

Self-Determination of Timorese women's in History of Timor-Leste's Diplomacy¹

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Abstract

This research article discusses the experiences of women's roles in the history of public diplomacy and non-state actions that aimed to attained to the right to self-determination of the people of Timor-Leste. That the shared perception of women's participation in the national liberation movement was equal between men and women throughout on the Diplomatic Front becomes a reference reflects to the historical reality. Women's role in the Timor-Leste national resistance movement demonstrated their progress and modernity of women in contemporary society. History shows women in the Diplomatic Front represented human capital through their sentiments of nationalism, patriotism and the right to self-determination. This study reveals that the women of Timor-Leste had a clear sense of purpose and belonging, strength, valuable importance, visibility, and responsiveness, being visible, and the competence to create gender balance in the narrative of the history of the Timorese people's struggle and that of future nation building onward.

Keywords: Timorese women, public diplomacy, non-state actors, self-determination

1. Background of research

This study analyses "...the narrative of women in the history of public diplomacy and non-state actors fighting for Timor-Leste's right to self-determination. It is known that Timor-Leste was under Portuguese colonial rule for approximately 450 years until 28 November 1975. Francisco Xavier do Amaral (the founding father and first President of Timor-Leste) proclaimed Timor-Leste as an independent state in the city of Dili. Nine days later, on 7 December 1975, ABRI - the Indonesian Armed Forces systematically invaded and annexed the territory of Timor-Leste. The international community condemned the invasion, and the United Nations accused Indonesia of violating the territory's right to self-determination and annexing ungoverned territory. Indonesia was increasingly pressured: Indonesia was pressure in various open forums at the international level due to allegations of military aggression and violence in Timor-Leste. Indonesia was accused of, and criticised for,

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violating various international human rights law treaties, including Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which states, 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood', as well as Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights (1966), which declares, 'All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.'² Through the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council adopted UN Security Council Resolution 384, which affirmed the people of Timor-Leste's right to self-determination and asserted that Indonesia must immediately withdraw its military forces from the territory.³

The leaders and people of Timor-Leste fought back from towns, villages, mountains, and forests. Many civilians, including children and women, were killed, some civilians were arrested and imprisoned, and enforced disappearances occurred. Resistance leaders realised that the struggle against the Indonesian military could not be won through an armed approach since Indonesia's military power was aided by modern and sophisticated weaponry and war equipment. In 1981, the leader of the people's resistance, Xanana Gusmão, changed the movement's strategy, which originally relied on military force and centred around The Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) party, to a universal people's resistance that focused on the principle of national unity.⁴ According to Gusmão, only with this strategy could all the nation's components, including women, take part in the resistance. This change in strategy made room for the birth of female fighters both within Timor-Leste and abroad and for the emergence of solidarity support from the international community through a line of resistance called the 'Diplomatic Front'. Under Gusmão's leadership, the movement adopted a strategy of resistance that comprised three major components, namely armed resistance fighters known as the 'Army Front', an underground movement known as the 'Clandestine Front', and international campaign and lobby ranks known as the 'Diplomatic Front', which is the focus of the present study. The change in strategy produced opportunities for women's involvement in the fight for Timor-Leste's right to self-determination.

During the research process, this study discovered that women had a significant involvement in the Diplomatic Front; however, their role has not yet been revealed in the historical narrative of Timor-Leste's independence. Therefore, this study examines the narratives of women in the history of the public and non-state actor diplomacy that aimed to achieve the right to self-determination for the people of Timor-Leste. Women's role in public diplomacy and as non-state actors in the struggle for Timor-Leste's independence has not been frequently addressed. A book written by José Ramos-Horta, who was the spokesperson of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM) and later the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) in the diaspora during Indonesian occupation (1975–99), emphasises the author's own narrative and does not discuss the role of women in the international diplomacy movement at all.⁵ Later, a book by John Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor*, covered the resistance fighters in the forest and highlighted the

². ICCRP and ICESCR, 1960.

³. United Nations Security Council. 1975. *Resolution 384 adopted by the Security Council on 22 December 1975 – On the East Timor Question*. 1869th Meeting. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/93735>.

⁴. Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor (CAVR), available at <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/en/chegaReport.htm>.

⁵. José M. Ramos-Horta, *FUNU: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press Eritrea, 1996).

role of male leaders such as Ramos-Horta.⁶ Further, though Sally-Anne Watson's book, *Buibere: Lian Feto Timor Lorosa'e Nian (Indonesia: Voices of Timor-Leste Women)*, features women's narratives, even this publication does not connect their heroic actions and tends to be considered merely complementary to narratives about the roles of men, conveying only those about women that highlight their position as victims of violence and that recount violations of women's human rights.⁷ In reality, the birth of the women's resistance movement on the Diplomatic Front was a reaction to Indonesia's occupation of Timor-Leste; forms of colonialism and imperialism in the political, economic, social, cultural, legal contexts; and the desire to achieve a free and independent nation-society. Even ideological ideas such as anti-colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, patriotism are the result of critical reflection and awareness that is not only limited to the right to self-determination but extends to broader aspects. According to Helen Mary Hill, the conditions that led to the birth of the women's movement include opposition to Portuguese rule in Timor-Leste, the affirmation of Timor-Leste culture, national unity, the differences between Timor-Leste and Indonesia, the economic promotion of the peasantry of Timor-Leste, the desire for economic liberation from colonial rule, the need to prevent neo-colonial economic rule, and the right to self-determination as a free and independent nation.⁸ East Timorese women strongly believed in the idea of living together in the region in the context of modernism, which the state called political legitimacy as a product of common will.⁹ Women are motivated by willingness and encourage men to recognise the abilities of those women who have similar qualities in terms of performance, persistence, and creativity.¹⁰ For a free and independent Timor-Leste, resistance needed to be the duty of all the nation's subjects, regardless of gender and linguistic differences; therefore, the women of Timor-Leste led by example, took on a political role, and devised a revolution for national liberation.¹¹

The women of Timor-Leste formed human capital for the struggle in the Diplomatic Front through their knowledge, ideas, creativity, skills, productivity, and intellect. They seized opportunities, maintained work productivity, influenced changes in public perception, attracted broad support against Indonesia's position, and supported the struggle for the people of Timor-Leste's right to self-determination. Like women in various other parts of the world, with all their powers of thought, as the subject for a role such as a role in resistance or as a subject in the narrative of a history. Therefore, the narrative about women's role in the history of Timor-Leste's diplomacy is an important topic of study. Their role as human capital for diplomacy is not only because they are East Timorese women. However, because of their strength and ability, knowledge, level of education, their intellect and their awareness of the human nature of the people of Timor-Leste to self-determination. They understood the need for the recognition of, and respect for, the human rights of the people of Timor-Leste; the basis of this awareness was their critical reflection on the idea of the right to self-determination, which stemmed from Indonesia's diplomacy abroad.

⁶. John G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor* (London: Zed Books, 1991).

⁷. Sally-Anne Watson, *Buibere: Lian Feto Timor Lorosa'e Nian (Indonesia: Voices of Timor-Leste Women)*, vol. 2, (Dili: Forum Komunikasi Untuk Perempuan Timor Lorosa'e, 2001)

⁸. Helen M. Hill, *Gerakan Pembebasan Nasional Timor Lorosa'e (English Translation)* (Dili: Yayasan HAK dan Sahe Institute for Liberation, 2000), 86.

⁹. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 2006).

¹⁰. Katherine Martin, *Women of Courage: Inspiring Stories from the Women Who Lived Them* (Novato, CA California: New World Library, 1999); Joan Kirner and Moira Rayner, *The Women's Power Handbook* (Richmond: Viking Australia, 1999).

¹¹. Hannah Loney, *In Women's Words: Violence and Everyday Life During the Indonesian Occupation of East Timor, 1975-1999* (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2018).

Indonesia built alliances with the USA, Australia, and the UK in an attempt to thwart the United Nations Security Council Resolutions and consistently opposed Portugal's proposal for Timor-Leste's independence. However, both women and men fighters on the Diplomatic Front succeeded in influencing Portugal's policy as a legitimately ruling authority, gaining the legitimacy to fight for and defend Timor-Leste's right to determine its own destiny. Portugal's legitimacy was established through the UN General Assembly Resolution 37/30 of 1982. In that period, Portugal also adopted the issue of Timor-Leste as part of its National Constitution, ensuring that Timor-Leste's right to self-determination and the recognition of its national independence became mandatory for the country. Thereafter, Indonesia faced a dilemma, and Portugal maintained a position of defending Timor-Leste's right to self-determination.

Before 1998, Indonesia was in an increasingly difficult position as various domestic pressure groups criticised the New Order government under Suharto's leadership. Together with the pro-democracy movement alliance in Indonesia, the Indonesian people accused the Suharto government of violating the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, in particular the preamble to the 1945 Constitution, which emphasised that independence is the right of all nations and that, consequently, colonialism must be abolished. This formulation became the basis for a resistance movement originating from within Indonesia that called for the respect for, and recognition of, Timor-Leste's right to determine its own destiny. The international community also condemned Indonesia's position. Cases of violence perpetrated by the Indonesian military against the people of Timor-Leste emerged in the public spotlight, and many demands and criticisms were voiced regarding the accountability of the Indonesian military. The female fighters in the ranks of the Diplomatic Front increasingly criticised Indonesia's position and declared that Indonesia had committed violence, gross human rights violations, and crimes against humanity in Timor-Leste.

The United Nations concluded the same. As reported by the human rights organisation Amnesty International, 'a UN Security Council mission sent to Jakarta and Dili, 8–12 September 1999, reported the involvement of elements of the Indonesian military and police in organising and supporting unacceptable acts of violence. For objective observers and openly acknowledged by the Indonesian Minister of Defence on 11 September 1999. The mission report notes that there is strong primary evidence of abuses of international humanitarian law since the announcement of the results of the popular consultation on 4 September 1999.'¹² These observations were supported by the International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor, which reported that 'there are patterns of gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law that vary from time to time and are carried out systematically and widely in the form of intimidation, humiliation and terror, destruction of property, violence against women and displacement of people',¹³.

2. Theoretical framework: Public and non-state actor diplomacy theories

¹². United Nations Security Council, Report of the Security Council Mission to Jakarta and Dili, September 8 to 12, 1999. UNDoc. S/1999/976, Paragraph 21.

¹³. International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor, Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on East Timor to the UN Secretary General, January 2000. UNDoc. A/54/726 and S/2000/59, January 31, 2000.

In discussing the narrative of women in the fight for the Timor-Leste's right to self-determination, we adopt the theories of public diplomacy and non-state actors as frameworks to discuss Indonesia's international interests as the de facto ruling authority over Timor-Leste and Portugal's de jure power in representing Timor-Leste's struggle for independence. Theoretically, public diplomacy is considered a platform from which soft power policies can be initiated and can be defined as a mechanism that engages foreign audiences to achieve the desired foreign policy goals. As explained by Edmund Gullion,¹⁴ 'public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It includes encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy: communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications 'Central to public diplomacy (PD) is the transnational flow of information and ideas'.

Non-state actors can be divided into different groups, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), academics and universities, the media, and so on, which conduct operations that are international in scope, manifested in their global offices.¹⁵ Non-state actors also include international bodies, lobby groups, businesses, and multi-national or global corporations. They have power that is equal to, and often exceeds, that of the state particularly in terms of their financial and political power and networking potential. They are able to make, mobilise, and influence anything related to their interests and are especially influential in terms of regulation and making policy. Though the manoeuvres of non-state actors are barely palpable, their impact can be felt. In addition to using proxies or third parties, the modes they use are often asymmetrical, non-military and indirect. To achieve strategic goals, non-state actors represent opportunities for the state, particularly in the case of Portugal and the Timor-Leste fighters. Conversely, they can also become a threat to national interests; in this case, for Indonesia.¹⁶

Diplomatic activities have increased significantly along with the increasing complexity of international relations. In the case of Timor-Leste and Indonesia, the issues affecting the interests of Indonesia, Portugal, and other countries that had bilateral interests in the debate on Timor-Leste's political status included the trade in firearms from Europe to Indonesia, the use of European and American-made weapons to carry out trade wars, and gross human rights violations in Timor-Leste, including violence against women and children. In the subsequent developments, the issue of Timor-Leste's political status was no longer limited to the interests of Indonesia and Portugal and was facilitated by the United Nations so that the pattern of diplomatic activity was that of 'first-track diplomacy', which only governments in diplomatic activities (i.e. government to government [G2G] diplomacy). Traditional first-track diplomacy is no longer effective in conveying diplomatic messages;¹⁷ thus, the role of non-state actors' diplomacy becomes critical. Diplomacy it is no longer limited to the government but involves other interest groups in multi-track diplomacy model missions.

¹⁴. Saima Ashraf Kayani and Muhammad SaifurRehman, 'PublicDiplomacy:ANewForeignPolicyParadigm' in *MargallaPapers 2015*, eds. Anwar Ali Hyder, Noel Israel Khokhar, Muhammad Saif ur Rehman, and Qurat ul Ain (Islamabad: National Defence University, 2015), 45–66.

¹⁵. BobReinalda, ed., *TheAshgateResearchCompaniontoNon-StateActors*, 1st ed. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 16.

¹⁶. Rizki Rahmadini Nurika, 'Peran Globalisasi di Balik Munculnya Tantangan Baru Bagi Diplomasi di Era Kontemporer' ('English translation'), *Sospol: JurnalSosialPolitik* 3, no. 1 (2017): 126–41.

¹⁷. Louise Diamond and JohnMcDonald, *Multi-TrackDiplomacy:ASystemsApproachtoPeace*, 3rd ed. (WestHartford, CT: KumarianPress, 1996).

Indonesia's diplomatic activities reflected its interest in maintaining the integration of Timor-Leste as part of the Republic Indonesia, which it they fought for both domestically and in international forums, especially to bear legitimacy and recognition from the United Nations. Likewise, Portugal continued to claim de jure authority over Timor-Leste, representing the Timor-Leste people's right to self-determination domestically (namely by upholding Portugal's responsibility to fight for this right to self-determination stated in the Portuguese Constitution) and in international forums including the United Nations. As per the nature of diplomacy, the efforts made by Portugal with the support of the anti-Indonesian Timor-Leste fighters focused on trying to convince others to understand, acknowledge, and justify the position that Portugal de jure represented and defended the East Timorese people's right to self-determination.¹⁸

The nature of women's role in public diplomacy in Timor-Leste was to support Portugal's position and oppose that of Indonesia through public diplomacy activities and the role of non-state actors. Women fighters from Timor-Leste did not communicate or dialog directly with Indonesia but instead used the mechanism of non-state actor diplomacy: women in the Diplomatic Front built an international community alliance to criticise Indonesia's position at the various levels of social realities, economics, security, cases of violence and human rights violations, and the legitimacy granted by international human rights law. In this way, the issues surrounding the aspirations of the people of Timor-Leste were constructed and became the material Portugal could use to dialog and negotiate with Indonesia. The problems that emerged as a result of the Indonesian occupation strengthened the position of the women fighters of Timor-Leste and Portugal's ability to counter Indonesia. The role of women fighters, together with their international community alliances, was crucial in influencing the public policies of Indonesia's global allies, which were also member countries of the United Nations.

The international community's public participation derived from the fact that state-to-state diplomacy is not always able to answer complex issues, for example, Indonesia's goal to remain in control over the right of the people of Timor-Leste for self-determination, which was an inherent responsibility for Portugal. It is important that public diplomacy activities were implemented by the government/state and non-state actors (both organisations and individuals) in the fight to defend the Timor-Leste's right to self-determination. It is through these multi-track approaches that non-state actors analyse and express their opinions on the mechanisms for resolving conflicting interests; in this case, the conflict between Indonesia, which had an interest in defending its position in Timor-Leste, and Portugal, whose stakeholders chose to support Timor-Leste's right to self-determination and independence from Indonesia, along with the Timor-Leste fighters. Given the important role of non-state actors in diplomacy, East Timorese women in the ranks of the Diplomatic Front built alliances with various groups of non-state actors, seeking policy loopholes that could benefit the position of the Timor-Leste fighters and Portugal, prevent Indonesia from building alliances with friendly countries, and manage the Timor-Leste issue within the framework of an international conflict. Through the multi-track diplomacy mechanism, East Timorese women took advantage of the power of their alliance with the international community. In this way, women in the diaspora succeeded in their goals through strategies and mechanisms of public diplomacy and the participation of non-state actors in the face of Indonesia and Portugal as stakeholder countries and other United Nations member states.

¹⁸. Louise Diamond and John McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Guide and Analysis* (Grinnell, IA: Iowa Peace Institute, 1991).

The struggle for the independence of Timor-Leste involved collective action. Empirical experience from the public diplomacy movement has given birth to a new discourse about women as a determining force that is equal to that of men. Women demonstrate their identity through their roles, which are capable of illuminating, stimulating, uplifting, and invigorating.¹⁹ The role of several young women lead to their portrayal as courageous female leaders who had a clear sense of purpose and belonging, confidence, integrity, strength, and were valuable, important, and responsive.²⁰ The historical and ideological ideas of nationalism, patriotism, and the right to self-determination underpinned the role of these women in public diplomacy and as non-state actors. They devised a diplomatic work agenda that influenced stakeholders, as well as working procedures in the context of diplomacy at the G2G, public, and non-state levels. The diplomacy of non-state actors succeeded in influencing the member states of the United Nations, namely by facilitating the historic 5 May 1998 Agreement, which approved a popular referendum as a mechanism for implementing the people of Timor-Leste's right to self-determination in 1999. The women fighters in the ranks of the Diplomatic Front did not miss the support of UN member states and other stakeholder groups.

3. Research Method

Design

This study adopted a qualitative research method. Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data, such as interviews, documents, and observations to understand and explain a social phenomenon. This method also involves collecting data on personal experiences, introspections, life stories, interactions, and visual texts that are significant to people's lives. Qualitative research typically serves one or more of the following purposes.²¹

Data collection

The historical data used in this study's analysis were obtained through a systematic investigation of past events via a literature review and interviews to develop a historical account. This account was not simply an accumulation of dates and facts or a description of past happenings but a flowing and dynamic explanation of previous events that included an interpretation of these events to recapture the incidents, personalities, and ideas that influenced them. The historical data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.²² Primary sources are first-person accounts that involve the oral or written testimony of eyewitnesses and may include documents, letters, observational notes, and other relics that were created at or very near the time of the historical event that is being described. Meanwhile, the secondary sources used in this study took the form of biographies, popular books, reference books, textbooks, and newspaper articles.²³

The process of interview took different times in Dili, targeted to the women who pay their important role through heroic action abroad during resistance period from 1975-1999. They are including

¹⁹. Martin, *Women of Courage*.

²⁰. Martin, *Women of Courage*; Kirner and Rayner, *The Women's Power Handbook*.

²¹. Alan Peshkin, 'The goodness of qualitative research', *Educational Researcher* 22, no. 2 (1993): 23-9.

²². Peshkin, 'The goodness of qualitative research'; E. Jennifer Monaghan and Douglas K. Hartman, 'Undertaking Historical Research in Literacy', in *Handbook of Reading Research, Volume III*, eds. Michael L. Kamil, Peter B. Mosenthal, P. David Pearson, and Rebecca Barr (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), 109-22.

²³. Monaghan and Hartman, 'Undertaking Historical Research'; John R. Hall, 'Historicity and Sociohistorical Research', in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Science Methodology*, eds. W. Outhwaite, and S. P. Turner (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2007), 82-99.

CeoBrites (Timorese Activist, representatives of CNRT-CNRT in Australia from 1985-1999, interviewed two times 2016, 2019 in Dili), Bella Galhos (spokesperson of CNRM-CNRT in Canada and United State of America from 1994-1999, interviewed two times iha 2016, 2019 in Dili), Solange Filipe (Timorese activist, member of CNRM-CNRT in Australia, interviewed at 2016 in Dili). Other source such as text using in this study and analyse include list of reference and textual narrative from actors include Ana Pessoa narrative textual write by Teresa Amaral (2005) Pinto and Ines Almeida that accessed. Process of interview through prepare list of questionnaires and inform in advance then do proper interview by asking questions such as asking what motivated women to participate in the national resistance movement through the Diplomatic Front? And what form did their role and involvement take in the resistance movement through the Diplomatic Front?

Analyses;

The analysis followed the five stages of historical research proposed by Lundy,²⁴ as follows:

1. A researchable phenomenon is identified by reading the relevant literature, gathering views about the phenomenon, and reflecting on the researcher's interest before choosing a specific time period, person, phenomena, or era related to the focus of the study.
2. Research questions are formulated. This is followed by the identification of a theoretical perspective that will guide the data collection process and interpretation of the results, as well as helping the researcher focus on and interpret the historical occurrences recorded.
3. This is the data exploration and collection stage, which is dependent on the subject of study and the accessibility of data sources.
4. This stage involves the checking of facts, evaluation of the validity and reliability of the data, and the analysis of the evidence gathered from each source.
5. Finally, the findings are written up and presented, along with interpretations and detailed supportive evidence in defence of the conclusions made.

4. Findings

The nature of women's involvement diplomacy in Timor-Leste took the form of public and non-state actor diplomacy, comprising both traditional and multi-track approaches. In this paper, the findings are grouped according to (a) the subjects' motivations and desires, based on an exploration of first-hand experiences and narrative testimony recorded from several women who were overseas, (b) their roles in providing information and building international community opinion, (c) their roles in building alliances and international networks, and (d) the gender disparity and gendered recognition in the resistance. In what follows, we describe the empirical findings and discuss them according to the actor's role, sequence of time, the climactic stage, and the final result. The experiences and strategic roles of several East Timorese women greatly determined the success of the Diplomatic Front in bringing Timor-Leste to the referendum stage on 30 August 1999. The Timor-Leste women fighters in the Diplomatic Front selected in this study include Ana Pessoa Pinto, FátimaGuterres, Maria Hermínia Martins de Santos Bessa, Lígia de Jesus, PascoelaBarreto, Milena Pires, Mimi Ferreira, CeuBrites, Solange Filipe, BellaGalhos, Ines Almeida during their stay in the diaspora.

²⁴ K. S. Lundy, 'Historical Research', in *TheSAGEEncyclopediaofQualitativeResearchMethods: Volumes1&2*, ed. Lisa M. Given(ThousandOaks, CA:SAGE, 2008), 395–99.

Invasion, international reaction, and East Timorese women in the diaspora, 1975

The Indonesian military invasion on 7 December 1975 caused reactions from various parties. In addition to Portugal and its former colonies, the United Nations immediately condemned Indonesia for violating the UN Security Council Resolution 1415/XIV/1960 of 14 December, which regulates the basic principles of the right to self-determination, and UN Security Council Resolution 1514/XV/1961, which included Timor-Leste in the list of non-self-governing territories in the United Nations. Indonesia violated various international human rights law treaties.²⁵ To defend Timor-Leste's interests, several East Timorese women who were in Portugal at that time, such as Pessoa Pinto, De Santos Bessa, and other colleagues who were delegates of Fretilin in the diaspora in Portugal (1975) and Mozambique (1976–99) immediately responded by lobbying, negotiating, and mobilising the support of the leadership of Portugal's ruling party, as well as organising student groups and trade unions and contacting the, mass media. Maria Hermina Bessa gathered information from various sources both from within Timor-Leste and from various secondary sources and analysed and transcribed Fretilin's political position. Together with Pessoa Pinto, they conveyed Fretilin's position to various mass media and community groups as the only legitimate political platform to fight for and defend Timor-Leste's independence, freedom, and right to self-determination against the Indonesian annexation of the territory. They conveyed Fretilin's position not only to the mass media but also to the leaders of political parties that had seats in the Portuguese parliament.²⁶

Ana Pessoa Pinto also approached student activists at various campuses in Lisbon, conducting a campaign to explain to student activists Fretilin's view that the Indonesian military invasion of Timor-Leste was a violation of its independence, freedom, and the right to self-determination according to the principles of international human law. Fretilin received support from various parties and groups in Portugal. Portuguese mass media was very influential in generating support within Portugal and former Portuguese colonies, including countries on the African continent. The influence of the mass media coverage of the Indonesian military invasion and Fretilin's position motivated the emergence of solidarity groups, including the Rail Workers' Union, factory unions, and students at various college campuses throughout Portugal. Meanwhile, De Santos Bessa also collected information from various sources about the violence involved in the invasion and annexation, then analysed, transcribed, and disseminated it to mass media sources in Portugal and Africa (De Santos Bessa, 2005)²⁷. Barreto,²⁸ Pessoa Pinto, and De Santos Bessa²⁹ organised regular meetings to discuss various themes related to Fretilin's position and the people of Timor-Leste. They were active in discussions about the struggle of the Timor-Leste people, compiling texts, political statements, and press releases on the situation there and on Fretilin's condemnation of the Indonesian military occupation. The dominance of mass media publications in Lisbon influenced the political attitudes of

²⁵ José M. Ramos-Horta (1996). *FUNU: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor* (Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press Eritrea.

²⁶ Ana Pessoa Pinto, interviewed by Teresa Amaral (2005), *Sete Mulheres de Timor, Feto Timor Nain Hitu: Historias de vida de Mulheres de Timor*.

²⁷ De Santos Bessa (2005) interviewed by Teresa Amaral.

²⁸ Pacoela Barreto, interviewed by Teresa Amaral (2005). *Sete Mulheres de Timor, Feto Timor Nain Hitu: Historias de vida de Mulheres de Timor*.

²⁹ De Santos Bessa, interviewed by Teresa Amaral (2005). *Sete Mulheres de Timor, Feto Timor Nain Hitu: Historias de vida de Mulheres de Timor*.

Portugal and African countries. The women of Timor-Leste were aware of the enormous difficulties they faced: since Portugal and Africa are far from Timor-Leste, when the Indonesian military invasion destroyed all communication facilities in the city, the only functioning radio communication was also destroyed, which made it very difficult to contact people there (Pessoa Pinto, 2005).

Young East Timorese women in Australia had the same experience. Australia was one of the countries to which people were displaced during the invasion and the subsequent armed conflict in December 1975. Indonesia blocked sources of information to Australia and other countries; therefore, some East Timorese women such as Brites, Filipe, Ferreira, Ines Almeida (who lived in Sydney from 1975–99) who fled to Australia during that period recounted that they knew very little of the situation in Timor-Leste. They received only limited information from the International Red Cross Committee (ICRC) in Australia, and the reports they received were about the Indonesian military's violence and crimes against the people of Timor-Leste. In the war following Indonesia's invasion, many civilians fled to the forest and mountains, and many were killed. Various mass media in Australia began to report on the atrocities that the Indonesian military was committing in Timor-Leste, including the killing of men, women, and children in Dili and various other areas. Occasionally, these atrocities, such as massacres, the rape of girls and women, arrests, and imprisonment, were reported in the columns of international media publications (interviews with CeuBrites, 2016, 2019). These events profoundly affected the sentiments of East Timorese women in Australia. The various difficulties and challenges faced by East Timorese women in Portugal, Africa, and Australia created a great sense of solidarity and concern among the Mozambique, Portuguese, and Australian communities.

In Portugal and Africa, the Fretilin delegation established the International Solidarity Committee, which oversaw Fretilin's political position in the Portuguese parliament and the political leadership of Mozambique. Together with the International Solidarity Committee, the women succeeded in influencing political party leaders and members of parliament to include the Timor-Leste people's independence, freedom, and right to self-determination as one of the principles in the Portuguese constitution of that period. Likewise, President Samora Machel declared that Mozambique's independence could not be completely sovereign without the independence, freedom, and self-determination of the people of Timor-Leste (statement of Ana Pessoa Pinto, interviewed by Teresa Amaral, 2005). In Australia, news of the situation in Timor-Leste became a narrative of interest. Brites, Filipe, and Almeida, who were domiciled in Australia, built relationships and garnered support, sympathy, and solidarity from various government institutions, international solidarity organisations, trade unions, academics, and politicians. They took maximum advantage of this opportunity: in addition to working to further the interests and goals of the resistance movement, they also studied at colleges/universities. The opportunity to study and work gave them the momentum to share their first-hand experiences and garner wider support from the Australian community.

According to Almeida, her personal and family experiences were the basis for her motivation and desire to take on a fighting role. Ines Almeida said, there is only one word 'Against, Timor-Leste must be Free and Free...'. The reports of murder, arrest and imprisonment, torture, rape, and sexual violence encouraged women abroad to fight back. There was an awareness that since they had settled abroad and had comfortable lives, being Australian citizens and residents, they had secure jobs and school and career opportunities. However, as East Timorese women, they realised that Timor-Leste needed to be freed from Indonesia's clutches, and that the people of Timor-Leste could not be

allowed to continue to be victims of Indonesian military violence. They emphasised that they had to fight against Indonesia: international legitimacy regarding Timor-Leste's political status as a non-governing territory and the international condemnation of the Indonesian military became the basis of their fighting spirit in the diaspora.

Packaging information and establishing an information centre in Australia

Information from first-hand experiences, narrative testimonies, and secondary sources about the actions of the Indonesian military in Timor-Leste generated sympathy from the Australian public. Catholic missionaries, the ICRC, and international NGOs (such as the Catholic Relief Service and Oxfam International who were conducting humanitarian missions at that time in Timor-Leste) acted as sources of information on the conflict situation. These institutions provided information about the Indonesian military violence, which was spread internationally through mass media reports. The information that emerged revealed the activities of resistance fighters in the forests and mountains and those of the underground resistance movements. Various facts were exposed in every forum and meeting, and various issues were discussed and opinions were formed to convey to the outside world the importance of supporting the struggle for Timor-Leste's right to self-determination. Almeida and Brites recounted that in 1983, the Bishop of Timor-Leste, Dom Martinho da Costa Lopes, managed to distribute a document about the movement's existence and the change in resistance strategy in Timor-Leste led by Gusmão (interview with Ines Almeida, 2017). The document was successfully received by Timor-Leste fighters in Portugal, Africa, and Australia, and thereafter, information about the resistance movement spread to various continents (interviews with CeuBrites, 2016, 2019). In Portugal, Barreto was responsible for writing the political statements published in Portugal and African countries, including Mozambique, Cape Verde, Sao Tomé e Príncipe, and Angola. Politicians in Portugal and Africa were increasingly sympathetic and paid growing attention to resolving the Timor-Leste problem. Further, the international community was aware that Indonesia had not succeeded in controlling Timor-Leste since the resistance movement remained active in its cities, forests, and mountains.

At the beginning of 1987, to intensify the information campaign about the Timor-Leste resistance movement, Almeida and her team in Australia produced and broadcasted a weekly radio programme named Radio Laline to convey information to Timorese people in Australia and the Australian public about the struggle for Timor-Leste's liberation. They recapitulated and analysed various information and reports about Timor-Leste, then distributed it to civil society movement networks across the globe, including in Portugal and elsewhere in Europe, Africa, and the Asia Pacific region. In addition to the radio programme, they also published two English-language bulletins: *Matebian News: East Timor Information and Documentation Centre*, with between 6 and 12 pages and 500 copies per issue, and *ItaMosBele* [mean We Can]), an informative bulletin from Fretilin committees abroad. These two bulletins published routine information and were distributed to working groups; world information networks in Australia, the Philippines, Portugal, the Netherlands, and the USA; NGOs; international development agencies; embassies; and members of parliaments in several countries between 1987 and 1999 (interviews with Ines Almeida, 2017).

To strengthen the mobilisation of information and support for the resistance movement, Almeida and Brites established the East Timor Relief Association (ETRA) in New South Wales, Australia. As an NGO, ETRA's main activity was campaigning for the Timor-Leste people's resistance movement,

publishing articles on cases of violence and human rights violations involving the Indonesian authorities in Timor-Leste, and raises raising funds to support the guerrilla warfare in Timor-Leste. They also conducted advocacy campaigns to influence government policies and international development agencies, including international NGOs. ETRA produced propaganda, political campaign materials, and print books about Timor-Leste, published articles in newspapers, and participated in arts and culture festivals. The printed information was not only distributed in Australia but also in Portugal and countries in Asia Pacific, Europe, and Africa. Women warriors in Australia campaigned in schools, colleges, churches, and parliaments in various countries including the USA, Canada, the Netherlands, and Southeast Asia (Interviews with Ines Almeida, 2016, and CeuBrites, 2017, 2019). ETRA published both print and digital news briefings to influence public opinion. The media plays an important role in forming opinions and, therefore, the women in the diplomatic front line met with the press regularly to provide updates on the progress of the resistance movement. These information updates benefitted the Timor-Leste struggle and worked to corner Indonesia.

They also organised visits by foreign journalists to Timor-Leste to cover important events and meetings with resistance leaders). For example, in 1990, facilitated and organising a meeting between ABC journalist Robert Domm and Gusmão at his hideout in Bunaria, south of the Timor-Leste capital Dili. Domm interviewed Gusmão in his capacity as leader of the resistance movement. The interview was successfully published abroad, resulting in the increasing support of the international community around the world (personal memory of Almeida, 2017). During the Santa Cruz incident on 12 November 1991, Australian journalist Max Stahl recorded the youth demonstration and the subsequent massacre carried out by the Indonesian military in Dili. After this recording was published in the international media, the world began to increasingly strongly criticise Indonesia's position in various United Nations forums. Indonesia found itself increasingly cornered for its war crimes, including massacres, premeditated killings, torture, and systematic enforced disappearances, which represented gross violations of human rights. All acknowledged that the events of 12 November 1991 cornered Indonesia and increased global support from political leaders, practitioners, and professionals, as well as the international community at large. As such, Indonesia was increasingly pressured to recognise Timor-Leste's right to self-determination.

In March 1996, Almeida and her colleagues facilitated Readers Digest journalist Paul Raffaele's interview with Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo in Dili. Bishop Belo's statement that the Indonesian government was treating the Timor-Leste people like slaves affected the church's position, which moved from silent to very vocal, at the international level. Women fighters abroad received open support from various interfaith groups, including Catholics, Protestant Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. These women fighters organised various demonstrations, beseeching countries to condemn Indonesia and demanding the withdrawal of the Indonesian military from Timor-Leste and the recognition of the right of the Timor-Leste people to self-determination in international human rights law. In Australia, Almeida, Brites, Ferreira, and colleagues organised a demonstration in front of the Indonesian Consul in Sydney to protest and pressure the international community to condemn Indonesia. Demonstrators carried campaign materials such as pamphlets and posters that read, 'Referendum for East Timor', 'Hands Off Timor Gap', 'Self-Determination for East Timor', and so on.

These brave women assisted political asylum seekers in various embassies, including in Jakarta, Indonesia, to give their testimonies. These testimonies from young people, including educated young women from Timor-Leste, further exacerbated Indonesia's precarious position on the international diplomacy stage. Through the Indonesia Youth Exchange Program in the USA, Bella Galhos fled to seek political asylum at the Portuguese Embassy in Canada, where she then lived for 10 years (1994 - 2000). Galhos gave testimony about her personal and family experiences living under the pressure, terror, and violence experienced by East Timorese women. Indonesia found itself in an increasingly more difficult bargaining position when trying to maintain its claim that 'Timor-Leste is an integral part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia' (Bella Galhos, 2016 & 2019). Countries that had bilateral relations with Indonesia began to criticise it more strongly in various forums, and these criticisms succeeded in influencing the international public's perception of Indonesia's weakening position.

Building alliances and international networks

To ensure the effectiveness of collective actions, women fighters in the diaspora built strategic alliances and were supported by various institutions and actors from professional organisations. The strategic alliances and support strengthened the Diplomatic Front, which not only appealed to the Timor-Leste fighters themselves but emphasised the right to self-determination as a common agenda for the entire global community. The universal principle of recognition and respect for the right to self-determination for non-self-governing nations had transcended the territorial boundaries of sovereign states, and this principle was held by both the women fighters and the actors within their strategic alliances. Brites, Filipe, and Galhos argued that the right to self-determination and national independence was not only important for the people of Timor-Leste as a colonised society, nor the agenda of the state parties, namely Portugal, which held de jure power, or Indonesia, which de facto occupied the territory of Timor-Leste; rather, it was a joint agenda for the international community and member states of the United Nations. The international community, including United Nations member states and allies of Indonesia, were all jointly responsible for resolving the struggle for the right to self-determination (Bella Galhos, 2017 & 2019).

These efforts succeeded in establishing the right of the people of Timor-Leste to self-determination based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948. Galhos, who was the only spokesperson in Canada and the USA, emphasised that through strategic alliances, women from Timor-Leste in the diaspora, together with the international community, succeeded in urging the Indonesian and Portuguese authorities (under the oversight of the General Secretary of the United Nations) to take the necessary steps for the final determination of Timor-Leste's status. The international community, including the people of Indonesia, publicly pressured the Government of Indonesia to respect one of the principles of its Constitution, which states that '...independence is the right of all nations and colonialism in the world must be abolished...'. Indonesia's occupation of the territory of Timor-Leste was form of colonialism, and, therefore, Indonesia was obliged to recognise the Timorese people's right to self-determination. Timor-Leste women fighters on the Diplomatic Front succeeded in building alliances and establishing international networks, such as those described below:

- 1) The International Solidarity Committee in Africa and Latin America.
- 2) In Australia, they built alliances with international solidarity organisations such as the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, the Australian East Timor Association in Sydney and Melbourne,

Christians in Solidarity with East Timor, the Campaign for Independent East Timor in South Australia, Australians for a Free East Timor in Darwin, the Mary MacKillop Institute for East Timor Studies, Friends of East Timor in Tasmania, and Community Aid Abroad. The women fighters and the international community alliance also worked with the international human rights organisation Amnesty International in Australia.

- 3) In Portugal, the fighters of Timor-Leste, both women and men, built alliances with the Comissão para os Direitos do Povo Maubere and the International Jurist Commission.
- 4) In the Pacific region, including in Fiji, they built alliances with Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific in Aotearoa, New Zealand, Independent Pacific, and the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre.
- 5) In the Philippines, they formed an alliance with the group Asia Pacific Solidarity for East Timor.
- 6) Alliances were established with the Asian Students Association in Kathmandu, Nepal and Madras, India.
- 7) In Indonesia, they built solidarity movements supporting the right to self-determination, including the Solidarity Forum for East Timor and the Indonesian People's Solidarity for Timor-Leste group.
- 8) In the United Kingdom, they worked with TAPOL and Amnesty International UK.
- 9) In France, they succeeded in establishing an alliance with Agir Our Timor.
- 10) Finally, they developed alliances with the East Timor Alert Network (Canada) and East Timor & Indonesia Action Network (USA).

To strengthening public campaign in Europe and Africa, then Pessoa Pinto travelled to Portugal, then moved around Mozambique, Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, establishing the International Committee of Support and Solidarity for the right to self-determination. Together with Timor-Leste activists, including Marina Ribeiro, Alice Casimira, Madalena Boavida, Teresa Serrao, Amelia Sequeira, Filomena Almeida, Fatima Guterres, Pascoela Barreto, and Lourdes Bessa, they published bulletins and news in print and radio publications. Loyal allies of Timor-Leste in Mozambique's capital Maputo organised regular meetings with both the Timor-Leste community in Mozambique and African solidarity activists and held political discussions about the Timor-Leste case, the role of the United Nations, and community support on the African continent (Pinto, interviewed by Teresa Amaral, 2005). These efforts aimed to publicise the resistance movement, influence public opinion, and attract political support from countries in Africa. They were prominent as movement activists, often giving testimonies in national and international forums, writing about the situation in Timor-Leste, and leading protests until 1999.

Likewise, in Australia, after successfully attracting the sympathy of the Australian public through narratives and memories of their first-hand experiences, Almeida, Brites, Filipe, and Ferreira began to take action that attracted the attention of the international public. In 1985, at the United Nations NGO Forum on Women in Nairobi, Kenya, Almeida, Pires, and Ferreira represented the women of Timor-Leste. This international forum was an opportunity to raise the topic of the people of Timor-Leste's struggle for the right to self-determination. The women succeeded in influencing this forum to sign a petition against the Indonesian military's illegal occupation of Timor-Leste. For two weeks, they wrote and posted posters that read 'East Timor: Betrayed but Not Beaten' and 'Indonesian troops out now: East Timor Fight On'. As the women received support from the majority of the

forum's participants, the Indonesian delegation was forced to depart the forum due to criticism (personal narrative of Almeida, 2017; Brites, 2016, 2019).

In 1986, the women took advantage of another opportunity when the ASA - Asian Solidarity Action - held conferences in Kathmandu, Nepal and Madras, India. Almeida, who represented Timor-Leste in this forum, received sympathy, and conference participants expressed their commitment to disseminate information about the Timor-Leste resistance movement in Nepal, India, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka (personal narrative of Almeida, 2017; Brites, 2016, 2019). Almeida represented Timor-Leste in the conference in Madras, India, which was attended by around 100 participants, delivering a lecture about the resistance movement and criticising Indonesia as a new colonialist power in the eyes of the international community. From 1990–95, Almeida conducted continuous campaigns to inform public opinion and strengthen international solidarity networks. In 1990, Almeida undertook a special mission in the Pacific Region: she was a key speaker at the conference on Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific in Aoteora, New Zealand, and presented a paper on the military-political situation and the people's movement in Timor-Leste. Later, in 1994, Brites and Almeida represented Timor-Leste at the Conference on the Asia Pacific Coalition (APAC) in Manila, Philippines. They succeeded in including the Peace Plan of the CNRT—the umbrella organisation for popular resistance—in the conference agenda, which was subsequently adopted as a mandate of APAC. In 1995, Brites, Almeida, and other female colleagues attended the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, again succeeding in including a discussion on the right to self-determination, Timor-Leste women, and armed conflict in East Timor in the conference agenda. They also successfully lobbied participants and included topics such as allowing women to be part of all political decision-making, women's rights to control their health (particularly their fertility), preventing violence against women, respecting and fulfilment the right for the children's livelihood. The high-level meeting succeeded in including the agenda for discussing the Timor-Leste issue.

Speaking tours and international campaigning

The women aimed to strengthen their alliance strategy through support from international solidarity organisations and influence the opinion of the international community, highlighting Indonesia's actions with information about cases of violent human rights abuses. Publications in various mass media about the struggle for the right to self-determination and cases of human rights violations were critical. The support of United Nations member countries and non-state actors, gained through conferences, seminars, and speaking tours in various international locations, were also vital and decisive. The strategy began in Japan in 1994, where Almeida and Brites undertook a speaking tour in nine cities, explaining to the Japanese people about the Timor-Leste resistance movement and requesting support from the Japanese people and government for Timor-Leste's right to self-determination. In New Zealand in 1996, they undertook another speaking tour organised by the solidarity group CORSO to coincide with the APEC Summit, which was attended by various world leaders.

The women took complete advantage of this moment by using the mass media space. In addition to the APEC agenda, they attracted public attention at the summit through a campaign to publicise the popular resistance movement for Timor-Leste's right to self-determination (personal narrative of Almeida, 2017). In 1997, through the Team Timor working group and a collaboration with the East Timor Alert Network (ETAN) in Canada, Almeida, Galhos, and twelve Timorese citizens conducted

another speaking tour, campaigning for the Timor-Leste people's resistance movement and emphasising the importance of support from the government and the Canadian people in the Timorese people's struggle for the right to self-determination. The speaking tour was widespread in Canada and urged the Canadian government to consider the Timor-Leste issue as Canada's problem as well. When Ramos-Horta and Bishop Belo received the Nobel Peace Prize in the year of 1996, they facilitated Ramos-Horta's international tour, which included several cities in Australia, the USA, and Europe, to support the campaign for international recognition for the people's resistance movement for Timor-Leste's independence (interviews with Bella Galhos, 2017, 2019; CeuBrites 2017, 2019).

Galhos, the only spokesperson for the people's movement umbrella organization CNRM-CNRT in Canada, conducted speaking tours around North America and various European countries, campaigning for the Timor-Leste people's right to self-determination and for the global recognition of women's rights. Galhos also intervened several times in the United Nations Decolonization Committee, which organized the Hearing for East Timor in New York in 1997. The ultimate goal of this campaign to form international public opinion was to ensure that the United Nations and its member states took responsibility for finalizing Timor-Leste's status as a non-self-governing territory and guaranteeing the support of the state government.

In 1985, Almeida, Brites, Ferreira, and other women international fighters compiled a petition and gathered around 3,000 signatories, which were then sent to the United Nations. This petition '...[demanded] and [urged] the intervention of the United Nations to immediately find a solution to the problem of Timor-Leste through a process that ensures the people of Timor-Leste are free to determine their own destiny...' (interviews with CeuBrites, 2017, 2019 & personal narrative of Almeida, 2017. In addition to the United Nations, petitions and statements demanding Timor-Leste's right to self-determination were also submitted to the governments of the United Nations member states, including those in response to cases of violence and human rights violations committed by the Indonesian military against the people of Timor-Leste. The content of these petitions demanded the withdrawal of the Indonesian military from the territory of Timor-Leste, as well as a referendum as an international modality that would guarantee the territory's right to self-determination.

Gender disparity and gendered recognition in the resistance

At the start of the Diplomatic Front resistance, the movement and its public diplomacy activities involved few, if any, women and was dominated by male leaders such as Ramos-Horta, Mari Alkatiri, José Luis Guterres, and Abilio Araujo. The East Timorese women abroad mostly played limited roles in the movement's work, such as preparing notes for meeting lead by male, accompanying male members, and writing and preparing meeting minutes. At first, the public looked more to the male figures, while even though the women worked hard, they were still largely ignored. The gender inequality in the Diplomatic Front at the beginning of the resistance movement in the diaspora was influenced by negative perceptions of the status of women, who were considered as second-class human beings as a result of the construction of Portuguese colonial power and Indonesian military occupation (interviews with Bella Galhos, 2017, 2019).

In the first half of the 1990s, a handful of women were elected to official positions in the resistance party. However, women remained grossly under-represented in the umbrella structure of the CNRM, and later the CNRT. Women activists close to the leadership did their best to raise women's issues

but found that their male colleagues asked for their presence on diplomatic missions only when it was politically expedient to do so. However, the situation of gender disparity did not last long since: although the activities of public diplomacy such as lobbying were initially played out by male actors, in subsequent developments, the East Timorese women's public diplomacy activities and their roles as non-state actors in the struggle for the right to self-determination.

Galhos became the CNRT spokeswoman in Canada in 1998. She joined the East Timorese diaspora circuit and noticed that only 5% of the activists were women. The women were often put in charge of the catering, 'looking after the coffee and the cookies. They were not taken seriously, and their issues were not discussed.' Although the women appealed to their political leaders to open up opportunities for women in the decision-making process, they felt that they were invited to public meetings simply as 'window dressing'. Galhos remarked that on one occasion, Ramos-Horta flew her to New York 'to save them the embarrassment of not having any women present'(interviews with Bella Galhos, 2017, 2019). Despite all the efforts of women activists in the diaspora to make women's voices heard, theirs was an uphill struggle. In general, they met with opposition or, at best, a lack of interest. Galhos became disillusioned. The resistance leaders' attitude towards women's inclusion, she said, was that women should endorse the men's decisions, rather than that the leaders should listen to women's ideas. A push for change came in 1998, when an East Timorese National Convention in the Diaspora was held in Portugal on 23–27 April, bringing together activists from East Timor, as well as those living in exile. For the (male) organisers, the priority issues for discussion were political: the need to unite disparate factions and the window of opportunity afforded by the end of the Suharto regime. However, they also designated a working group to discuss the 'feminism condition'.

Galhos, the only spokeswoman abroad in several interventions in the Decolonization Committee, emphasized that the struggle for the right to self-determination was also an integral part of the struggle for the right to gender equality and that women's rights are human rights. To guarantee women's human rights required giving the women of Timor-Leste as many opportunities as possible to determine their own destiny. Throughout the East Timorese diaspora, women worked to draw attention to the suffering of their people, while also beginning to challenge the hegemony of male political leaders (interviews with Bella Galhos, 2017, 2019). The representation of young women in various forums justifies the importance of recognising the gender balance in the Timor-Leste resistance movement. This gendered resistance must be included as a narrative to complete the history of diplomacy by public and non-state actors that aimed to gain the right to self-determination and national independence for the people of Timor-Leste.

5. Discussion

The actions of women fighters from Timor-Leste form part of the historical narrative of the public and non-state actor diplomacy in the fight for the right to self-determination and Timor-Leste's independence. The history of the resistance movement and national independence must recognize women as a component of its design strategy. Several conditions shaped the motivation and desire of women to be fighters in the diaspora as components of a resistance strategy called the Diplomatic Front, namely, the use of public diplomacy and non-state actors to defend the interests of the nation. Gusmão was the only strategic leader responsible for designing the strategies and methods of the Timor-Leste resistance movement. Women's expertise allowed them to defend their nation from

Indonesian military occupation: the first-hand experience and narrative testimonies from the women of Timor-Leste became one of the foundations for the realization of the nation that was aspired to.

The women desired to strengthen sentiment against the Indonesian occupation of the territory of Timor-Leste. With the power they had, East Timorese women in the diaspora developed their knowledge, intellect, and leadership skills in light of the need to defend the dignity of the nation, respect for human rights, and the right to national independence. Their first-hand experiences and testimonies reflect the birth of sentiments of nationalism, patriotism, anti-colonial imperialism, and the right to self-determination. These ideological conceptions gave them the courage to escape the very difficult situation when the Indonesian military invaded and annexed the territory of Timor-Leste. Through this bravery, they managed to loudly protest and attract sympathy and support in solidarity from the international community. The actions of the young women in the diaspora changed the world's perception: they designed various forms of initiatives and strategies, demonstrated their expertise and work productivity in various forms, and influenced international public opinion as the leading social capital in this case of public and non-state diplomacy.

Evidence from the women's personal experiences and narrative testimonies reveals a portrait of the Indonesian military invasion and the terrible consequences it had in Timor-Leste. The women fighters of Timor-Leste realized that neither testimonies based on first-hand experience nor secondary sources could be relegated to simply stories about the grief of a nation, which would attract only limited sympathy. They did not stop there: the next strategic steps involved taking advantage of global communities and building relationships in several countries where they were domiciled. Their strategic move was to convert their personal mourning stories into those of the international community. The women built alliances with various international social, economic, cultural, and political groups. They realized that conventional means of resistance such as armed war were insufficient and that it was also necessary to employ various other assets such as knowledge, education, and intellectual resources to manage information and influence public opinion. However, through multi-track approaches and non-state actor diplomacy, a turning point of sentiment against the political policies of the Indonesian military began due to their atrocities in Timor-Leste, and evidence of these atrocities encouraged the international community's support for Timor-Leste's right to self-determination.

As such, non-state actors' contributions were critical. Timor-Leste women in the diaspora were able to mobilize international solidarity support without limits and carry out collective heroic actions as an element of social capital for the Timor-Leste resistance movement through the Diplomatic Front. They used strategic alliances to achieve the movement's goals; through these alliances, they involved individuals with extensive potential, knowledge advantages, high academic abilities, and professionalism. They were able to build strong social networks and re-balance the state's domination, which was secured through the military and organizations that provide legitimacy to state power. The women fighters from Timor-Leste succeeded in influencing and shaping public opinion to support the recognition of the right to self-determination and in cornering Indonesia in United Nations negotiations. This also demonstrates that states are no longer the only actors in diplomacy.

The women in the front-line of the Diplomatic Front understood that the United Nations was the only institution that had both the political and legal legitimacy to resolve the issue of Timor-Leste and Indonesia. Therefore, they conducted lobbying that formed a multi-track approach to public diplomacy. Using the power of social networking engagement, political pressure was levied through

various forms of action and methods that suppressed the United Nations member states that had bilateral cooperative relations with Indonesia. Actions were undertaken at various levels, starting with lobbying member countries of the United Nations that had cooperative relations with Indonesia and, therefore, opposed the people of Timor-Leste fighting for their right to self-determination, as well as and other international bodies. Lobbying was conducted either directly by Timor-Leste fighters abroad, including women, or through agents/institutions who functioned as intermediaries. Growing support emerged from international solidarity organizations, professional individuals, various United Nations member states, eminent members of government (such as those of the US Congress and Australia's Labour Party), academics, clergy, and professionals and practitioners on colleges campuses in Australia, the USA, Canada, Europe, Indonesia, and the former colonies of Portugal. The women fighters of Timor-Leste realised the importance of strong relations with various parties at the community and state levels, civil society groups, and international organizations. The recognition of, and respect for, human rights and the people of Timor-Leste's right to self-determination was not only the responsibility of the people of Timor-Leste and the state parties involved (i.e. Portugal and Indonesia) but became a shared responsibility between state and non-state actors. In this way, non-state actors succeeded in making Timor-Leste's right to self-determination and national independence a part of the collective global agenda.

To strengthen their arguments and justify their actions, women fighters in the diaspora lobbied directly or through intermediaries. Evidence of their success can be seen at the policy level of United Nation member countries, such as in Portugal, where Timorese women fighters succeeded in influencing the leadership of political parties in parliament to fight for and defend Timor-Leste's right to self-determination and national independence as part of the state constitution. In Mosambique, Fretilin delegates such as Pessoa Pinto and other East Timorese women succeeded in influencing President SamoraMachel to determine that Mosambique's independence could not be sovereign without Timor-Leste's independence at the level of the *ComunidadePaises da Lingua Portugueze* (Portuguese Speaking Countries Community). The member states of the CPLP -and the international civil society alliance as non-state actors have succeeded in influencing the member states of the United Nations to vote in favour of the right to self-determination for the people of Timor-Leste in every session at the United Nations Assembly.

Likewise, in Australia, Almeida, together with women fighters from Timor-Leste and the Australian community alliance, succeeded in influencing members of the Australian parliament, politicians, religious leaders, and Australian solidarity organizations to support Timor-Leste's right to self-determination and independence. In 1997, Pires lobbied the United Nations Special Rapporteur, Radhika Coomaraswamy, on the case of the violence against women in Timor-Leste, convincing her to visit Timor-Leste to meet with witnesses and victims of domestic and sexual violence involving the Indonesian military and police authorities. Coomaraswamy's findings strengthened the position of the women fighters in Timor-Leste and weakened Indonesia's negotiating ability in international forums. In Canada, the USA, and Europe, Galhos conducted a large-scale campaign and gained widespread support for the demand to withdraw military troops from the national territory of Timor-Leste and the recognition of its people's right to self-determination through the implementation of a referendum. East Timorese women took part in the movements decision-making regarding the right to self-determination. Meanwhile, Galhos played a role in representing Timor-Leste in international political arenas and was trusted as the spokeswoman for the highest resistance umbrella organizations CNRM (1994–97) and CNRT (1998–99) of the Diplomatic Front. She represented

Timor-Leste several times at the United Nation Committee for Decolonization and took part in the high-level All-Inclusive Timorese Dialogue in Austria facilitated by UN Secretary General Kofi Anan.

In Indonesia, by building alliances with civil society organisation activists, college campus activists, and labour organisations, East Timorese women were able to highlight the Timor-Leste problem among Indonesian society. The success of the Timor-Leste student organisation, the National Resistance of East Timorese Students (Renetil), in Indonesia contributed to the success of the non-state actor movement as part of Timor-Leste women's diplomacy at the international level, including the overthrow of the Suharto regime in 1998. This gave Indonesia the momentum to release Timor-Leste from its power. The abovementioned women fighters from Timor-Leste demonstrated their courage, leadership, and success in guiding the resistance movement via the mechanisms of public and non-state actor diplomacy. They successfully used an advocacy approach, strategic alliances, and collective action through engagement with civil society networks to increase international pressure, linking the right to self-determination with international interests to encourage Indonesia to recognise this right. Indonesia's acts of violence and military atrocities threatened the interests and objectives of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognises the right of all nations to self-determination. This study emphasises that in the development of the dynamics of international interest politics, G2G communication is no longer the only actor in diplomacy.

The significant role of the Timorese women fighters in the Diplomatic Front was not only limited to their ideological ideas about the right to national independence. Rather, their role represents a vision of the importance of women's participation in determining the future of a nation-society politically, socio-culturally, and economically. The women had the ability and level of expertise to design methods for strategic actions such as meeting with the press, organising speaking tours, disseminating publications, and giving cultural presentations to influence public opinion. These methods greatly influenced changes in the policies of the member states of the United Nation, including those on Indonesia's position on Timor-Leste. Indonesia accepted the offer of a referendum to give Timor-Leste's people the opportunity to choose between remaining part of the Indonesian state or independence; in the referendum on 30 August 1999, the majority of voters refused to remain part of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Indonesian occupation was a form of colonialism and imperialism that did not adhere to the principles of international law adopted by the United Nations Security Council. The United Nation opposed and condemned the Indonesian military invasion and annexation of the territory of Timor-Leste. The Indonesian military was responsible for various forms of violence and human rights violations throughout the territory of Timor-Leste, strongly legitimising the demand for it to withdraw from the territory. Women in the diaspora took advantage of their opportunity for freedom and, to the best of their ability, built relationships with the international community. They also succeeded in gaining recognition of the right to self-determination, which was not only a focus of Timor-Leste women abroad but also became a common agenda for the international community. Timor-Leste women in the diaspora succeeded in using public diplomacy mechanisms, including both first-step and multi-track approaches, along with the contributions of non-state actors, to win the right to self-determination for the people of an independent Timor-Leste.

6. Conclusion

This study represents a critical reflection on the historical reality of women's experiences in the people's resistance movement that demanded the right to self-determination for the people of Timor-Leste, which tended to be male-oriented. The study's results conclude that achieving a common perception of the role and participation of women in the national liberation movement that is equal to that of men on the Diplomatic Front can constitute a reference for writing national history and future education. As such, the role of women in the national resistance movement on the Diplomatic Front represents the reality of the progress and modernity of women in contemporary society. Historical reality describes women on the Diplomatic Front as human capital who possessed strength and excellent ideas based on sentiments of nationalism, patriotism, anti-colonialism-imperialism, and the right to self-determination. They also had the ability to design strategies and carry out collective actions using public diplomacy, including both first-track and multi-track approaches, through the maximised utilisation of power resources from components of non-state actors' diplomacy.

The women who fought overseas through the Diplomatic Front are proof that they are human capital that holds the key to influencing the opinion and support of the international community. Their ability to mobilise international solidarity support without limits and undertake heroic actions made them a social capital force for the resistance of the people of Timor-Leste. They used the ideas of nationalism and patriotism and the recognition of the right to self-determination in their work on the Diplomatic Front, as well as undertaking creative activities to showcase their skills and work productivity and influence international public opinion. Without equal participation between women and men at various levels of policy and society, equal, non-discriminatory, and peaceful development goals cannot be achieved. This study aimed to ensure the visibility of women's experiences to maintain gender balance in the historical record of the Timor-Leste people's struggle and in future nation building. The study demonstrated that the women of Timor-Leste had a clear sense of purpose and belonging, confidence, integrity, strength, and responsiveness; were of value and importance; were visible; and had the competence to create gender balance in the historical narrative of the people's struggle and future nation building.

Conflict of Interest:

"I, Aniceto Guro-Berteni Neves as the Corresponding Author, declare and undertake that in the study titled '*Self-Determination of Timorese women's in History of Timor-Leste's Diplomacy*' as, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry Journal Editorial Board has no responsibility for all ethical violations to be encountered, that all responsibility belongs to the author/s and that this study has not been sent to any other academic publication platform for evaluation."

Sincerely,

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