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Articles

The insertion of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) into the Indonesian province raises the potential threat to foreigners, particularly from pro-integration militias. The militias already have conducted attacks and issued threats against foreign journalists and international peacekeepers, including seriously wounding a US civilian police officer. Attacks may continue from attempts to disarm and possibly relocate the militias. Jakarta's efforts to contain the violence in East Timor failed largely because the military has supported or worked alongside the militias.

The more threatening the peacekeeping mission is to the militias' goal of keeping East Timor part of Indonesia, the higher the risk to foreigners, as the militias may conclude they have little to lose by attacking foreign targets. The greatest danger to foreigners is in East Timor, particularly in the western regions, although protests with the potential to turn ugly are taking place elsewhere in the country.
Indonesian Nationalists Pose Potential Threat

Outside Timor

Indonesian nationalists have issued threats to foreigners and held protests in Jakarta and Surabaya in response to the ballot results and the deployment of INTERFET to East Timor.

- Indonesian protesters sacked the West Australia Trade Office in Surabaya on 13 September.
- The Australian school in Jakarta received two separate telephonic threats on 13 September. The first caller made a bomb threat, and the second threatened to kill foreigners.
- Foreigners could become targets or inadvertent casualties if violence erupts during these protests.

Pro-integrationists also conducted attacks against foreigners following the deployment of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) on 19 September.

- Militia members burned 30 UNAMET vehicles and opened fire on a UNAMET convoy in Likisla on 4 September, shooting and seriously injuring a US civilian police officer.
- Militiamen fired on the Australian Ambassador’s vehicle and attacked the Australian Consulate in Dili on 6 September, according to press.
- Alleged militiamen killed a Dutch Financial Times reporter on 21 September in a Dili suburb after his motorcycle driver tried to flee from six armed men, according to press. In a separate incident the same day, pro-integrationists ambushed a British journalist and a US photographer in Baucau, east of Dili. Australian troops later rescued the two.

The pro-integrationists blame the referendum results in part on UNAMET, claiming it manipulated the ballot results, and plan to confront international peacekeepers to keep East Timor part of Indonesia.

- A militia leader told the press on 9 September that if the UN is responsible for electoral fraud, accusing it of failing to count all the votes for autonomy.
- Barico Guterres, leader of the pro-integration Akbar militia, told Indonesian Armed Forces Chief General Wiranto on 11 September that he would have no regrets about killing nongovernmental organization or UN employees who support the pro-independence side, according to press.
- According to press, milita have gathered in several locations across East Timor and plan to attack INTERFET personnel. Approximately 500 members of the East Marat Pathu (Red and White Iron)
militia—possessing old and homemade guns—gathered in Likisia on 23 September, claiming they would attack foreign peacekeepers.

**Indonesian Military Elements Enhance Prointegrationist Capabilities**

Jakarta's initiatives to control the security situation in East Timor have had little impact because Indonesian military elements have supported prointegration militias.

- Numerous reports indicate that Indonesian military elements have sided or worked with prointegration militias. The Indonesian military on 6 September worked openly with the militias to force people out of East Timor, according to press.

Outlook

Prointegrationists will focus most of their attention on proindependence Timorese, but the deployment of INTERFET raises the threat to foreigners. Clashes may occur as peacekeepers attempt to disarm and possibly to relocate the militias. An effective peacekeeping effort that enforces the referendum results probably will lead prointegrationists to conclude they have nothing to lose by attacking foreign targets. If prointegrationist proposals for a partition of East Timor ultimately are ignored, militias also may continue attacking foreign interests.

- The militias' capabilities to carry out attacks, however, will depend in part on continued support from Indonesian military elements.

- Foreigners face the greatest threat in East Timor, particularly in western regions, but prointegrationist sympathizers in other parts of the archipelago may attack foreigners for perceived interference in their country's internal affairs.