

EUROPEAN LAUNCHES OF THE ENGLISH CHEGA!, 2016

Two launches of the English edition of the CAVR Chega! report were held in January 2016.

1. *Nobel Peace Center, Oslo, Norway – 25 January 2016*

At Bishop Gunnar Stalsett's initiative, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) convened a one-day seminar to launch the English language version of Chega! at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo on 25 January 2016.

The Nobel Peace Center is a potential model for the future of Dili's Comarca where CAVR operated. It is located in a converted railway station, includes an auditorium, offices, book and souvenir shop, exhibition and café. The process of its establishment is also a helpful precedent. It was established after the Parliament voted in 2000 as follows: 'The Parliament asks the Government, in cooperation with the Norwegian Nobel Committee, to prepare the way for the establishment of a peace centre in the old Vestblane railway station, with a view to opening on 7 June 2005'.

The seminar was opened by H.R.H Crown Prince Haakon (who visited Timor-Leste as UNDP Goodwill Ambassador in 2015), Tore Hattrem (State Secretary, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Jose Ramos-Horta (Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former President, PM and FM of Timor-Leste).

The seminar was compact and addressed four topics:

- Timor-Leste – from colony to independence (Chair: Stig Traavik; presenters - Arnold Kohen, Bishop Belo, Olandina Caeiro, Fidelis Magalhaes);
- Truth, justice and reconciliation – towards a national consensus? (Chair: Bishop Stalsett; presenters - Pat Walsh, Galuh Wandita, Jose Ramos-Horta);
- Transitional justice (Chair: Dag Nylander; presenters - Ana Pessoa, Priscilla Hayner, Shin Umezu, Rodrigo Uprimny);
- Peacebuilding and nation-building in Timor-Leste (Chair: Knut Ostby; presenters - Tamrat Samuel, Sukehiro Hasegawa, Rebecca Engel, Stig Traavik).

Following are some random comments that I thought were interesting and managed to write down (with apologies to those I didn't manage to monitor):

Bishop Stalsett: the seminar was 'a day of critical reflection'. **Prince Haakon:** participants should 'get the substantial Chega! report out so that the rest of us can benefit from Timor's experience'. **Tore Hattrem (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs):** 'it cannot be emphasized enough that the victim is the centre of lasting peace and reconciliation'. **Jose Ramos-Horta:** 'the event also marks the 20th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize to Timor-Leste'; 'generosity and compassion are required of the winning side; it should climb down from the mountain of victory and meet the losers in the valley of defeat'. 'Political correctness and repetition of UN jargon on impunity does not always correspond to reality or history'. 'Justice is a matter for Indonesia'.

Bishop Belo: ‘Two of my colleagues on the CAVR Advisory Council were later murdered: Sergio Vieira de Mello and Omar Munir’. ‘It’s the voiceless we must remember’. ‘Reconciliation is at the top level between Indonesia and Timor-Leste and only apparent’. ‘Over time justice must be served in the interests of long term reconciliation’. ‘A conference on Portugal’s time in Timor is also needed to advance justice and reconciliation’. **Fidelis Magalhaes (former Chief of Staf of the President, Timor-Leste):** ‘Chega! is a monument to the resilience of a nation, not a monument to forgetting’. ‘Timor-Leste needs a more vibrant political culture and civil society and less secrecy’. **Ana Pessoa (Senior adviser to the President and former Prosecutor, Timor-Leste):** CAVR did ‘a tremendous job! The report *Chega* attests for their great work. It was a process of collective *catharsis*’. ‘I strongly believe that justice ought to bring people together, unify societies rather than increase tension that may escalate into unforeseen disruptive effects particularly, when the building of the Nation is still a work in progress. We rather focus, on the guaranty of an inclusive and sustainable development, while we redress as much as possible, the needs of the victims taking in due consideration, the implications and repercussion to society’. ‘Maybe its time for Timor-Leste to stop and reflect on justice and victims’. **Olandina Caiero (former CAVR and CTF Commissioner):** ‘East Timor’s women are waiting for recognition’. **Priscilla Hayner (co-founder of ICTJ):** ‘CAVR was one of the best truth commissions - it was local, worked with the community and victims in a real way and was creative’. ‘Long-term follow-up that can take years is essential – to turn a relatively brief process into a fully constructive benefit’. **Rodrigo Uprimny (co-founder of Dejusticia, Colombia):** ‘Rights are universal, remedies context specific, but in that context the voice of the victims is critical’. **Galuh Wandita (director AJAR):** ‘Impunity is contagious. Following Indonesia, Timor-Leste is sliding into comfortable impunity’. ‘Women victims have become invisible and indistinguishable from the poor and other vulnerable groups’. **Pat Walsh (former adviser to CAVR and PCAVR):** ‘In the absence of community consensus on truth and justice, it cannot be claimed that reconciliation has been achieved between Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Much more needs to be done and at the very least Timor-Leste should avoid giving the impression that conclusive truth has been achieved and all is forgiven and forgotten’. **Sukehiro Hasegawa (former SRSB to Timor-Leste):** ‘peace is more important than justice in the East’; ‘the UN Security Council did not think its job was nation-building’; ‘Timor-Leste was well served by its leaders who put the past behind them and the national interest above personal gain’. Tamrat Samuel (Senior Adviser UN Political Affairs): ‘compliance with principles and international law is important’; ‘be careful saying that some cultures are more pro-justice than others; the desire for justice is universal but political reality often dictates otherwise’.

Nine sets of *Chega* were presented to key participants and Norwegian institutions as follows: H.R.H. Crown Prince Naakon; Nobel Peace Institute; PRIO; NUPI; NOREF; National Library; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; University of Oslo; Center for Humanitarian rights. Some 60 Plain Guides were provided to seminar participants. A full list of recipients will be provided to PCAVR for its international *Chega!* data base.

The day after the seminar, 26 January, the Norwegian Center for Human Rights (based in the University of Oslo) screened *Nina’s Story*, AJAR’s new documentary on stolen East Timorese

children. The screening and discussion was well attended including by a number of post-graduate Indonesians researching issues such as torture in Indonesia.

2. Belgian Mission to the European Union, Brussels – 28 January 2016

The English *Chega!* was presented to the European Union at a seminar in Brussels, Belgium, on 28 January 2016. The event was jointly organised by Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Leuven Institute of Criminology Research Line on Human Rights and Transitional Justice.

The venue was the Lumumba room in the Belgian Mission to the EU in Brussels. (Patrice Lumumba led the independence movement in the Belgian Congo and was executed in 1961. To add to the venue's symbolism, a large portrait of Leopold II, the second King of the Belgians, hung over the fireplace. Leopold is chiefly remembered for the founding and exploitation of the Congo Free State as a private venture).

Participants included the Timor-Leste Embassy, officials from the EU and Belgian Government, NGOs and researchers.

Special thanks are due to Prof Stephan Parmentier, Coordinator of Leuven's research on transitional justice, who initiated the seminar, and Veronique Joosten, Deputy Director of Human Rights and Democracy in Belgian's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The seminar was supported by Leuven's Fund on Transitional Justice which was established in 2015 to encourage research and activity on transitional justice, and Intersentia Publishers.

The seminar was opened by **Mr Bart Ouvry**, Director of Human Rights and Democracy in the Human Rights Department of Belgian's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other presenters were:

- **Prof Stephan Parmentier**: the contribution of truth commissions to transitional justice;
- **Pat Walsh (AJAR)**: the *Chega!* report;
- **Galuh Wandita (AJAR)**: unfinished business in post-conflict Timor-Leste;
- **Emma Hickey** (Human Rights Policy Officer, European External Action Service): the new European Union policy on transitional justice. The EU policy was adopted in November 2015 and is a guide to EU staff in every country where they work, including ASEAN.
- The seminar was followed by a screening of *Nina's Story*, AJAR's new video on Timor-Leste's stolen children.

[End]