



The Right Livelihood Award

for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people

Carmel Budiardjo (UK)

(1995)



...For holding the Indonesian government accountable for its actions and upholding the universality of fundamental human rights.

Carmel Budiardjo

Carmel Budiardjo is a British citizen who gained a degree in economics from London University in 1946 and went to Indonesia in 1951, after marrying an Indonesian government official. Her husband was imprisoned for 'political offences' after President Suharto seized power in the 1960s and spent 12 years in prison without trial. She herself suffered three years in detention, without trial or charge, before being forced to leave the country in 1971.

In 1973, Carmel Budiardjo was at the centre of a group of activists in London who founded the Indonesian human rights campaign, TAPOL. She has now been running TAPOL for 25 years, with a small staff but with a wide network of volunteer supporters and readers of the TAPOL Bulletin, which has been published every two months without interruption throughout that time.

TAPOL's initial purpose was to campaign for the release of hundreds of thousands of political prisoners, mostly jailed without trial, who had been held as communist suspects after an anti-communist crackdown in 1965 (the word 'tapol' is a contraction of two Indonesian words meaning 'political prisoner'). But it soon broadened its campaign to include students arrested in 1974 and 1978. In August 1975, TAPOL warned that an Indonesian invasion of East Timor would bring bloodshed and terror. The invasion, which brought both, occurred four months later.

Under Carmel Budiardjo's leadership, TAPOL has campaigned against economic aid and arms exports to Indonesia, as well as human rights abuses such as press censorship. During the 1980s the TAPOL Bulletin published many detailed interviews with West Papuan resistance leaders, East Timorese victims of abuse and Indonesian human rights activists. It also started making representations on a variety of issues to UN human rights bodies. Apart from the Bulletin and 'Occasional Reports', TAPOL has published books including *An Act of Genocide: Indonesia's Invasion of East Timor* (1979), *West Papua: the obliteration of a people* (1983), and *Indonesia: Muslims on Trial* (1984).

1995 was a symbolically important year for those working on Indonesian human rights issues, being

the 50th anniversary of the country's independence, the 30th anniversary of Suharto's seizure of power and the 20th anniversary of the invasion of East Timor. The International Federation for East Timor (IFET), based in Japan, strongly endorsed Budiardjo's nomination for the Right Livelihood Award.

Since the beginning of the new century, Carmel Budjardjo has become very much involved in campaigning against human rights violations in Aceh and for a peaceful solution to the conflict. For West Papua she is supporting the exercise of the right to self-determination and exposing the fraudulent Act of Free choice in West Papua in 1969.

Quotation

"We try to keep the solidarity movement supplied with the kind of analysis that helps groups to understand the political background to repression... According to an Indonesian colleague, our TAPOL Bulletin has become part of the alternative press in Indonesia, keeping alive the torch of free expression."

Carmel Budiardjo

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