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Indonesia: NGOs call on the UN to move to resolve the question of justice for Timor-Leste

Amnesty International, together with four other international human rights groups, is calling on the UN Secretary-General to immediately set up an International Commission of Experts to review the status of efforts to hold individuals accountable for crimes against humanity and other serious crimes committed by the Indonesian security forces and pro-Indonesian militia in Timor-Leste in 1999.

Trials in Indonesia's *ad hoc* Human Rights Court have now been completed, but were so limited in scope and so procedurally flawed that neither truth nor justice have emerged. A parallel process, set up by the UN in Timor-Leste has made progress, but will be unable to complete its task of investigating and bringing to trial suspects in many hundreds of cases before its mandate ends in May 2005.

A joint letter was sent last week to the Secretary-General by Amnesty International, the International Center for Transitional Justice, the Open Society Justice Initiative, the Coalition for International Justice and Human Rights Watch. The five organizations believe that an independent review is now needed to identify the technical, financial and political obstacles to the two processes with a view to ensuring that credible and effective investigations and trials into *all* the alleged human rights violations committed in Timor-Leste during 1999 take place promptly.

"If there is to be no impunity with respect to crimes committed in Timor-Leste, the UN must follow up on its commitment in two separate Security Council resolutions from 1999 to ensure that perpetrators are brought to account," said Amnesty International. "The independent review is a necessary step towards achieving this," the organization added.

Detailed discussions on the shape of a Commission have taken place within the UN, with the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste and other key governments, but it appears that plans to establish it may be delayed until later this year when the presidential election process in Indonesia is completed. Such a delay could result in victims waiting yet longer for justice and may prevent the opportunity to properly consider the merits of an extension of the Timor-Leste based serious crimes process because its mandate will be nearing an end as the Commission reports.

To see the letter, please go to: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa210222004>

