Public Order Restoration] KOPKAM/10/1968 (I) in *Himpunan Surat-surat Keputusan* [Collection of Decisions], 206-219. Cited in Komnas Perempuan, *Gender-Based Crimes Against Humanity: Listening to the Voices of Women Survivors of 1965* Komnas, Perempuan, 2007, pp.102.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Interview with Hartini, 18 November 2014.
- ⁴⁹ Interview with Wasimun, the Secretary of Savanajaya Village, 30 September 2013.
- ⁵⁰ In 2014 and 2015 three passed away, leaving 45 former prisoners on Buru Island.
- ⁵¹ In 2012 female clergy from two Protestant churches published *Forbidden Memories: Women Victims and Survivors of the '65 Tragedy in East Nusantara*, containing interviews with women from the islands of Sabu, Sumba, West Timor, and Alor. Mery Kolimon, Liliya Wetangterah (eds), *Memori-Memori Terlarang: Perempuan Korban dan Penyintas Tragedi '65 di Nusa Tenggara Timur*, Yayasan Bonet Piggupir, Kupang, 2012.
- ⁵² Steven G. Faram, "From 'Timor Koepang' to 'Timor NTT': A Political History of West Timor, 1901-1967" (PhD thesis at Charles Darwin University, 2003), p. 305-6.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 306 and Steven Farram, "Revolution, Religion, and Magic: The PKI in West Timor, 1924-1966," *Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 158 (1), 2002, p. 32.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- ⁵⁵ R. A. F. Paul Webb, "The sickle and the Cross: Christians and Communists in Bali, Flores, Sumba and Timor, 1965-67," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 17, 1986, p. 99; Farram, 2003, p. 307.
- ⁵⁶ Farram, 2002, p. 39; Webb, p. 100.
- ⁵⁷ Webb, p. 99-101.
- ⁵⁸ El Tari, *Memori Gubernur Kepala Daerah Propinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur tahun 1958-1972*. Jilid I, p. 263 as quoted in Farram, 2003, p. 307.
- ⁵⁹ G. F. Brookes, "The Influences of Some Primal Religious Experiences on the Beliefs and Practices of Atoni Christians and their Challenge to the Protestant Evangelical Church of Timor" (MTh diss., Melbourne College of Divinity, 1980), p. 85.
- ⁶⁰ Nela Loy Bhoga, Martha Bire, dan Golda Sooi, "Peristiwa 1965 dan Aktivis Perempuan di Kota Kupang," dalam Mery Kolimon, Liliya Wetangterah (eds.), *Memori-Memori Terlarang: Perempuan Korban dan Penyintas Tragedi '65 di Nusa Tenggara Timur*, p. 198.
- ⁶¹ Webb, p. 99-100.
- ⁶² Bhoga, et al., p. 201.
- ⁶³ Bhoga, et al., p. 197.
- ⁶⁴ Instruction of the Minister of the Interior No. 32 Year 1981 re. Guidance and Surveillance of Former Detainees and Criminals of G.30.S/PKI; Presidential Decree No. 16 Year 1990 re. Special Research on Civil Servants.
- ⁶⁵ In 1977, the value of the rupiah was 415.00 to one US dollar or about US \$2,410 for one juta. In May 2015 this would be the equivalent of US \$9,720.
- ⁶⁶ 'Forbidden Memories: Women Victims and Survivors of the '65 Tragedy in NTT
- ⁶⁷ The name of the Indonesian part of the massive island shared with Papua New Guinea is prone to confusion. Over time it has been called Dutch West New Guinea, Irian Jaya, and Papua, with the confusion increasing when the Indonesian province of Papua was divided into two provinces in 2003: West Papua with the capital in Manokwari and Papua with the capital in Jayapura. In this document the term Papua is used to refer to both provinces.
- ⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, 'Indonesia: Ending Repression in Irian Jaya,' Report no.23, 20 September, 2001, p.3
- ⁶⁹ UNSF-Background, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unsfbackgr.html> p.6
- ⁷⁰ The Past that has not Passed: Human Rights Violations in Papua before and After Reformasi, International Centre for Transitional Justice, June 2012, p.7
- ⁷¹ International Crisis Group, 'Indonesia: Ending Repression in Irian Jaya,' Report no.23, 20 September, 2001, p.3

⁷² Rutherford, D. 'Waiting for the End in Biak: Violence, Order and a Flag Raising', in *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, Southeast Asia Program publications, Issue 30 of Studies on Southeast Asia, Anderson B, (ed), 2001, p.p, 189-190

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.190

⁷⁴ ICG Asia Briefing Paper, 9 April, 2003:5.

⁷⁵ *Keppres 88/1999 tentang Komisi Independen Pengusutan Tindak Kekerasan di Aceh* [Presidential Decree 88/1999 on the Independent Commission for the Investigation of Violence in Aceh].

⁷⁶ Report of the Independent Commission for the Investigation of Violence in Aceh.

⁷⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Aceh Under Martial Law: Inside the Secret War", 2003, 18–37.

⁷⁸ *Chega!*, Chapter 7.8: Violation of the Rights of the Child, 7.8.4., The Transfer of Children to Indonesia.

⁷⁹ C. Dolan, J. Large, and N. Obi, *Evaluation of UNHCR's Repatriation and Reintegration Programme in East Timor, 1999-2003*, Geneva: UNHCR, Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, February 2004.

⁸⁰ *Chega!* Chapter 7.3., para. 485.

⁸¹ Karen Campbell-Nelson, Yooke Adelina Damapolii, Leonard Simanjuntak, dan Fredrika Tadu Hungu, *Perempuan Dibawa/h Laki-laki yang Kalah: Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan Timor Timur dalam Kamp Pengungsian di Timor Barat [Women Brought By/Under Men Who Were Defeated: Violence Against East Timor Women in Refugee Camps in West Timor]*, Kupang: JKPIIT & PIKUL with support from The Ford Foundation, ICMC Indonesia, dan NOVIB, 2002.

⁸² *Chega!* Chapter 7.3., para 495; *Perempuan Dibawa/h Laki-laki yang Kalah*.

⁸³ In 2002, the status of East Timorese in West Timor as refugees was discontinued and since then the government has called them new Indonesian citizens. Consequently, all state policies as well as aid related to East Timor refugees was terminated. The Indonesian government no longer uses the terms refugee and refugee camp. However, the removal of refugee status relates to state policy, whereas local residents around the camps scattered throughout West Timor still consider and treat them as refugees from East Timor and still call the places they live refugee camps. Members of JPIT who conducted research with the Timor-Leste women in Tuapukan choose to use the term former refugee camp. The word "former" is used in order to help them access public services, and "refugee camp" is intended to remind the state that the daily lives of many from Timor-Leste remain the same as refugees—their dwellings are still emergency housing, they do not yet own their own land or gardens, and their access to public services is next to nothing.

⁸⁴ Olandina's husband served with *Babinsa (Bintara Pembina Desa)*, a quasi-military entity that ensured the reach of the Indonesian military at the village level.

⁸⁵ From 1989-1992 in East Timor, village civil defense officers were sent to Malang by Kostrad (Army Strategic Command) for three months of military training. In Indonesian this training was called *militerisasi* (militerization) or *milsas* for short.

⁸⁶ At that time the person in charge of zinc assistance for roofing for refugees was a leader from Viqueque.

⁸⁷ *Chega!* The Final Report of the Timor Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), Volume 1, Part Three: History of the Conflict, 2002, pp. 175-210.

⁸⁸ Taylor, J. 'East Timor Forced Resettlement', *Forced Migration Review*, August 1999, p.5

⁸⁹ *Chega!* The Final Report of the Timor Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), Volume 1, 2002, p.1719

⁹⁰ Taylor, J. 'East Timor Forced Resettlement', *Forced Migration Review*, August 1999, p.5

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.11

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.2707

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.12

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.1817

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2002, p. 2650

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2651 - 2669

⁹⁷ The Security Council established the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) with a broad mandate "to exercise all legislative and executive authority, including the administration of justice." See UNSC Res 1272 (25 October 1999) [UN Doc S/RES/1272(1999)].

⁹⁸ UNTAET Regulation 2000/15 (June 6, 2000) on the Establishment of Special Panel for Serious Crimes

⁹⁹ UNTAET Regulation 2000/11, Section 10.1.

¹⁰⁰ For example UNTAET Regulation 2000/30 on Transitional Rules of Criminal Procedures, Section 34.3 states that cases of sexual assault require no corroboration, limits the use of consent as a defence by the suspect, and bars admittance of the victim's prior sexual conduct as evidence. These procedures were also used by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY.)

¹⁰¹ See David Cohen, *Intended to Fail: the Trials Before The Ad Hoc Human Rights Court in Jakarta*, Occasional Paper Series (New York: ICTJ, August 2003), v; Also, "Derailed: Transitional Justice in Indonesia since the Fall of Soeharto," ICTJ, 2011, p.46-48. <https://www.ictj.org/publication/derailed-transitional-justice-indonesia-fall-soeharto-report>.

¹⁰² Galuh Wandita, "Whose Justice Is It Anyway? Gendered Lessons in Transitional Justice in Timor-Leste" in *The Future of Asian Feminisms: Confronting Fundamentalisms, Conflicts and Neo-Liberalisms*, Nursyahbani Katjasungkana & Saskia Wieringa (ed.s), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.

¹⁰³ CAVR was established in 2002 during the interim administration of the UN but re-affirmed in the new nation's Constitution (Article 162: Reconciliation).

¹⁰⁴ *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR)*, Volume 1, 2002, p.2670

¹⁰⁵ CAVR Final Report, ch.7.7, "Sexual violence," at www.chegareport.net

¹⁰⁶ Susan Alldén, Post Conflict Reconstruction and Women's Security – analysing political outputs in East Timor, Umeå Working Papers in Peace and Conflict Studies, no 1, 2007, p.12

¹⁰⁷ Deborah Cummins, 'The problem of gender quotas: women's representatives on Timor-Leste's suku councils', *Development in Practice*, 2011, 21: 1, 85 — 95, p.87

¹⁰⁸ J. Braithwaite, et al. *Networked Governance of Freedom and Tyranny: Peace in Timor-Leste*, March 2012, p.272

¹⁰⁹ Three militia men, Jhoni Franca, Sabino Leite, Jose Cardoso were convicted for rape as crimes against humanity in the Lolotoe case. Another person was convicted of rape as an ordinary crime. "SCU: Cases of Sexual Violence," Office of the Deputy Prosecutor General for Serious Crimes Timor-Leste, 8 March 2004 (on file.)

¹¹⁰ *Chega! The Final Report of the Timor Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR)*, Volume 1, 2002, p.237 and p. 945.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² *Amnesty International*, Laporan Tahunan 1981.

¹¹³ *Chega!*, p.945

¹¹⁴ *Chega!*, p.1497

¹¹⁵ *Chega!*, p.1935

¹¹⁶ Testimony, Maria de Fatima, Jakarta.

¹¹⁷ *Chega!*, p. 245.

¹¹⁸ *Chega!*, p.184, 195, 1595. At the end of 1991 Kodim 1633 in Ainaro ordered Koramil Maubisse to bring all those ever detained to the Ainaro stadium to take a blood oath of allegiance to Indonesia. According to a witness more than 2,150 people filled the football field, *Chega*, p. 1595.

¹¹⁹ *Chega!*, p. 284.

¹²⁰ Robinson, G. *East Timor 1999: Crimes Against Humanity*, A Report Commissioned by the United Nations Office Of The High Commissioner For Human Rights (OHCHR), July 2003, p.134.

¹²¹ Rehabilitation Centres (Campo de Rehabilitacao Nacional) were part of Falintil's disciplinary strategy to "re-educate" members and civilians who criticised the Falintil leadership. Stanley, E. *Torture, Truth and Justice: The Case of Timor Leste*, 2011.

¹²² Bartrop, P. et. al. (eds) *Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection*. 2015, pp.835-6.

¹²³ *Chega!*, p.11

¹²⁴ Robinson, G. *East Timor 1999: Crimes Against Humanity*, A Report Commissioned by the United Nations Office Of The High Commissioner For Human Rights (OHCHR), July 2003, p.p. 142-3, p. 380.

¹²⁵ *East Timor 1999: Crimes Against Humanity*, pp. 229-233.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Kachin State is rich in timber and jade and is close to Chinese financed energy projects. "The Fight for Kachin: Struggles over Independence in Burma," D. <http://creativetimereports.org/2014/09/08/diana-markosian-the-kachin-in-burma/>, 8 September 2014.

¹²⁸ “364 villages wholly or partially abandoned since 2011, State Terror in the Kachin Hills: Burma Army attacks against civilians in Northern Burma,” KWAT, 2013, p. 2.

¹²⁹ “I Thought They Would Kill Me: Ending Wartime Torture in Northern Myanmar,” Fortify Rights, June 2014, p. 12.

¹³⁰ “Deciphering Myanmar’s Peace Process: A Reference Guide,” Burma News International, 2013, p. 8.

¹³¹ ‘Walking Amongst Sharp Knives: The Unsung Courage of Karen Women Village Chiefs in Conflict Areas in Eastern Burma,’ Karen Women’s Organization, February 2010, p. 5

¹³² Refugee Camps in Thailand – Burma Link. 2015, <http://www.burmalink.org/background/thailand-burma-border/displaced-in-thailand/refugee-camps/>

¹³³ Afraid to Go Home: Recent Violent Conflict and Human Rights Abuses in Karen State, Karen Rivers Watch, 7 November 2014.

¹³⁴ “Legal Memorandum: War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity in Eastern Myanmar,” International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School, November 2014.

¹³⁵ ‘Walking Amongst Sharp Knives: The Unsung Courage of Karen Women Village Chiefs in Conflict Areas in Eastern Burma,’ Karen Women’s Organization, February 2010.

¹³⁶ Asia Justice and Rights, “Surviving on their Own: Women’s Experiences of War, Peace and Impunity,” Jakarta, 2013.

¹³⁷ The CEDAW Committee adopted General Recommendation (GR) 19 in 1992, and more recently GR 30 on women in conflict prevention, during and post conflict context in 2013. The UN Declaration of Elimination of Violence Against Women was made in 1994, and the Beijing Platform for Action was adopted in 1995. In the same decade international criminal courts expanded their definitions of sexual violence as a crime against humanity from the Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1994, the Serious Crimes Court for Timor Leste (2000), the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in 2002 and the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002. Since UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women Peace and Security in 2000, numerous other resolutions have been passed on the issue, including UNSCR 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), and 1983 (2011).

¹³⁸ Special Panels for Serious Crimes (District Court of Dili), Timor-Leste, *The Prosecutor v Joao Franca da Silva alias Johni Franca*, Judgement, Case No. 04a/2001, 5 December 2002; President Jose Ramos Horta issued a pardon for 94 prisoners in 2008, including 9 convicted for crimes against humanity. See “Timor-Leste: Events of 2008” Human Rights Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2009/country-chapters/east-timor>

¹³⁹ Trials currently on-going in the the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia looking at crimes of humanity of forced marriage and rape and sexual violence within forced marriage. ‘Transformative Reparations for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia: Reflections, Recommendations and Next Steps, Report of the Workshop,’ 28th November 2014, Australian Human Rights Centre and the Asian International Justice Initiative, UNSW, p.8. In 1948, a Dutch court in Batavia (now Jakarta) convicted Japanese personnel for rape as a war crime. See Kelly Askin, *War Crimes Against Women: Prosecution in International War Crimes Tribunal*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1997, p.85

¹⁴⁰ See ‘Women Building Peace’, ACCORD Insight an International Review of Peace Initiatives, Conciliation Resources, 2013; ‘UN Women Source Book on Women, Peace and Security’, UN Women, October 2012

¹⁴¹ “Where Are The Women: Negotiations for Peace in Burma,” Swedish Burma Committee, May 2013; “Looking at the Current Peace Process in Myanmar through a Gender Lens,” Salai Isaac Khen and Muk Yin Haung Nyoi, August 2014

¹⁴² This view is in line with the World Health Organization’s (WHO) *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching, Documenting and Monitoring Sexual Violence in Emergencies* which states that “basic care and support for survivors must be available locally before commencing any activity that may involve individuals disclosing information about their experiences of sexual violence.”

¹⁴³ Transformative reparations focus on identifying and changing underlying conditions that led to or contributed to the causes of conflict, and sexual violence in particular, Transformative Reparations for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia: Reflections, Recommendations and Next Steps, Report of the Workshop, 28th November 2014, Australian Human Rights Centre and the Asian International Justice Initiative, UNSW.

Enduring Impunity

WOMEN SURVIVING ATROCITIES
IN THE ABSENCE OF JUSTICE

PUBLISHED BY



IN COLLABORATION WITH



SUPPORTED BY

