

EAST TIMOR

MEET A CHILD

Covas, now 20, joined Besi Merah-Putih, a pro-Jakarta militia group that conducted atrocities in East Timor in 1999 after the territory overwhelmingly voted for independence. "I was 14 when the militia came to my village, beating and killing people, and forcibly recruiting me. My parents accepted the recruitment to save the lives of relatives. They taught me how to use guns and machetes and 'how to rape, steal and kill.' The first time they took me from my house, we had to rape a woman and then kill anything we could, animals and people." As East Timor became independent, Vasco joined the first battalion as a captain.

TOTAL POPULATION **820,000**
CHILD POPULATION **360,800**

Population Reference Bureau -
2004

TOTAL CHILD LABOUR

No confirmed figures are available.

The Labor Code prohibits children under 18 from working; however, there are circumstances under which children between the ages of 15 to 18 can work, and there are even exceptional exemptions for children under 15. The minimum age did not apply to family-owned businesses, and many children worked in the agricultural sector.

US Dept. of State, Country Reports
on Human Rights Practices- 2004,
February 2005

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION

Of an estimated 608,000 economically active population in 2010, 30,000 are estimated to be children in the age group 10-14 representing 33% of the children of that age

ILO, Bureau of Statistics,
Economically Active Population

GENDER RATIO

961 females for 1000 males

CIA, factbook-2005 (Fig is an
estimate for 2005)

CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

According to a U.N. study, approximately 25 percent of primary education age children nationwide were not enrolled in school; the figures for rural areas were substantially worse than those for urban areas.

US Dept. of State, Country Reports
on Human Rights Practices- 2004,
February 2005

PROGRESS ON PRIMARY EDUCATION MDG

Data not available

CHILD SLAVERY
No confirmed data

CHILD TRAFFICKING

East Timor is a destination country for women trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, majority of them from Thailand, Indonesia, and the Peoples's Republic of China

Child labor in the informal sector occurred, and there were reports of trafficking in persons.

During the year, there were several reports of women and girls trafficked into the country for prostitution. In most reported trafficking cases, the victims and the traffickers were foreign nationals.

It is believed that as many as 1000 children were separated from their parents at the height of the violence in East Timor in 2001 and later from refugee camps in West Timor. Investigators fear many of the children have been forced to work in Indonesian factory sweatshops, plantations or as prostitutes.

CHILD PROSTITUTION

East Timorese girls and women become prostitutes as a consequence of rape by Indonesian soldiers, high levels of unemployment and the need to support themselves and their children, often in the absence of their men who are away fighting or have been killed.

CHILDREN USED IN CRIME
No confirmed data

CHILD SOLDIERS

The number of children who served Armed Forces of National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL) is unknown but there were many of them. However, from 2001, the demobilisation of child soldiers began and many were off the ranks.

Pro-Indonesian groups also had child soldiers. They were usually coerced or bribed to join the army.

However, the latest report on child soldiers reports that there are no under-18s in the armed forces in East Timor

US Dept. of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 2005

US Dept. of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004, February 2005

Timor's Stolen Children Abandoned, The Age, 25 Oct, 2000

CATW Fact Book citing East Timor human Rights centre, Violence by the state against women

CSUCS, Global Report on Child Soldiers, 2001

CSUCS, Global Report on Child Soldiers, 2004

CHILD LABOUR IN UNORGANISED SECTOR

Reports of children working on the streets particularly in the capital city Dili are available. About 200 to 300 children sell VCDs in the streets and wash cars.

Around 1,000 street children have been reported in Dili, and two projects have been established by religious groups to provide some services.

World of Work, No.43, June 2002,
ILO