

# Former Indonesian leader calls for Timor trials



General Wiranto (left) and Abdurrahman Wahid in Jakarta in 1999.

PICTURE: AP

By **BEN DOHERTY**  
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FORMER Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid, who plans to contest next year's election, has supported the establishment of a war crimes tribunal to try Indonesian military figures accused of inciting violence during East Timor's independence vote in 1999.

Mr Wahid said further formal investigation of alleged human rights violations was needed urgently.

"We have to be clear on this. There were violations of human rights in both countries, and that's what the commission discovered," Mr Wahid said. "But going further means further research, opening the facts ... and not burying everything under the covers."

His comments follow the release this week of a report by the Indonesian and East Timorese governments' Commission for Truth and Friendship, which found the Indonesian government and military were "institutionally responsible" for a campaign of violence and intimidation.

More than 1400 people were left dead and tens of thousands

without homes or basic infrastructure.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono expressed "very deep regret" in accepting the report. But his Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirayuda, said: "The case is closed. There will be no legal prosecution against individuals as the state has taken over the responsibility."

Mr Wahid was elected president in October 1999, just two months after East Timor seceded and as departing troops wrought a violent "scorched earth" policy on the fledgling nation. He told *The Age* he had no prior knowledge of the actions of the military, but has said those in authority who did know should be brought to justice. Asked whether a war crimes tribunal should be established to try those suspects, Mr Wahid said: "Yes, precisely."

He named former army head General Wiranto — whom he sacked from his cabinet in 2000 — as one of the military officials he suspected of having ordered the violence, as well as Chief Lieutenant-General Prabowo Subianto. Both General Wiranto and Lieutenant-General Prabowo are also expected to run for president.