



# **Self-Determination in East Timor: The United Nations, the Ballot, and International Intervention (International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series)**

*Ian Martin*

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This unique inside account traces events in East Timor from the negotiations that led to the May 1999 agreements among Indonesia, Portugal, and the United Nations to the mandating of international intervention to check the violence that wracked the country following the elections. Ian Martin, the UN Secretary-General's special representative in East Timor at the time, describes how political change in Indonesia, coupled with the UN's good offices and pressures from Australia and elsewhere, led President Habibie to offer the East Timorese a choice between autonomy within Indonesia and full independence. His discussion of what followed - the activities of the UN mission (UNAMET) established to implement the election, in the face of violent efforts to coerce the East Timorese to reject independence; the election itself, with a historic 98.6% turnout and a 78.5% vote for independence; and the ensuing killing, destruction, and forced displacement - includes an analysis of the intense negotiations that led to the Indonesian government's reluctant acceptance of intervention. With the benefit of his first-hand experience, Martin considers whether the UN was wise to proceed as it did despite Indonesia's refusal to cede responsibility for security during this period and also places the experience in East Timor in the context of the wider debate over peacekeeping and international intervention. A unique inside account of events in East Timor from the lead-up to the 1999 elections to the reluctant acceptance of international intervention to check the violence that wracked the country following the overwhelming vote for independence from Indonesia.

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