

ACTJET NEWS DECEMBER 2006

November *Chega!* launches in Australia

There were launches of the CAVR's final report in Sydney, Melbourne, Ballarat, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra between 12 and 28 November, and two forums (in Sydney and Melbourne) on the future of justice and reconciliation in Timor-Leste (TL). Most were well attended and (the odd technical hitch notwithstanding) went off very well. Before the Canberra launch we also had the first Independence Day reception at Albert Hall, hosted by the Timor-Leste Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Hernani Coelho da Silva, which was attended by some 150 people (my estimate).

Because the report is not new, we didn't try very hard to get national media coverage, but still scored two interviews on ABC Radio National on Monday 13 November, with Fran Kelly interviewing Pat Walsh on Breakfast, and Philip Adams interviewing Pat and Isabel Guterres on Late Night Live.

Special thanks for their time and dedication must go to our visitors from Dili – Aniceto Lopes, Isabel and Pat; to everyone in Australia who helped to organise each of the launches; and to the organisations that provided funding. It was especially humbling to me, as a relative newcomer to this work, to witness the commitment of so many Australians (and not only old lefties!) to friendship and solidarity with the people of Timor-Leste. It was also gratifying that the launches are likely to be the beginning rather than the end of a process of engaging Australia about the CAVR's work (more on that below).

The evening after the Canberra launch, Senator Stott-Despoja formally tabled *Chega!* in the Senate; the relevant Hansard is linked on the News page of the ACTJET website.

UK launch

There was a launch of *Chega!* in the Houses of Parliament on 28 November, co-hosted by the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group, TAPOL the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, Amnesty International, Prograssio, and Human Rights Watch. The press release is at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA570032006>.

ACTJET website

The website, www.actjet.org, has been updated to include recent events and documents, including this newsletter.

Booklet and CAVR publications

To coincide with the launches Uniya produced a booklet, *Justice and Reconciliation in East Timor: Australia and the CAVR*, which is now available from AETA in Melbourne and Sydney for \$4 or \$5 with postage. An expanded pdf version of the booklet, which contains more details of the CAVR's findings concerning Australia, is now on the ACTJET website. Other CAVR publications are available from AETA.

Post-launch projects

Outlined below are a number of justice and reconciliation-related projects that might be taken up by ACTJET supporters. If you are interested in pursuing any of them, please contact me.

1. Proposed Senate motion

Senator Stott-Despoja has offered to sponsor a motion in support of post-CAVR justice and reconciliation work. Jim Dunn and I will be talking to politicians from the major parties over summer to garner support for such a motion, in the hope that it will meet a better fate than Senator Stott-Despoja's previous motion on 9 February 2006, which was lost by 48 votes to 8.

2. Immigration watchlist

There is now a question in Part D, Character, of visa applications to Australia which asks, "Have you ever been charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity or human rights violations?". There is enough material in *Chega!*, Serious Crimes indictments and the book *Masters of Terror* to compile a list of names for submission to DFAT and DIMA so that these men are refused entry, or at least subject to review, if they want to come here for training, holidays, etc. A Senate motion in support of the establishment of this watchlist would receive widespread support among human rights groups in Aust and TL and is doable at little cost. However, it would be politically sensitive and might therefore require a separate motion to the one in support of an Australian contribution to (3) below.

3. Follow-on institution to CAVR and International Solidarity Fund (ISF)

While the TL Government has not formally committed itself to support a follow-on institution to the CAVR (the post-CAVR Secretariat's job being restricted to disseminating *Chega!*), a number of the recommendations in *Chega!* found their way into UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 26 July report on justice and reconciliation in TL. It has proved impossible to date to discover whether any progress has been made on implementing Annan's proposal for an ISF in support of justice and reconciliation programs. It is important that there is cooperation between the post-CAVR Secretariat and the Human Rights and Transitional Justice Office of UNMIT (assuming they will be charged with local implementation of the ISF). In the meantime, the Secretariat is discussing with AusAID the possibility of supporting its work over the coming year.

4. Progress report on the work of the Commission for Truth and Friendship (CTF)

The CTF is now over halfway through its mandated 2 year period, and shows little evidence of achieving anything to date (they have only this week invited Wiranto to appear, and there is no indication as to whether he or others will accept the offer). A progress report could be done early in the year, or an evaluation could be timed to appear when the CTF's mandate expires in August. While it might be easy to criticise the CTF's work in such a report, it would also be possible to focus on the positives. For instance, it might be argued that agreement between the 2 countries on the "truth" of what happened in 1999 constitutes a good foundation for a subsequent initiative to achieve real justice, with the report then suggesting how this might be achieved.

5. Australia-Indonesia security treaty

The Framework for Security Cooperation 2006, better known as the Australia-Indonesia security treaty, was signed on Lombok on 13 November 2006. For a comment on the treaty by Dr Clinton Fernandes in New Matilda, go to <http://www.newmatilda.com/home/articledetail.asp?ArticleID=1923>. The treaty is expected to be subject to parliamentary review early in 2007 before being formally ratified by the Australian Government. This review should include provision for public submissions to JSCOT (the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties). ACTJET is likely to make a submission.

Photos

At the Melbourne and Canberra *Chega!* launches we exhibited some of Ross Bird's excellent photos of Timor-Leste, while in Ballarat we had Dawn Delaney's exhibition "Reflections of East Timor". There have been some other Australian photographers doing great work in TL in recent years, including Chris Palethorpe and Robin Taudevin. Most of this work remains unpublished. It strikes me that there is scope to mount a travelling exhibition of the best work of these photographers, which could also be compiled into a book. As well as being good for the photographers, this could help to bring the people, land and recent history of TL to a wider Australian audience, and could be a good charity fund-raiser. If you are interested in following up either the exhibition or the book, then (as they say in Hollywood) "Let's talk!".

Other news

Damian Grenfell of RMIT University's Globalism Institute was recently awarded an ARC grant to study the CAVR. The project summary is below. The Institute has since advertised for an Honours student to do research in TL related to the project.

In the aftermath of the Australian military-led intervention in 1999 and through the transition to nationhood in 2002, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor (CAVR) has represented one of the key institutional attempts at ensuring a stable transition to a peaceful society in Timor-Leste. The internal security of Timor-Leste is of significant interest for Australia, and this project would seek to understand if and how CAVR has succeeded in producing sustainable forms of social cohesion and integration. The project would also provide an understanding of truth and reconciliation processes that could be of value for application in future post-conflict societies.

Deakin University's Ass Prof Damien Kingsbury and Dr Michael Leach also received an ARC grant for their project, Internal and External Sources of Political Instability in East Timor. Here is the project summary:

This project is of direct relevance to Australia through its bilateral and multilateral provision of police to assist in the maintenance of East Timor's law and order, through its training of and support for the East Timor Border Patrol Unit, and its training and support of the East Timor defence force, Falintil-FDTL. The project also goes to the core of Australia's concerns with regional state maintenance (or conversely, potential state failure), direct bilateral relations with both East Timor and Indonesia, and the triangular relationship between these three states.

Dr Clinton Fernandes, the author of *Reluctant Saviour: Australia, Indonesia and the independence of East Timor* (Scribe, 2004), had his new book, *Reluctant Indonesians: Australia, Indonesia and the Future of West Papua* recently published by Scribe Publications (<http://www.scribepublications.com.au/book/reluctantindonesians>).

The connections between Australia's relationship with Timor-Leste and with Papua, and the roots of both in our often submissive relationship to successive Indonesian governments, are also touched on in a new book from Uniya, *Good Neighbours Bad Neighbours: Australia's Relations with Indonesia*, the collection of the 2006 Uniya Seminar Series (<http://www.uniya.org/publications/uniyashop.html>).

An excellent recent summary of transitional issues in Timor-Leste can be found in Jeffrey Kingston, Balancing justice and reconciliation in East Timor, *Critical Asian Studies* 38, 3, September 2006, 271-302. If you would like to obtain this article contact me.

ETAN's 5 December e-news digest contained a JSMP Justice Update (dated 15 November 2006 but apparently not yet on the JSMP website) on the dissemination of *Chega!* in TL, in which it "commends the STP-CAVR for the work that it has carried out so far" while raising two major concerns: "the ongoing lack of a response from the organs of sovereignty to the CAVR's Final Report; and the need for further and much more widespread dissemination of the report." Perhaps the biggest hurdle now is the fact that, as Pat Walsh has written in an email today,

The Timor-Leste Parliament has not discussed the Report or responded to any appeals to do so. Debate in the Parliament will not be possible this year but there may be a small window in the first part of next year, although the backlog of work and election preoccupations may wipe this out. It is suggested that, in view of the PM's commitment to seeing most of the recommendations implemented, we ask the Cabinet of Ministers to press the Parliament to respond.

Meanwhile, there will be a seminar on the role of intellectuals in promoting the values in *Chega!* at the National University, UNTL, Dili, on 18 December. It is being organised by the Post-CAVR Secretariat, which "believes that intellectuals are educated to serve and that their teaching, writing, research, and status in society are effective means to promote the lessons identified in *Chega!* that are fundamental to nation-building in Timor-Leste."

cheers
Mark Byrne