



# Broken promises

**T**HE disappointment is thick in the air as the sound of gunfire rebounds around the streets of Dili. The chaos and disorder as thousands flee their homes amid the sporadic fighting is the immediate concern of government officials, Australian troops and the residents of Dili. But for 35-year-old Rosa Garcia, mother, worker and believer, it's the dashed promise that hurts most. "Independence was our long-held dream," she says as she again contemplates a fractured future for herself and her family. "We want to build

The outbreak of violence in East Timor has been building for some time. **Ian McPhedran and Anna Reynolds report**

something and now we are already destroying it." Garcia is typical of many in Dili. Hardworking, intelligent and aspirational, she and her family were forced to flee to West Timor when the Indonesian military rampaged through the country after the vote for democracy in 1999. Thousands were killed as again Australian forces joined with the

United Nations to restore order. Then, she understood that the massive and pointless loss of life, damage to property and widespread destruction was because of the Indonesians. This time, however, the violence is home-grown. The promise and hope invested in her people and their new society has crumbled, as East Timorese turn to violence against their fellow citizens.

Garcia's distress is coupled with deep disillusionment. She blames the country's new political leaders for the breakdown in law and order, and the severe setback for the fledgling nation which comes with it. Happy that the troops are here, she wants nothing more than a normal chance in life. Judging by the joyous reception the advance party of Australian troops

received as they arrived at Comoro airport by Hercules aircraft late on Wednesday, this young wife and mother is not alone. The dirt-poor East Timorese people are sick and tired of violence and destruction. How much anarchy can one tiny country bear? "We have been scared for six weeks," says 25-year-old Brazilian missionary Elieinae Moura, as police gunmen blaze away on his street. "We have two policemen staying with us. They are very scared — they are the targets." **Continued P54 >>**



**Health**  
 Little choice for rural women giving birth  
**P53**

**Crime**  
 Sentencing mentally ill criminals  
**P54**

**Politics**  
 What chance an early state poll?  
**P56**

**Energy**  
 The nuclear debate we have to have  
**P58**



**Recycling**  
 New report a load of rubbish  
**P60**

