

New association appeals to HK and Macao people for relief

CHINESE IN TIMOR FACE STARVATION



REPRESENTATIVES of the Hongkong and Macao Provisional Association of Overseas Chinese of East Timor speaking of the plight faced by the refugees. From left are Mr. Chung Kai-ying, Mr. Loui Young and Mr. Allan Parkes.

TWENTY thousand Chinese in East Timor are facing the grim prospect of starvation within two weeks, refugees from the territory said yesterday.

According to the recently-formed Hongkong and Macao Provisional Association of Overseas Chinese of East Timor, private letters arriving from Dili, said that although fighting had generally died down, the situation was volatile and the country was seriously short of food and medical supplies.

Chinese in villages around Dili were reported to be fleeing on wildlife while the Chinese community in the capital's food storage was estimated to run out within two weeks.

In view of this grim prospect faced by the Chinese in Timor the provisional association yesterday appealed to local people to send emergency relief to the country.

Secretary of the association, Mr. Loui Young, said the association had already written to the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, asking his government to take immediate humanitarian action in sending relief material to East Timor and evacuating the refugees.

The association has also cabled the Vatican and asked for assistance in appealing to the Red Cross and the governments concerned to come to the aid of the refugees.

by

Douglas Lam

Mr. Young said although plans had been sent from Macao and Australia to evacuate the refugees before, most of the people who managed to get on board were Portuguese.

About 500 Chinese were able to get out, he said. Three hundred of them are staying in Darwin in northern Australia, 60 in both Hongkong and Macao and the rest in Taiwan or other places.

"We hope to get out another 3,000 Chinese," said Mr. Young.

Apart from the immediate goal of sending emergency relief to East Timor, Mr. Young said the provisional association was also planning to hold a fund-raising campaign some time later to set up a refugee welfare fund.

He added that relief materials can be sent to P.O. Box 81, Red Cross International, Darwin.

Most of the Chinese in East Timor are merchants who emigrated to the island from mainland China after the communist takeover in 1949.

Turn to Page 16

They make up the principal force in East Timor's commercial sector, importing a considerable portion of the country's staple food and daily necessities and exporting coffee and dried coconut to Europe and America.

Meanwhile agency reports from Timor quoted a Fretilin saying that Indonesian troops are gathering for an attack on areas controlled by his left-wing liberation movement.

Fretilin claims to control the Portuguese colony, which borders Indonesian West Timor.

Fretilin military commander Rogerio Lobato said in Dili yesterday that intelligence reports showed "large scale military activity" by Indonesian units in the Alas district of West Timor, within striking distance of the Fretilin-held town of Suai.

"The military command of Fretilin repeats its warning that any foreign force entering East Timor will be considered to be invading forces," Lobato said. "Any invasion on the pretext that a civil war is still in progress will be repelled." Indonesian troops are

also to give military training to pro-Indonesian refugees informed sources said yesterday in Jakarta.

Meanwhile leaders of a pro-Jakarta alliance have backed down from a previous refusal to attend Portuguese sponsored peace talks, and are now prepared to attend such talks on certain conditions, the sources said.