

(10/31/00)

Charles Sheiner has been an activist supporting human rights, peace, demilitarization and independence in East Asia-Pacific countries for two decades. He will return to East Timor in December to work with La'o Hamutuk and other projects. His experiences in East Timor cover a range of activism, lobbying, and research.

Sheiner co-founded the East Timor Action Network/U.S. in late 1991 and is currently its National Coordinator. ETAN/US includes over 9,500 activists with more than 25 local groups across the United States. ETAN works with others in the United States and around the world, and with East Timorese groups. In addition to educating Americans about the roles of the United States and Indonesian governments in East Timor, ETAN pressures the U.S. government to support the human and political rights of the East Timorese people. Since ETAN started, the U.S. government has supported UN resolutions, terminated military aid, and limited arms sales to Indonesia.

He is also the United Nations Representative for the International Federation for East Timor (IFET). IFET was formed in 1991 as a federation of organizations supporting East Timorese human rights and self-determination, and is accredited with the United Nations. It currently has more than 30 member groups from more than 20 countries. IFET organized the largest international observer delegation to the UN Consultation in East Timor from June through September 1999, with 125 nonpartisan volunteer observers from 22 countries. Sheiner was the International Coordinator for the project, positioned in East Timor from August 12 until being evacuated by the Australian Air Force on September 6. During 2000, IFET has campaigned for an international tribunal to hold Indonesian and East Timorese military and militia leaders accountable for crimes against the East Timorese people, for the East Timorese trapped in refugee camps in West Timor to be allowed to return, and for greater transparency, democracy, accountability, and East Timorese participation in the U.N. Transitional Administration. It has started the La'o Hamutuk project to improve cooperation between international agencies operating in East Timor and the East Timorese people.