

Maar de tijd van ontkennen is in Indonesië nog lang niet voorbij (lees de commentaren) en de Nederlandse overheersing wordt nog altijd aangevoerd om mensenrechtbeschermers van Nederlandse oorsprong de mond te snoeren. Zullen we ook nog even teruggaan in de tijd tot Attila de Hun, of de Vikingen, of misschien Keizer Augustus, of Napoleon?

Bron : [Inside Indonesia 116: Apr-Jun 2014](#)

door Gerry van Klinken



Career breakthrough

In 1983 Prabowo Subianto, aged 32, was a captain in the Special Forces, Kopassandha. Later renamed Kopassus, this force was the New Order's most trusted, most capable, iron fist. It is a miracle we know anything at all about his activities – elite forces mostly work in secret.

Prabowo's career was on the verge of a breakthrough. He was intelligent and came from an elite family. But in the lower reaches of the Indonesian military of the early 1980s, that was not enough. Advancement required connections, and violence. Everything came together for Prabowo in 1983.

His astuteness won him repeated invitations to overseas training courses – to the American Fort Bragg in 1980, to the German GSG-9 probably in 1981, and later to Fort Benning in 1985. Each time he scored 'top graduate.' In 1982 he was invited, with Major Luhut Pandjaitan, to form a new anti-terror unit called Detachment 81 within Kopassandha, to try out his skills. He directly commanded a group within it called Chandraca 8. Indonesia had invaded East Timor in 1975, and this was his second tour of duty there. (The first was as a lieutenant in 1977-78, at the height of the fighting. He was involved in the killing of East Timorese resistance hero Nicolau Lobato, whose head was reportedly sent to Jakarta in triumph so President Suharto could verify the death for himself.)

Connections? Prabowo married the president's daughter, Siti Hediati Harijadi (Titiek), in May 1983. They divorced in 2001, but throughout the New Order the access she gave him to the president was the envy of his fellow officers. He could afford to behave above his rank.

And then the violence. In April of that same year 1983, East Timor's guerrilla army Falintil had signed a ceasefire with the Indonesian armed forces. For the Indonesian high command, it was the prelude to complete victory, but for the Timorese, it was a chance to regroup. Prabowo shared the view of some officers who opposed the ceasefire for that reason. During subsequent months, he would pop into East Timor without reporting to the commander responsible for the ceasefire, much to the latter's discomfort. What did he have in mind?

Resurgence

On 8 August 1983, Falintil commander Xanana Gusmao made his move. The Indonesian military had put captured Falintil guerrillas to work as their auxiliaries. Xanana now asked a

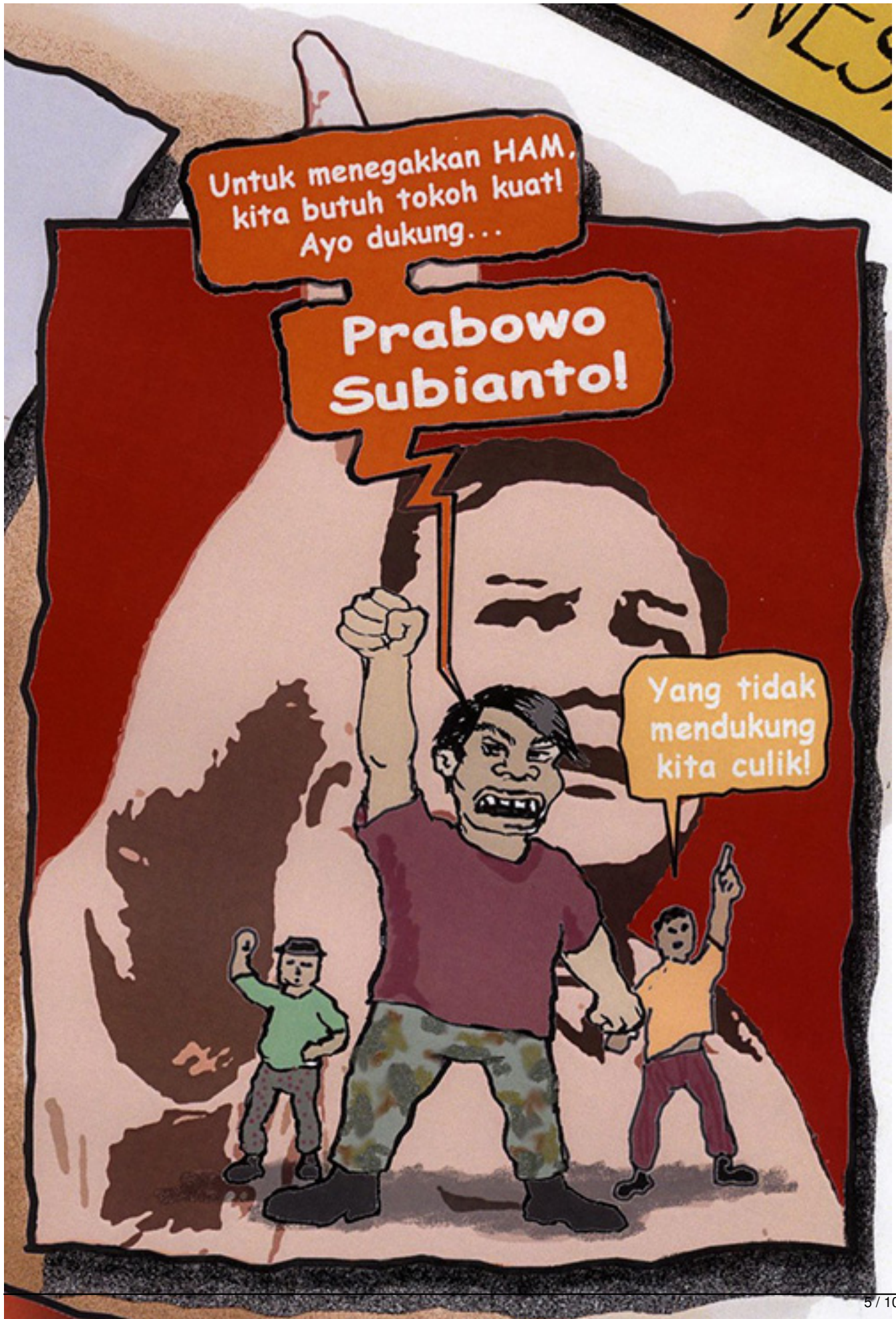
resistance leader in the east of the island, Ular Rihik (Virgílio dos Anjos), to persuade an entire detachment of such auxiliaries in the hamlet of Kraras to kill their Indonesian superiors and rejoin Falintil in the hills. Kraras was located on a plain just west of the town of Viqueque, and south of Mount Bibileo. The men killed 14 Indonesian army engineers. The attack definitively ended the ceasefire – though its agreed three months had already run out in July and Indonesian Armed Forces Commander General Benny Moerdani had then begun demanding a Falintil surrender. The uprising that began on 8 August 1983 is known in East Timor as the *levantamento*, or rising, because it signified the resurgence of a resistance movement that was almost beaten.

Knowing retaliation would follow, civilians and combatants alike then fled into the forests covering Mount Bibileo. Repression certainly did follow, and it seems Prabowo played a central role in it. Just how central is something we urgently need to know.

Indonesian Armed Forces Commander General Benny Moerdani was furious about the attacks and immediately ordered a counter-insurgency operation, which lasted for several months. The campaign resulted in hundreds of deaths. Some were of combatants. Increased fighting caused fatal Indonesian military casualties to rise from 163 the previous year to a reported 269 in 1984 (still much lower than the 600-700 deaths a year Indonesia had suffered immediately after the invasion). Falintil forces also suffered casualties at this time – a February 1985 resistance report wrote of 78 dead and wounded since August 1983. All the 530 killings and disappearances reported in *Chega!* for this period, however, were of civilians or of combatants who were no longer taking part in combat. International law regards such killings as unlawful.

Kopassus

Who was responsible for these unlawful killings and disappearances? Of all the perpetrators of abuses in East Timor throughout the period 1974 to 1999 reported in *Chega!*, Kopassandha/Kopassus is the one unit associated with the highest number of violations. And the highest number of violations associated with the role of Kopassandha occurred during the 1983-84 suppression of the *levantamento*. (Kopassus indirectly caused even more suffering. Throughout the Timorese war it played the central role in the formation of militias that carried out so much of the Indonesian military's vicious work for them, not least in 1999. Militias were a big part of Prabowo's work with Kopassus. 'I have this philosophy: the people's army,' he once told a foreign journalist. 'We have to have the people on our side.')



Research

The CAVR report on the killings of 1983-1984 runs to 27 pages. Other sections describe the hunger deaths, forced displacement, torture (including sexual abuse), and arbitrary detentions arising from the campaign. The unlawful killings alone were comparable in scale to the Santa Cruz massacre of November 1991, which shocked world opinion. The chain of one-sided murder that characterised the counter-insurgency operation following the levantamento was started by the two horrendous massacres of 16 and 17 September 1983. It is these events, and not (as Prabowo has suggested) the initial killing at Kraras on 8 August, that together carry the name 'Kraras massacre' in the memory of those who know the story.

The cautiously worded CAVR report does not name most of the Indonesian officers involved. But they can be read in, among others, the eyewitness accounts in Jill Jolliffe's book, and in a long interview with the Indonesian governor of East Timor at the time, Mario Carrascalao, published in Cornell's *Indonesia* (above). That Prabowo played a significant role in this operation seems clear, but precisely how significant is less clear. His rank and the Ossu base suggest he held a field command post in the eastern part of the country, where the levantamento had begun.

According to João Caetano, the massacre at Tahubein on 17 September was perpetrated by members of Kodim 1630/ Viqueque, Infantry Battalions 328, 501 and 745, and Kopassandha. Such a mix of military units was typical of Indonesian operations in East Timor throughout the war. Kodim 1630/ Viqueque was the local 'territorial' command (with associated civil guards, or *hansip*); Battalion 745 was a combat unit based in East Timor; Battalions 328 and 501 were 'green beret' Kostrad infantry units that spent much time on tour in East Timor. The Kopassandha officers were in charge, following normal practice. Two other Kopassandha officers mentioned in connection with the operation in the eastern region were Major Slamet Supriyadi (Chandraca 6) and Captain Harry Pisand Pinem (sometimes incorrectly listed as Heri Pisang, Chandraca 7). Caetano said he saw Pisand and his troops leaving Viqueque on the morning of the Tahubein massacre. The fact that Prabowo has not been identified by any living eyewitnesses as having been participating in killing does not mean he was not coordinating it from nearby.

Whatever exactly he was doing, it is clear that Prabowo's bosses noticed his work and approved of it. Late in 1983, still in East Timor, he was promoted from captain to major – a high rank for a 32-year old.

The levantamento triggered a serious escalation of a guerrilla war that the Indonesian armed forces had considered settled in its favour since the mass Fretilin surrenders of late 1979. The Indonesian response was ruthless and claimed many hundreds of civilian lives. The CAVR report that describes the atrocities in such horrifying detail has never been reviewed in any Indonesian mainstream publication, let alone acted on by Indonesian justice officers. This silence has permitted Prabowo to claim they are 'unproven allegations.' Indonesian readers can now check for themselves – an Indonesian translation of the report is available online and is on sale in major bookstores in Indonesia.

When confronted with the Kraras story in 1998, Indonesian armed forces commander General Wiranto said of it nonchalantly: 'To kill or be killed can't be avoided in a war situation like this.' There will be some who agree with Wiranto. But the president of a great nation like Indonesia must above all else protect human life. The people of Indonesia should hope that military indifference to human life won't be carried into the presidential palace after 9 July.

Gerry van Klinken (Klinken@kitlv.nl) is professor of Southeast Asian history at the University of Amsterdam. *Chega!* was published in 2005 and is available online in various languages at <http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/en/cheгаReport.htm>.

A new English edition will be published in book form later in 2014.

An Indonesian translation of this article can be read on the Kontras website.

Comments

Quote

Wirawan 2014-07-23 16:08

Those datas you got seems only one sided source, can anybody explain or find any source from indonesia's source. I believe there's lots of indonesian has documented all those tragedies but were afraid to publish it due the fact that prabowo seems like had more chance to win this year election. Well, the good news is, he doesn't win. We already knew that prabowo losses this election so any indonesian got any source and could prove that the story above is true, doesn't need afraid no more. Let's put prabowo on trial and let justice win this time.

Quote

OberstDackel 2014-07-10 19:56

KOMNAS HAM- Indonesia Human Rights and KPU found Prabowo as well as kidnapped

"victims" most of which now working for Gerindra Party found Prabowo thus allowing Prabowo to participate in elections since 2009.

Dutch- ou are unwanted and irrelevant.

Your slavery, theft, murder and imperialism has failed. youur intellectual constructs are failures: neo-liberalism, secularist, positivist, humanist, liberalist, anti-religious culture and your parasitic financial institution driven economic model.

Yes, because van Klinken is Dutch, he has no right to comment as brainwashed with anti-Indonesian propaganda assuaging widespread Dutch War Crimes by, pro-Maluku/pro Irian OPM propaganda, a false Dutch national myth of Nazi victim-hood (despite highest % participant in SS, and highest death toll of Jews outside Germany- 93%).

Prabowo wins according to Gerindra voting supervisors

No.1 PH = 52.04%

No.2 JJ = 47.96%.

NKRI- Harga Mati sampai tetes darah terakhir.

Quote

James NG 2014-07-07 23:31

DONNY et al.

i think you mistook the meaning of the article. The article links the current presidential candidate, Prabowo, with the things he has done in the past. This Gerry van Klinken guy, although his NATION has done atrocious things, he himself HAS NOT. There's a difference.

oops just read through the rest of the comments...ahwell another one doesn't hurt

Quote

Handoko 2014-07-05 18:59

Donny: The Dutchman will not be our president. This is a different story between "Dutch Colonization" and "Prabowo & human rights". Unless the Dutchman is one of our presidential candidates then you can make that typical of comments. LOL!

Quote

Bobby 2014-07-04 07:57

Donny I agree wholeheartedly. Van Klinken, as a Dutch person, should be banned from writing anything that might call into question the human rights record of this Indonesian presidential candidate. But if Van Klinken wants to discard your sensitivities in this matter (he is so colonial!), then of course he should be forced to list every single Dutch colonial abuse, atrocity, or slander in Indonesia over the course of 350 years, before he even begins to discuss the 2014 presidency. Bravo Donny. You are an impressive critical thinker. I'm sure if Elizabeth Pisani has interviewed you she wouldn't have written 'A Nation of Dunces'.

Quote

Pattimura 2014-07-04 07:48

Donny: the subject is 'Prabowo and human rights.' Not '350 years of Dutch colonization.' Are you suggesting that the author, because he's dutch, should not be allowed to question the human rights background of the man who may be the next Indonesian president, because he

happens to be a citizen of a country that was once an abusive and exploitative colonial power? Where's the connection between what Klinken is writing and your own idiotic assertion?

Quote

donny 2014-06-19 07:35

I really wonder, if mr Klinken are able to conduct such extensive research on East Timor Conflict, how about atrocities done by Dutch during 350 years of imperialization, human rights violation and robbery of Indonesian treasures (many are still in Museum in Netherlands), not to mention Westerling, Daendels who literally forcing civilian to build roads to their death and many more

I am not a supporter of Prabowo, but Mr Klinken - before you point a human rights violation done by people in my country, why don't you start with atrocities and human rights violation done by your fellow countrymen??

Quote

Ishaq Rahman 2014-06-04 07:58

If we follow the logic of this story, then all military officer who posted in Timor Timur during that period should be also pointed. In my humble opinion, what happened in Timor Timur during that era was state violence, not a single military officer cowboy action personally...

Quote

Harli Muin 2014-05-06 01:18

I really like it, it was based on true story of i knew, but Prabowo, when we asked for question, was still denying it, he need a proof

Quote

kultural 2014-04-30 11:34

well said! all Indonesians should read this. PKS cadres in particular

Quote

we need u 2014-04-28 14:58

In the 1998 incident, many more people asked who's wrong and who's right on the human right case ? and munir ever said that if prabowo wrong, why he was not judged ..this trouble still be on top issue till now..

we can see what munir says on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bZsKVZSTRw>

Quote

priyo matius 2014-04-28 12:33

Thats all fine and we know it,actions" quite well, however, he seems to be untouchable while

again going with the political wind....
PRABOWO right in insiden'98 okey.....

Quote

Jev Petrossian 2014-04-28 01:41

Thats all fine and we know it, but I wonder why Luhut escapes such critics! As a former friend of Uli Wegener I know his " actions" quite well, however, he seems to be untouchable while again going with the political wind....