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# SECURITY COUNCIL OFFICIAL RECORDS

THIRTY-FIRST YEAR

**1912**<sup>th</sup> MEETING: 20 APRIL 1976

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#### NOTE

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Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/ . . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements* of the *Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

The resolutions of the Security Council, numbered in accordance with a system adopted in 1964, are published in yearly volumes of *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council*. The new system, which has been applied retroactively to resolutions adopted before 1 January 1965, became fully operative on that date.

## 1912th MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 20 April 1976, at 3 p.m.

*President:* Mr. HUANG Hua (China).

*Present:* The representatives of the following States: Benin, China, France, Guyana, Italy, Japan, Libyan Arab Republic, Pakistan, Panama, Romania, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

### Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/1912)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. The situation in Timor:  
Report of the Secretary-General in pursuance of Security Council resolution 384 (1975) (S/12011)

*The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.*

### Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

### The situation in Timor:

Report of the Secretary-General in pursuance of Security Council resolution 384 (1975) (S/12011)

1. The PRESIDENT (*translation from Chinese*): In accordance with the decisions taken earlier [1908th, 1910th and 1911th meetings], I shall now invite the representatives of Australia, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Portugal and Saudi Arabia to participate in the discussion without the right to vote.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Anwar Sani (Indonesia) and Mr. Galvão Teles (Portugal) took places at the Council table and Mr. Harry (Australia), Mr. Fernandes (Guinea-Bissau), Mr. Singh (Malaysia), Mr. Yango (Philippines) and Mr. Baroody (Saudi Arabia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.*

2. The PRESIDENT (*translation from Chinese*): In addition, I should like to inform members of the Council that letters have been addressed to the President by the representative of Mozambique and by the representative of Guinea which contain requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the question in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the provisional rules of pro-

cedure. Accordingly, pursuant to the usual practice, I propose, if I hear no objection, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote.

3. In view of the limited number of places available at the Council table, I invite the representatives of Guinea and Mozambique to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber, on the usual understanding that they will be invited to take places at the Council table when it is their turn to address the Council.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Camara (Guinea) and Mr. Lobo (Mozambique) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.*

4. The PRESIDENT (*translation from Chinese*): The first speaker is the representative of Mozambique, whom I now invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

5. Mr. LOBO (Mozambique): Mr. President, first of all I should like to thank you and the members of the Council for allowing the People's Republic of Mozambique to participate in the debates of this particular series of Council meetings concerning the act of aggression committed by Indonesia against the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

6. Please accept my highest and most sincere expression of my gratitude for your brilliant performance during these meetings as well as on many other previous occasions when you have presided. It is with great satisfaction that we see a representative of the People's Republic of China presiding over this particular debate, because the People's Republic of China has a very glorious tradition of fighting against foreign invasion and domination as well as of fighting for the liberation of all oppressed people. The historical example of the People's Republic of China has inspired many people around the world in their struggle to put an end to oppression and exploitation imposed upon them by unscrupulous aggressors and foreign invaders.

7. In the same way that the Chinese people heroically resisted the invasion of the Japanese during the Second World War as a part of their struggle for national independence, so today the people of East Timor are also engaged in a valiant and heroic struggle against

Indonesian aggressors who would like to deny them their right to freedom and national sovereignty.

8. The People's Republic of Mozambique is a product of a very long and arduous armed struggle against Portuguese fascism and colonialism for national liberation. During the years of our resistance against the fascist Portuguese oppressors, very deep-rooted, friendly relations were established with all progressive forces around the world, and particularly with the peoples under the same Portuguese colonial yoke. Among this last group were the combatants of East Timor, who in spite of very difficult circumstances were still able to create the conditions necessary to carry on their struggle for national liberation and eagerly to destroy the Portuguese colonial system in their country. In this common cause against Portuguese colonialism, the Timorese and the Mozambican peoples forged a most profound, militant and long-lasting friendship.

9. To support the Timorese people in their continuing struggle for freedom is today the sacred duty of the Mozambican people, for, just as the people of Mozambique experienced the most brutal and inhuman manifestation of a colonial and fascist régime during the very long centuries of Portuguese domination and exploitation, so, also, have the people of East Timor.

10. Some of the sufferings in East Timor today stir up horrible memories of Portuguese fascist atrocities committed against our own people, atrocities which are still too fresh in our minds to be ignored. This suffering is being inflicted on the people of East Timor by Indonesian forces which invaded that country last December. The People's Republic of Mozambique cannot remain indifferent in the face of reports of human atrocities being committed by the Indonesian Government in its efforts to recolonize Timor. From this debate we have learned that about one tenth of the East Timorese nationals have been exterminated by the Javanese army.

11. The Mozambican people's legacy from the dark era of colonial experience has taught us that any colonialist, any exploiter, any oppressor and any expansionist aggressor will stop at nothing in the drive to maintain his crime against the colonized victims. Colonialists and expansionists are people with no scruples whatsoever as to behaviour. In order to achieve their morbid goals they will not hesitate to bribe their victims if necessary. To accomplish their objectives, the colonialists will buy off those leaders who have no integrity and make them as much as possible their puppets. Also, it is a general technique of colonialists, expansionists and aggressors to spare no effort in order to confuse public opinion by distorting the facts to their own advantage whenever they are given the chance. Finally, the last resort of these wicked and dehumanized creatures is open military aggression and the indiscriminate massacre of resisting people, with the ultimate intention of terrorizing and intimidating the masses which they wish to subjugate.

12. This is the formula of colonialist, fascist and expansionist-minded régimes when faced with the resistance of the people. This was the formula used by South Africa in Angola, and this is the formula used by Indonesia in East Timor. It is interesting to note here that these two instances occurred in former Portuguese colonies. Was this a mere coincidence? It is even more interesting to know that in both instances the aggressions were committed in the name of restoring order and preventing chaos in those territories and of helping the people of the ex-colonies. Are the aggressors suggesting that the local populations were happy with the Portuguese colonial rule which enslaved the people for long centuries? If not, then why did they not help during the Portuguese domination, when help was needed? Régimes like these do not act only in a cowardly manner but also irrationally, at the command of the international imperialists.

13. On 28 November 1975, FRETILIN [*Frente Revolucionária Timor Leste Independente*], the sole legitimate representative of the people of East Timor, took upon itself the responsibility for the future of that people and solemnly declared independence and the formation of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

14. The People's Republic of Mozambique believes that the proclamation of the independence of East Timor by FRETILIN stands out clearly as part of the vast movement for the emancipation of oppressed peoples all over the world and falls within the historic General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), adopted in December 1960. For these reasons, the Democratic Republic of East Timor deserves our support.

15. The People's Republic of Mozambique, a product of a victorious armed struggle by the people of Mozambique against Portuguese colonialism and imperialism, recognized the Democratic Republic of East Timor from midnight of 28 November 1975, the very day of the proclamation of independence.

16. The Central Committee of FRETILIN, the revolutionary vanguard of the people of Timor, took the important and drastic step of declaring independence because it realized that the Portuguese colonialists, who had dominated the lives of the people of East Timor for many centuries, would not engage in any serious, honest and constructive dialogue leading to national independence for the people. So independence had to be declared and taken, since it would not be granted. Unfortunately, it was not only the Portuguese who were conspiring to deprive the people of East Timor of their sovereignty. There was also a conspiracy of silence and a total lack of support on the part of the major capitalist Powers. Indonesia had by this time organized a campaign to denigrate FRETILIN and to intimidate the people of East Timor. It had already concentrated a huge military force along their common border. Yet the people of East Timor were united in support of FRETILIN, their vanguard party which had heroically proclaimed independence.

17. The achievement of independence by the people of East Timor under the leadership of FRETILIN is the culmination of a long history of foreign domination by Portuguese colonialism and fascism and of resistance by the East Timorese to that domination. In the early part of this century a nationalist fighter, Dom Boaventura, provided leadership and inspiration for the resistance movement in Eastern Timor. During the Second World War, the people of East Timor struggled valiantly against the Japanese imperialist invaders.

18. FRETILIN alone enjoys the support of the people of East Timor, because since its formation it has been able to articulate and address itself to the most deeply felt needs and the most profound aspirations of the people of east Timor.

19. At the time of independence, the Democratic Republic of East Timor was a country which had been looted by fascists and disrupted by colonialists, a nation which lacked schools, hospitals and the basic economic means for development. However, the people of FRETILIN looked to the past of the people of East Timor and to their history of heroic resistance and triumph over the political legacy of colonialism to find inspiration for building a new Timor. A new Timor would have to be constructed from scratch, and under the leadership of FRETILIN it would develop the economic and social base necessary for the development of the country and the progress of the people in a way which would bring peace in that part of the world.

20. Yet, despite the important and difficult tasks they faced, the people of East Timor were not to be allowed to concentrate their energies on national reconstruction. Even before independence, manoeuvres began which caused difficulties for the people of East Timor. Some insignificant and pretentious political groups—one called APODETI [*Associação Popular Democrática Timorese*], a small gang of people taking part in a sell-out; another, UDT [*União Democrática de Timor*], a small group of latifundia owners; and the so-called anti-communist movement, which as its name suggests is nothing more than a bunch of irresponsible loafers on the payroll of international imperialism—were organized to enable outside forces to continue dominating East Timor. For a time some of these counter-revolutionary elements collaborated with reactionary Portuguese forces to orchestrate a position of supposed willingness on the part of the people of East Timor to remain under Portuguese colonial bondage, but it was not long before these individuals were denounced by the East Timorese people themselves. Finding they were no longer welcome, these counter-revolutionary elements left East Timor and joined their bosses across the frontier in Indonesia.

21. The Indonesian fascists entered the scene shortly thereafter, realizing that if they wanted to control

East Timor, there was no alternative but to invade the young republic openly. So, with tremendous military might, they launched an attack on the Democratic Republic of East Timor, taking along with them their political puppets, whom they soon ordered to form a so-called Provisional Government of East Timor. Many countries openly deplored this Nazi-like invasion and demanded that Indonesia pull out all its forces immediately and unconditionally. The United Nations itself in this very Council has already taken a strong stand on this matter.

22. Nevertheless, Indonesia continues to refuse to honour and respect the most elementary principles of the Charter of the United Nations or Council resolution 384 (1975), which calls upon the Government of Indonesia to withdraw without delay all its forces from East Timor. The Indonesian Government has defied every recommendation made by the United Nations through the Council in relation to the case of Timor. The presence of the Indonesian delegation in this room is meant to challenge all the efforts made by the international community with regard to guaranteeing peace and security in the world. These actions stand as insults which are directed not only against the freedom fighters of East Timor but against all peace-loving people in the world.

23. From the time of our armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism to the present days of our national reconstruction, the people of Mozambique have always placed a very high degree of confidence in the fairness of the Security Council and its ability to find adequate solutions for all the problems brought before it. Encouraged by this impressive past, my delegation has confidence in the Council, whose majority consists of countries which at one time gallantly fought with weapons in hand for their own independence against colonial Powers and at other times against fascism or nazism, in addition to helping other peoples to fight and liberate themselves from those reactionary forces.

24. Bearing in mind that spirit, my delegation is very confident that in the Council there is no country which would be willing to betray the very historical realities of its noble and dignified past to associate the people it represents with the criminal, reactionary and irresponsible acts of aggression against the people of East Timor committed by the fascist and expansionist régime of Indonesia.

25. On the contrary, if the United Nations and the entire international community do not want to see a wave of wars of aggression and pretexts for more annexations of small countries by other régimes like that in Indonesia, they should take the present case very seriously and find a proper and adequate solution so that nations seeking to exploit or annex weaker neighbouring countries will see clearly that the international community of nations, acting through the United Nations, will not allow such aggression to take place.

26. The Security Council should take all the necessary and adequate measures to assure the world that the kind of drama and the barbarous acts reported here by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of East Timor are vigorously and thoroughly investigated and halted and that the Indonesian forces go back to where they belong and leave the people of East Timor alone, free to determine their own political, social and economic future in the same way as Indonesia was given the opportunity and chance to be what it chose to be.

27. The Council should reiterate its condemnation of Indonesian aggression against the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Also, adequate measures should be taken to permit the creation of the conditions necessary to consolidate the independence of the people of East Timor and to ensure respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Just last month I had the opportunity to be the spokesman of my people and my Government in condemning South Africa's aggression against the People's Republic of Angola. At the end of the discussion the Council adopted a resolution condemning the aggression.

28. My delegation is very confident that this time too the Council will again know how to interpret the most profound sentiments of all of humanity by adopting the correct measures which will force the unpopular régime of Indonesia to curb its puppets, to withdraw all its forces from the Democratic Republic of East Timor, to respect the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of this young nation and to let peace and freedom flourish in East Timor.

29. The PRESIDENT (*translation from Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of Guinea. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

30. Mr. CAMARA (Guinea) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, allow me first of all to convey to you my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of April.

31. The situation in Timor which we are now discussing deserves particular attention because it has become so serious, for long months have elapsed without full implementation of resolution 384 (1975). While paying a tribute to the Secretary-General for having implemented paragraphs 5 and 6 of that resolution, my delegation notes with regret that the appeal to Indonesia has not been heeded. Indeed, in a subtle manoeuvre the Indonesian occupation troops have been described as volunteers in order to evade the provisions for their immediate withdrawal. Overstepping all its rights Indonesia is supporting a pseudo- "Provisional Government", which indeed represents no one. FRETILIN proclaimed the independence of Timor on 28 November 1975. To create confusion, the reac-

tionary factions in the country proclaimed on 18 December the creation of a government which automatically disqualifies itself because it calls for the integration of Timor into Indonesia.

32. In our statement of December 1975, we drew the attention of the Indonesian leaders to the serious error which they would commit should they fail to abide by the sacred principles of the Bandung Conference. That Conference, as we all know, was a point of reference for all the independent African and Asian countries which have emerged since 1955. Self-determination and independence were the concepts most extolled, and this in the very heart of a progressive and militant Indonesia, the focus of the admiration of the peoples of the third world. The fundamental error of the Indonesian Government is to have failed to live up to the confidence we had placed in it with the certainty that as a champion of decolonization it would give all necessary assistance to enable Timor to throw off the shameful Portuguese colonial yoke.

33. Instead of intervening as a saviour, it is intervening as an executive agent of imperialism. FRETILIN could never have resisted Indonesian aggression without popular support. One can perceive the extent of the organization set up in East Timor by FRETILIN from an article by Robert Aarse published in *Le Monde diplomatique* of 11 March 1976:

"The political programme of FRETILIN is simple: independence, free elections and new economic, social and political structures based on village co-operation. From the moment of its creation FRETILIN sent militants into the villages. The number of members of the movement went from 1,000 at the beginning of September 1974 to 80,000 in one month.

"Education is one way of raising the political consciousness of the population. FRETILIN is constructing in the villages its own schools made of straw and clay and whatever materials are available. Men and women are enrolled in elementary courses. Co-operatives are being formed; roads are being built; land is being cleared."

34. The events which gave rise to resolution 384 (1975) have once again been set forth [*1908th meeting*] in the brilliant statement of Mr. Horta, the Minister for External Relations and Information of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. This clear statement unquestionably revealed that the allegations of so-called crimes perpetrated by FRETILIN are entirely false.

35. The administering Power, which in conformity with paragraph 3 of resolution 384 (1975) was to cooperate fully with the United Nations to permit the people of Timor freely to exercise its right to self-determination, did make an effort along these lines,

and the statement made by the representative of Portugal [*ibid.*] strongly incriminates Indonesia as an aggressor. The question of Timor is a question of military strategy on the one hand, and of economic interest on the other.

36. The existence of a democratic, and therefore progressive, republic in the region inconveniences the imperialist interests there which are seeking at all costs and by all possible means to muzzle the peoples. Indonesia unfortunately has allowed itself to be led astray by the assistance it receives from reactionary Powers in whose view a people's republic in Timor is a threat to peace in the region.

37. What is more, the search for oil in Timor, particularly offshore, has revealed the existence of this black gold in the region. According to the magazine *The Petroleum Economist* of March 1975, prospects are good for both oil and natural gas. If Timor became Indonesian, the powerful company Pertamina, the Indonesian state oil company, would be able to get its hands on all those riches. This explains the ferocity with which imperialism is hastening to tear apart the people of Timor.

38. The delegation of the Party-State of Guinea, faithful to the long tradition of friendship which unites our people with that of Indonesia, repeats its appeal to the Government in Djakarta to cease sullyng the heroic name of Bandung and to cease playing the game of the imperialists, who have no concern for the peoples and who will only lose when confronted by the popular will.

39. Our delegation encourages the Portuguese Government in its thorough rehabilitation vis-à-vis its past and asks it to do everything possible to ensure that the 500 years of colonization of the people of Timor ends in true independence. We have the firm conviction that the Security Council will be able to take all the necessary steps to ensure that the people of Timor, led by its people's Government, can consolidate its welfare in peace and progress.

40. Our delegation asks that all States respect the territorial integrity of East Timor as well as the inalienable right of its people to self-determination in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). We strongly urge the Indonesian Government immediately and unconditionally to withdraw its troops, and we request the Secretary-General to take all the necessary steps, including the dispatch of a mission to Timor, for the effective implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council.

41. Finally, we ask all neighbouring States and all concerned parties to co-operate fully with the United Nations in order to reach a peaceful solution of the problem of East Timor. The people of Timor deserve all our sympathy in these moments of difficult trial against injustice. The delegation of the Party-State

of Guinea reiterates its complete and militant solidarity with it.

42. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Chinese*): The next speaker is the representative of Portugal, on whom I now call.

43. Mr. GALVÃO TELES (Portugal) (*interpretation from French*): As this debate continues, one gains the impression that some of the statements have been made not with the aim of really contributing to the solution of the problem, but rather to enable the people making those statements to vindicate themselves. That vindication has been unduly subjective, even aggressive, but it has always revealed profound contradictions and difficulties.

44. The Portuguese delegation, in its first statement [*ibid.*], made a realistic and constructive effort. It did not attack any of the parties to the conflict. That did not mean that we could refrain from condemning the presence of Indonesian armed forces in East Timor, a presence confirmed in the report before us and recognized by the Council itself. Nor did it mean that we could refrain from drawing the attention of the international community to the grave humanitarian problems of the inhabitants of the Territory, problems which have a very serious impact on my own country.

45. That is why the Portuguese delegation deeply regrets that the Indonesian delegation in its statement should have made certain accusations against my country. We regret that primarily for three reasons: first, because the accusations are unjust; secondly, because they are not relevant to the issue before the Council; and thirdly, because they contribute nothing to a solution of the problem.

46. The Portuguese delegation, for its part, does not have the slightest intention of contributing to the useless prolongation of the debate, nor do we intend to divert the Council's attention from the grave and urgent problems it is discussing. However, we should like to clarify certain aspects of the main issues that have been raised in the course of the debate. But we shall do that without failing to keep our commitment to a realistic, constructive, objective and dispassionate approach.

47. From the beginning Portugal's decolonization process has followed the same principles whatever the Territory in question. Contrary to what has been asserted here, that applies equally to Timor and to the exercise by its people of the right to self-determination and independence. Portugal has always felt that it was up to the people of each Territory to determine the political style of its independence; that is to say, it was up to the people to decide the kind of society that they wanted, the form of government they preferred, the organs of government and their composition, and so forth. In no instance has Portugal imposed any model of society or government, nor has

it exported such a model. It is the people of each Territory, through their chosen representatives, who have always determined their own future. In most cases, the process began with a just war of liberation. Indeed, that is what happened in Guinea-Bissau where, after a struggle which lasted for several years, the PAIGC, as the legitimate representative of the people of Guinea-Bissau, finally set up an independent State. Similarly, in Mozambique, independence was won by FRELIMO, the truly representative liberation movement of the people of that country. The same is true with respect to Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe, Territories in which there was a liberation movement internationally recognized by the United Nations or by the Organization of African Unity as representatives of the people concerned. In all those cases, therefore, Portugal merely accepted the will of the people already expressed through the liberation movements that had conducted the struggle against the colonial situation.

48. In Angola and Timor, however, the situation was not the same, not only because it was different from that of the other colonies, but also because there were differences within each of those Territories.

49. In fact, in Angola there were three liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. Therefore, and independent of ideological options, Portugal decided to hear the three in order to determine what process should lead to self-determination. That is what was set up by the Alvor agreements, and in spite of subsequent problems, my country has always abided by the spirit of those agreements.

50. There was not even one liberation movement in Timor when Portugal expressly recognized the right of that colony to self-determination. The political parties which are now shouting about their status as legitimate and exclusive representatives of the people of Timor have all been created since 25 April 1974—that is, since the Portuguese revolution. Portugal was determined to abide faithfully by the principles of decolonization, which it adopted most sincerely, and it entered into talks with all the political forces in the Territory. We did this so that the act of self-determination of the people of Timor could be carried out in accordance with the will of its legitimate representatives. That is what the Portuguese Government tried to do when it brought together all the existing political parties to engage in a dialogue. Thus it was, with the unjustified absence of FRETILIN, that the Macao conference took place. Later on, before the events which gave rise to these meetings of the Security Council, my Government once again, as the Council has seen, undertook as a matter of greatest urgency to involve all the political parties of Timor in the process of decolonization. But this time it was a lack of interest on the part of UDT and APODETI that impeded our efforts. In the meantime, the different political forces began to fight with each other. They

are responsible for the situation now existing in the Territory, a situation in which the people of the Territory are not in a position freely to exercise their right to self-determination, a right recognized in resolution 384 (1975).

51. In these conditions, and considering the real situation in the Territory, what could Portugal do? Nothing except what it did do: it remained neutral in the face of the various factions that were fighting. We refused to recognize any unilateral attitude and to legitimize any foreign intervention. That is why the Portuguese Government did not recognize the Government of FRETILIN when that party dominated the capital, and that is why we now maintain the same position vis-à-vis the so-called Provisional Government of East Timor. Parenthetically, I may say that that is why we have been attacked from all sides; we have been attacked because my Government has maintained a position of complete impartiality, and that position is, as a matter of fact, that of the United Nations itself, because neither the General Assembly nor the Security Council has recognized that any party has the least right to speak on behalf of the people of Timor to the exclusion of other parties. It is impossible at the present stage of decolonization honestly to consider that the statements that have been made—either on the question of whether the Territory should be integrated into the Republic of Indonesia or on the question of the legitimate representatives of the people of Timor—indicate that a real choice has been made by the majority of the people of East Timor.

52. It is also completely wrong to say that Portugal has supplied FRETILIN with weapons. It has never done anything of the sort. What happened is this. At one point in the conflict, local troops decided to fight on one side and left, taking some of the weapons with them. The Portuguese Government and the drastically reduced Portuguese military contingent then stationed in the Territory never abandoned their position of neutrality. It is obvious that if they had at any point stopped being neutral, violence would have increased considerably in Timor and international peace and security would certainly have been seriously affected. But the Government of my country, aware of its responsibilities, preferred not to become involved in the conflict and did not lend its support to any of the parties in the struggle. That is why we had recourse to the Security Council and urged the United Nations to ensure free accession to self-determination for the people of Timor.

53. Portugal does not wish to impose itself as the administering Power of East Timor. The Portuguese Government does not view that status as a right but as a heavy responsibility, one it does not intend to abandon through a unilateral act. We wish to exercise that responsibility in close co-operation with the United Nations, to the extent that the international community ensures the necessary conditions. As long as we exercise those responsibilities, my Government

firmly intends to accept some form of exercise by the people of Timor of the right to self-determination in conformity with the principles of Portuguese decolonization and in keeping with the general policies of the United Nations. My country is therefore open to any solution which might help bring about the proper kind of decolonization for Timor. We are even willing to entertain suggestions as to the role we are playing now. In the circumstances, Portugal's position cannot be used as an excuse for the mistakes or ambitions of third parties. To each his particular responsibility.

54. In spite of what I have just said, one cannot deny that the Portuguese Government has a right to express its serious concern over what is happening in Timor—not only because the people of the Territory have been victims of crimes and atrocities but also because of the deprivation, the isolation, even the lack of freedom of many Portuguese nationals there. My delegation wishes once again to draw the attention of the Council to the regrettable fact that, four months after adoption of resolution 384 (1975), my Government is still unable to obtain any information about the status of Portuguese citizens in Timor. We cannot get that information even from the International Red Cross, which is still not allowed to pursue its humanitarian activities in the Territory.

55. It is only natural that Portugal should be concerned about the status of its 23 soldiers detained in Timor without justification. No charges, whether military or non-military, can be brought against them, since they only performed their military duties as part of the Portuguese armed forces. For that reason my Government believes their detention is quite unjustified, and we are categorically opposed to their being used as a political weapon. Without abandoning its principles or responsibilities, Portugal has done all it could, and will continue to do what it can, to obtain their immediate and unconditional release. Humanitarian concerns of the highest importance are at stake, and no Government or country can afford to ignore those humanitarian considerations unless it wishes to expose itself to the severest condemnation from the international community.

56. Mr. VINCI (Italy): When the Council met last December to consider the question of East Timor, there was general agreement among its members that our knowledge of the local situation was not comprehensive enough to enable this body to take proper action under the responsibilities bestowed upon it by the Charter. That is why we asked the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative with the task of establishing contact with all the parties concerned and of reporting to the Secretary-General the results of his fact-finding mission. In carrying out his mission, the Special Representative did not fail to assess at the same time what possibilities existed of peacefully reconciling the differences between the political parties in East Timor—those differences which, being at the basis of the conflict, have so far

prevented the people of the Territory from exercising their inalienable right to self-determination. That was, I believe, the main purpose we all had in mind on 22 December when we adopted resolution 384 (1975); it remains the main purpose at present.

57. The Special Representative, Mr. Winspeare Guicciardi, overcoming great difficulties and often acting at personal physical risk, has fulfilled his mission and submitted his report to the Secretary-General [S/12011, annex]. The report gives us a *prima facie* view of the situation in the Territory and provides us with some insight into the respective positions of the Governments and parties concerned, together with a conclusion that can be taken by the Council as a useful general guideline in regard to what our next step could be. I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate the Special Representative and his assistants for their excellent work and to thank them for the most valuable contribution they have made to our deliberations.

58. I wish also to express the appreciation of my delegation for the open-mindedness shown by all the parties concerned in their contacts with the Special Representative and for the co-operation which was extended to him by all the Governments of the countries he visited during his tour of duty. In that connexion I should like to mention in particular the efforts made by the Portuguese authorities in ensuring to the Special Representative the communication and transportation facilities which he would have needed to reach certain areas of East Timor and complete his assessment of the over-all situation in the Territory. Even if that part of the visit failed to materialize, owing to the insurmountable difficulties existing on the ground, we welcome the fact that the Portuguese Government does not wish to shirk its remaining responsibilities and continues to feel directly involved in the action taken by the Council to allow the people of East Timor to exercise their right to self-determination. We welcome that fact because, as I said in my statement to the Council on 22 December [1869th meeting], we are firmly convinced that in order to ensure juridical continuity between the colonial status and the future political and social order of the Territory, the participation of Portugal in the transition process is necessary.

59. The situation prevailing in East Timor is certainly not a simple one, as can be clearly seen from the report of the Special Representative, and the Council's task is not easy. Indeed, the still-differing views and even accusations exchanged by the representatives of the political parties regarding the terrifying number of victims on one side or the other have not thrown further light on the situation as we understand it from the objective report of Mr. Winspeare Guicciardi. However, under the surface of the conflicting positions we detect some grounds for hope. It is our duty to build on the "common assumption", however "slender"—to use the expression used by the Special

Representative in the last paragraph of his report—in order to hasten a peaceful solution of the problem in accordance with the principles and the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The co-operation given by all the parties to Mr. Winspeare Guicciardi to facilitate his mission is one of the reasons at the back of our hopes. Another one, it seems to me, is the continued attendance at our meetings of all the Governments and parties concerned, without exception. I think that is a significant sign that they all recognize the essential role the Council can play in bringing about a peaceful settlement of the problem and that they share our hope that our decisions will mark a step in that direction.

60. All this enhances, if that is possible, our responsibility towards the 600,000 inhabitants of East Timor, to whom, as I pointed out in my statement of 22 December, we owe the establishment of the conditions required to allow them to exercise their right to self-determination. Upholding one of the basic principles enshrined in the Charter, and giving it the respect due to its universal character, is the only way, in the view of the Italian Government, to settle durably the problem confronting the Council.

61. In that connexion, we share the view expressed by many delegations at all our meetings on this item, including those of today, that an essential condition for the normalization of the situation in East Timor and for the free exercise of the right of self-determination by its people is the withdrawal from the Territory of all foreign armed forces. We appreciate the assurances given the Council by the representative of Indonesia that the withdrawal has already started, and we firmly urge that this process be completed.

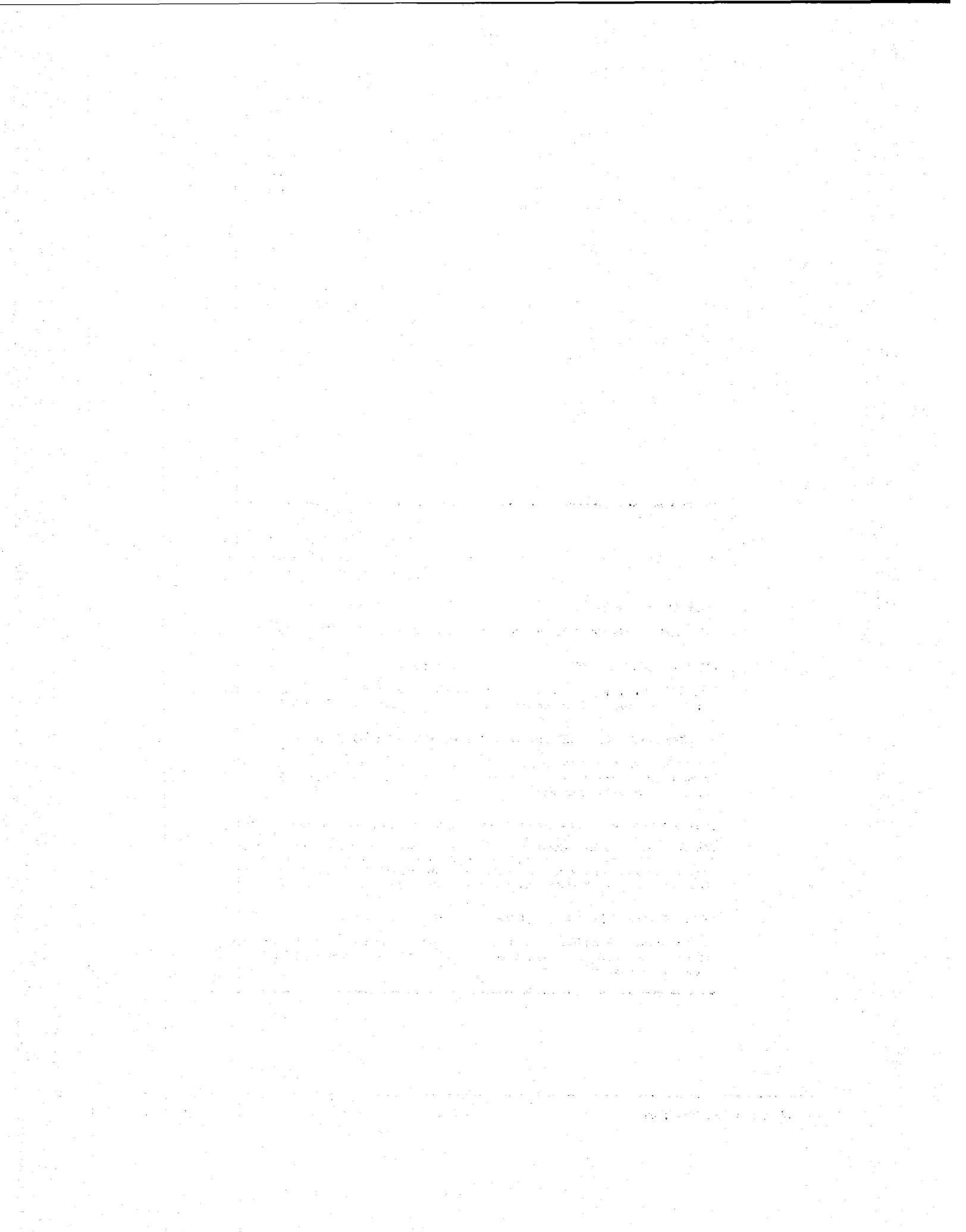
62. We were, on the other hand, favourably impressed by the conclusions drawn by the Special Representative in his report—namely, that all the parties concerned concurred in principle that any agreement on the settlement of the problem should be submitted to the people of East Timor and approved by them. It is true that, as the Special Representative

pointed out, opinions vary about who should take part in the negotiating process which might produce such a settlement, and how popular approval should be sought. Our main task at this stage cannot be other than to try to reconcile these differences, which seem to originate in both personal feelings and a variety of approaches to the problem. We see no better way to lead the parties to co-operate with the Council in tackling the substantial aspects of the problem. A basic condition for the success of such action will obviously be that all the parties get involved in these negotiations at one time or the other, if not through the whole process; the lack of contacts with any of them—as well as with any of the States concerned—might seriously undermine the final outcome of the process we envisage.

63. Now that the existence of some essential elements of a possible solution has been ascertained, we share the view of the Secretary-General that the Council should recommend the promotion of further contacts between the Special Representative and the parties concerned. The final objective of these contacts should be to bring the parties together and work out a solution on the basis of some fundamental guidelines to be established by this Council. The guidelines could in our view be the following ones: all the parties should pledge to refrain from armed violence during the negotiations; they should take part in these negotiations with a sincere will to reach a peaceful solution; and such a solution will in any event be subject to the approval of the people of East Timor, whose right to self-determination cannot and must not be jeopardized by any settlement negotiated without their direct participation.

64. We deeply hope that the Council will move in that direction and that the parties will agree on such a line of action. We believe, in fact, that this is the only way to bring about a reconciliation among the opposing sides and to establish the conditions for the people of East Timor to live in a normal and stable political and social order and rebuild their shattered economy.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*



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