

6 April 1999 Liquiça Church Massacre

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Liquiça Church Massacre 6 April 1999 Lead-up

31 March Xanana Gusmão warns of a new bloodbath in his occupied homeland if the international community fails to put pressure on Jakarta to disarm pro-Indonesian militias. 3 April In an interview given in Dili, General Damiri, Indonesian Military (TNI) commander of the region, stated that the presence of a United Nations peace force is not necessary because TNI is capable of maintaining security. 4 April At 4pm about 18 members of Besi merah Putih militia came to Dato village on the western side of Liquiça, beat up the village head and destroyed his house because they knew that the villagers support independence. The villagers then attacked the militia force and caused them to flee. The militia hid at the military headquarters (Koramil) in Liquiça. The Liquiça priest organised a reconciliation meeting to be held in Dato village the next day.

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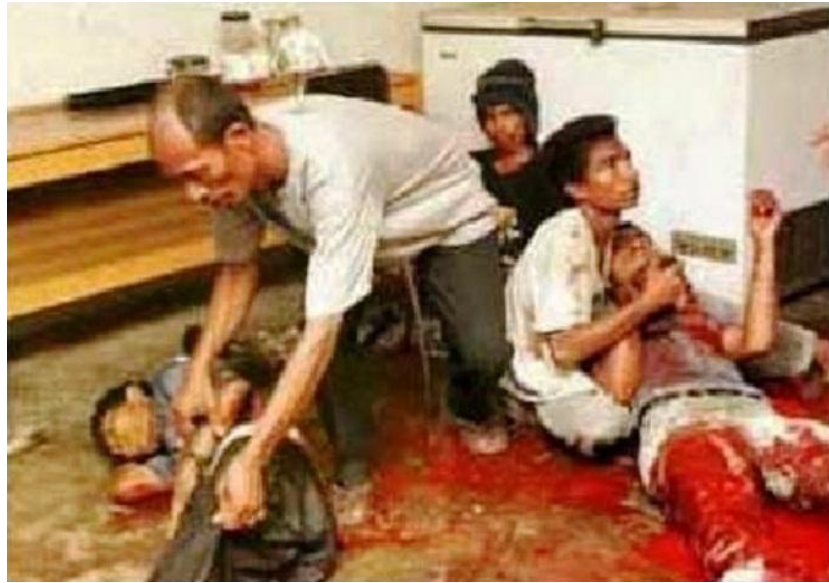
samurai swords and stones. Whoever they found was tortured and gashed. TNI started shooting randomly at the resisting community from behind the militia. □ Four people were killed: Julio, 25, of Dato; Felisberto dos Santos, 27, of Dato; Francisco, 25, of Fatuvou; and Paulino Ribeiro, 28, of Manumeta. At least 7 people were wounded by gunshots and scores of others were injured by traditional weapons. Youths ran towards the town of Liquiça, but all over the town at 1pm the sounds of gunshots could be heard. It was Liquiça Kodim and the Police Command (Polres) doing the shooting and it went on for about an hour. □ Laurindo, 40, head of the government fisheries office for Liquiça was killed by members of the Maubara command (Koramil) in his home. More than 2000 people fled into the church for refuge. After the shooting, the Besi Merah Putih entered Liquiça shouting and went to the compound of Liquiça Kodim. The battalion commander of Besi Merah Putih, Manuel de Sousa, said that his troops would occupy Liquiça until those who were wanted by his group surrender themselves.

Massacre - 6 April

At 4pm Besi Merah Putih and security forces from BTT 143, Kodim 1639 Liquiça, Koramil Liquiça, police from Liquiça and Brimob (special police) surrounded the Liquiça church. The police shot tear gas into the church and gunshots into the air which gave a chance for Besi Merah Putih to enter the church grounds and shoot at the people in the church. The people sprayed by tear gas ran outside the church with their eyes closed then Besi Merah Putih began to massacre the people with arrows and spears. An eyewitness said □ they shot and hacked at people as though they were killing animals. Even when people were raising their arms to surrender, they were still shot and hacked □. The names and ages of the 54 people killed in the church was later compiled by Dili based Yayasan Hak (the Foundation for legal and Human Rights). Some of them are:

1. Antonio do Santos, 24, Hatukesi;
2. Jacinta da Conceição, 34, Dato;
3. Joni Mausoko, 28, Dato;
4. Evangelina Gonçalves, 14, Dato;
5. Juvelina, 16, Dato;
6. Salvador, 13, Vatubou;
7. Santiago, 12, Vatubou;
8. Herminio, 17, Hatukesi;
9. Francisco, 30, Dato;
10. Rafael Maria, 18, Dato;
11. Paulo de Fatima, 53, Daruleten;
12. Erminho do Santos, 35, Maumet;
13. Fernando da Costa S., 29, Dato; Antonio Marcos, 27, Hatukesi;

14. Elidio do Santos, 20, Hatukesi; Abel Ballo, 26, Vatubou;
15. Julito Maria, 18, Metabou;
16. Filipe, 17, Metabou;
17. Americo Marcal, 40, Darulete;
18. Rudolfo do Santos, 15, Darulete;
19. Loubato do Santos, 16, Darulete,
20. Floriano Santos, 30, Vatuboro;
21. Joanico, 35, Dato; Abrão, 37, Hatukesi;
22. Francisco do Santos, Guguleur;
23. José Ribeiro, Guguleur; Julio, Vatubou;
24. Manuel da Costa, 30, Dato;
25. Thomas de Jesus, 26, Hatukesi;
26. Titi Afonso, 29, Guguleur;
27. Alcino Gonçalves, 45, Guguleur;
28. Tiago dos Santos, 17, Liquiça;
29. Afonso, 35, Dato; Rita, 36;
30. Sejarío, 25, Leopa;
31. Custori, 31;
32. Alsino, 25, Leopa;
33. Antonio Gonçalves, 25, Liquiça;
34. José Mosquita, 25, Leopa;
35. Augusto dos Santos Mausinho, 36, Liquiça;
36. Paulino Voavida, 22, Villa Adios;
37. Alsino Fernandes, 28, Leopa. Also 14 disappeared and 35 were wounded.
38. Seven more people were shot dead in the upper floor of the parish house by the army and Brimob. They included:
 39. Jacinto da Costa Conceição Pereira, 47, the village head of Dato;
 40. Agostinho, 43 from Darulete;
 41. Victor; Leovigildo (a junior high school student); and
 42. Lucio.



An eye witness hidden with others in the church said that around 6.45pm they saw six Hino truckst taking bodies away from the church. The bodies were thrown on top of the truck and taken to an unknown destination.

Another five

1. Americo, 28,
2. Afonso, 26
3. Manuel Lisboa, 40, from Dato; and
4. Mautersa, 22, Vatuboro
5. Secar do Carmo, 21 from Vatuboro, all died from wounds in Dato village.

Plus Laurindo da Costa, 45, died in the village of Maumeta/Mercado. At the same time, about Rp. 8 million belonging to Liquiça catholic school and money for alms was also looted. The Besi merah Putih took a motorcycle belonging to the church and several other cars and took them to Maubara. The contents of the priest's house were destroyed. On the same day a great number of heavily armed Indonesian soldiers disembarked in Dili harbour. 7 April An Indonesian army spokesman offered no explanation for the Liquiça massacre beyond saying that five separatists were killed after opening fire at soldiers.

This is an extract from Indonesia's Death Squads: Getting Away With Murder A Chronology of Indonesian military sponsored Paramilitary and Militia atrocities in East Timor from November 1998 to May 1999 Published by the East Timor International Support Center in Darwin in May 1999 Compiled by me without my name appearing so I could continue to travel to East Timor.

Justice must be done for the victims of this massacre. Plus I support the view of Fidelis LeiteMagalhães that the Timor-Leste government must have the courage to ask Indonesia the whereabouts of the missing bodies. See his article April 6 was the commemoration of the 12 th anniversary of the Liquiça massacre At

<http://timorhauniandoben.blogspot.com/2011/04/massacres-in-timor-leste-liquica-12.html?spref=fb>