

East Timor News Digest No 9 - September 1-30, 2006

Thursday 26 October 2006, by [ASAP](#) (Date first published: 30 September 2006).

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NEWS & ISSUES

East Timor shock as new UN chief changes his mind

Sydney Morning Herald - September 29, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch — The man appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to head a new mission in East Timor has decided not to take the job, in a setback for plans to help the country recover from months of violence.

Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro, a former president of Cape Verde, who originally accepted the job earlier this month, has changed his mind, which will leave the UN mission in East Timor leaderless for weeks as international police and troops struggle to curb gang violence in the capital, Dili.

The mission is also under pressure to move quickly to help organise national elections scheduled for April.

The mission approved by the UN Security Council in August has been without a leader since it formally assumed responsibilities in East Timor almost a month ago. Japan's Sukehiro Hasegawa, who had led the former UN mission since 2004, has already left the country.

The new mission will consist of 1600 international police, including 130 Australians, and about 500 UN civilian personnel. Hundreds of Australian troops will also remain in the country.

Mr Monteiro told the UN this week that he decided not to take the job because of opposition to his appointment in Dili.

He told a news conference in Cape Verde, an island state in the North Atlantic and former Portuguese province, that he knew there were some "reservations" about his appointment in East Timor and "I was no longer interested in serving there".

"The functions of a representative of the UN

Secretary-General in East Timor are very broad and must be exercised with the goodwill of all parties involved,"Mr Monteiro said."It is better to stand down now than to create problems later on, especially in view of the complexity of the situation in East Timor."

Some of East Timor's leaders are known to have questioned Mr Monteiro's appointment, partly because of a perception that he would favour interests aligned with "lusaphone" (Portuguese-speaking) countries such as Portugal, Mozambique, and Angola.

Critics of East Timor's deposed prime minister, Mari Alkatiri, have often accused him of pursuing Mozambique-type Marxist policies; Mr Alkatiri spent years in exile in Mozambique and Angola.

Another criticism of Mr Monteiro was that he was a poor speaker of English and many of East Timor's young people cannot speak Portuguese, even though it is one of the country's formal languages.

Some leaders are known to be disappointed that Mr Annan did not select an experienced UN administrator for the job, as he did in 1999 when he appointed the Brazilian Sergio Vieira de Mello, who served in the country until May 2002. Mr de Mello was killed in a bomb blast in Iraq in late 2003.

A UN spokeswoman in Dili said last night that she had not been told when a replacement for Mr Hasegawa would be appointed.

In the meantime Finn Reske-Nielson, the UN's humanitarian co-ordinator in East Timor, would stand in as Mr Annan's special representative, she said.

Homeless family sent back to Dili

Northern Territory News - September 22, 2006

Emma — There were emotional scenes as an East Timorese family were deported from Darwin yesterday. Epifano Faculto, 32, his wife Susette and two children — Willy, 6, and two-year-old

Lelanlia — were flown home to Dili.

Their Dili house was burnt down in the political violence and they will be forced to live in a refugee camp. The family was told at 5pm on Wednesday that they were being deported and were put on an Airnorth flight at 7am yesterday.

Mr Faculto shook as he spoke of his fear at returning home. "They do not have a solution to the violence in East Timor," he said. "We wanted to stay in Australia until everything was resolved and we could go back. We asked to stay temporarily — we don't want to stay forever."

Mr Faculto and his brother-in-law Louis Lobato, 31, were both admitted to the psychiatric ward at the Royal Darwin Hospital, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, hours before their original return was scheduled.

"It's fine for the Australian Government to say it's safe, but it's not," he said. "In some places, there is still fighting. I am scared to go back." Almost 40 friends and family were sent home this month.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade last week warned of escalating violence in Dili and surrounding areas. But Immigration spokesman Sandi Logan said: "The security situation remains stable and there is no need to be concerned for the security of those returning."

UN says East Timor report should be ready next month

Agence France Presse - September 13, 2006

Dili — A UN team probing the violence that erupted in East Timor earlier this year is on track to complete its report by next month, the commissioners said Wednesday on their second visit to the tiny nation.

The team had spent the past 10 days reviewing information gathered by investigators as well as interviewing key individuals ahead of their

departure this week, said Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, one of the three commissioners.

At the request of East Timor's government, the commission is tasked with establishing facts relating to violence that hit the impoverished nation in April and May and clarifying who was responsible. It will also recommend measures to ensure accountability for crimes and rights violations committed then.

"The report will be submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the national parliament of Timor-Leste within the three-month timeframe foreseen for the work of the Commission, that is, on or about 7 October," Pinheiro told a press briefing.

The commission has an international team of 12 criminal and human rights investigators and legal advisors working with it. Pinheiro said about 200 witnesses have been interviewed and more than 3,000 documents collected from various institutions.

"We strongly hope and trust that the representatives of the government and all relevant institutions will give serious consideration to our recommendations, and utilize the report as a step towards reinforcing the institutions of the country," he said. He added that the commission hoped the report would be made available to the public in a readily accessible form.

East Timor asked the UN to set up the inquiry after the nation descended into chaos in April and May, with at least 21 left dead in two waves of violence that initially flared as sacked soldiers held protests.

That mayhem descended into factional fighting within the security forces and ethnic street battles which led to at least 150,000 people fleeing their homes. More than 3,000 foreign peacekeepers had to be deployed to restore calm.

Community fears for Timorese group being sent home

ABC News Online - September 10, 2006

Australian East Timor activists say the Federal Government's decision to send a group of 42 refugees back to the country does not make sense because East Timor is still unstable.

The 42 East Timorese have been living in Melbourne and Darwin for the last three months on temporary protection visas, after they fled their home to escape civil unrest earlier this year.

The Immigration Department informed them on Friday that their visas would run out on Monday.

Australians for a Free East Timor activist Rob Wesley-Smith says it is bizarre for the Federal Government to send the group back while the security situation is still unpredictable.

"At the same time that John Howard is saying he's got to send extra troops to East Timor, another arm of his Government is saying it is okay for people who are utterly stressed out to rush back with three days' notice," he said. "[We] don't even know if there will be an aircraft available for them."

He says the decision to send the 42 East Timorese people back is inconsiderate because some of them are in a poor psychological state and the situation in Dili is still unstable.

"A lot of them are very stressed out, I was with one and some crackers [went off] up the street and he was very disturbed," he said. "You have to remember that there is still about half of the Dili population is in refugee camps. Some of these refugee camps are being attacked by up to 150 people."

Jose Gusmao, a member of Darwin's East Timorese community, says many among the group of 42 are scared to return home.

"I know that the Government have to make decision, I agree," he said. "But on the other hand, I mean as human being I feel... we should have given them more time."

Mr Gusmao says the families should have been given more time to prepare for their return journey.

The Immigration Department says the 42 people were

given a two-week extension to their temporary visas and have been notified of their departure date.

The department says it is satisfied they will not be targeted when they return home to East Timor tomorrow.

But Epifano Faculto, who is among the group of 42 and has been living in Darwin for the last three months, says he is scared to go home. "The situation is today is better, but maybe tomorrow is not better," he said.

He says he and his family respect the decision of the Australian Government to send them back to their homeland, but they are nervous about returning.

Australia criticized for sending 42 East Timorese home

Associated Press - September 9, 2006

Canberra — Lawmakers criticized the government Saturday for forcing 42 East Timorese who fled violence in the capital Dili in May to return to their homeland.

The 42 men, women and children were told Friday that they have until midnight Monday to go home, an Immigration Department spokeswoman said Saturday.

All of them, currently living in the Australian cities of Melbourne and Darwin, had made failed appeals to Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone for extensions of their humanitarian visas.

Paul Henderson, a Darwin-based minister of the Northern Territory Government, criticized the federal government for ordering the East Timorese out the day after announcing Thursday that an extra 120 Australian soldiers were to be sent to Dili because of escalating tensions.

"One arm of government is saying things aren't too good in East Timor and we need to send more troops over there and another arm of government is saying

it's safe for these 14 to go home," Henderson told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio, referring to the 14 East Timorese who are residing in his home town.

The group was among 54 East Timorese rescued from Dili in May when Australia sent a battalion of troops to quell violence that killed at least 30 people and drove 150,000 from their homes.

The violence had snowballed from clashes between government security forces and soldiers dismissed in March by former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri.

A dozen of the 54 who were initially given three-month Australian humanitarian visas had already returned to their homes voluntarily, the immigration spokeswoman said on condition of anonymity, citing department policy. The remainder were given two-week extensions on Aug. 24, the spokeswoman said.

She declined to detail why the East Timorese were brought to Australia, citing privacy considerations. "Because of their personal circumstances, they were particularly vulnerable given the political and security situation in Dili then," the spokeswoman said.

Vanstone had decided the remaining 42 should go home after considering the latest government report on security in East Timor, she said.

Prime Minister John Howard told Parliament on Thursday the level of violence in Dili had fallen in recent weeks. But Australia was immediately sending an extra 120 troops because the escape of 57 inmates from Dili's prison on Aug. 30 had "escalated tensions," he said.

At the time of Howard's announcement, Australia had 930 military personnel and 180 police in East Timor.

POLITICAL/SOCIAL CRISIS

Security forces arrest youths in East Timor

Agence France Presse - September 28, 2006

Dili — International police in East Timor fired

tear gas to disperse groups of youths fighting on the streets of the capital today and later arrested some at a refugee camp, witnesses said.

Youths hurling rocks clashed with others from a major refugee camp in Dili's Colmera area until the police working under UN authority intervened, witness and camp resident Teresa do Carmo said.

The incident was the latest in a series involving youth gangs on the streets of the seaside capital since deadly unrest in May that led to some 3,200 peacekeepers being deployed to maintain calm.

"I saw myself the Australian police fire five canisters of tear gas and none of us could see anything," 42-year-old Ms do Carmo said.

She said the police entered the camp and arrested about 30 young men living there and "wreaked havoc among the tents and damaged kitchen utensils that they found. Other people outside were the ones who provoked and pelted us, and then the (people here) responded. But police came and only arrested those living at the camps," she complained. "Police also seized our kitchen knife and firewood that we used to cook."

About 200 UN police and Australian troops encircled the camp, an AFP correspondent reported, while an Australian helicopter hovered overhead. He saw about 20 men detained and police confiscate knives and sticks. Police declined to immediately comment.

May's initial violence, which left at least 21 people dead, was triggered by the government's dismissal of some 600 soldiers who deserted the army complaining of discrimination.

Tens of thousands of East Timorese remain in refugee camps, still too afraid to return home amid the uncertain security.

East Timor police back on the beat

Agence France Presse - September 27, 2006

East Timor's police force has begun returning to

work in the capital Dili. It is the first time this has happened since the city descended into violence earlier this year.

Twenty-five officers resumed duties this week under the command of United Nations (UN) police. Up to 900 officers are expected to return to work after completing a six-week training and mentoring program run by the UN.

"The return to duty of these police in the capital is a crucial step in restoring Timorese public authority and ensuring law and order on the streets of Dili and the whole country," acting UN police commissioner Antero Lopes said in a statement.

East Timorese police were taken off-duty after the violence in April and May, which involved fighting between rival police and military factions.

The officers are participants in an ongoing screening process that began in early September and has seen some 900 Dili-based police register as a prerequisite for returning to work, the UN says. The program is to be implemented outside the capital later.

Officers found to have had complaints lodged against them may be subject to investigation by the UN police and the prosecutor's office.

Cleared officers are eligible to begin a six-week training and mentoring program, comprised of a five-day intensive refresher course at the police academy followed by five weeks of on-the-job mentoring, the UN says. Officers are not permitted to carry firearms during mentoring.

The East Timorese capital descended into chaos in May, when rival factions from the military and police waged bloody battles on the streets alongside youth gangs, leaving at least 21 people dead.

Some 3,200 international peacekeepers were deployed to the tiny half-island nation to restore calm, while the United Nations has extended its mission.

Violence flares again in East Timor

Agence France Presse - September 24, 2006

Dili — Violence erupted on the streets of the East Timorese capital today as two groups pelted each other with stones, forcing residents in the area to flee their homes.

The disturbance occurred between two groups of youths from different regions of East Timor near the Comoro market at about 2pm local time, witnesses said.

They said the incident appeared to follow the beating of a man the previous day in the Aimutin da Lurumata area.

"This stone throwing is a follow up to yesterday's incident where several drunken youths beat up a man called Joaoa at a party in Lurumata," said Damiao Amaral, 26, a student who witnessed the violence. Family and friends of the attacked man, from the eastern part of the country, had sought to avenge him, he said.

About 100 families mostly from the western part of East Timor living in Lurumata fled the violence and sought shelter at the Dom Bosco seminary or with family elsewhere in Aimutin, he said. Police disbanded the fighters, he said.

Meanwhile, the civil registry office next to the Fatuhada police post in Dili was burned by unidentified men today, witnesses said. At least six international police had tried to douse the flames with fire extinguishers, the witnesses said. The police declined comment.

The incidents were the latest in a series that have shaken the city and its surroundings after then-prime minister Mari Alkatiri dismissed 600 soldiers in an army of 1400 early this year when they protested suspected discrimination against soldiers from the west of the tiny country.

The violence, which later degenerated into conflicts pitting East Timorese from the western

and eastern parts, prompted the deployment of international peace keeping forces in May to restore security in the capital of the fledgling nation.

UN takes over policing in East Timor

Agence France Presse - September 13, 2006

International police deployed to East Timor in the wake of unrest in May have formally handed over their authority to the United Nations during a ceremony in the capital.

Some 554 police now fall under the control of the new UN mission in East Timor which was set up by the Security Council last month, according to a mission spokeswoman.

Diplomats from Australia, Malaysia and Portugal symbolically placed blue berets on the heads of representatives of their respective police forces serving in the tiny nation at the ceremony attended by about 100 officials.

"You have a double responsibility and priority: to serve the community and to serve your respective countries," Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta told the gathering.

Ramos-Horta praised the "outstanding" job done by the foreign police force so far in East Timor, which was plunged into months of political uncertainty after violence among military and police factions left some 21 people dead in May.

UNMIT, which has an initial six-month mandate, is tasked with assisting in elections due next year as well as strengthening the East Timorese police and justice system. Some 1,608 police officers and 34 military liaison officers are to be part of the mission.

The original violence, which saw an estimated 150,000 people in the nation of one million flee their homes in fear for their lives, was triggered by the dismissal of 600 deserting soldiers. Most of the refugees remain in camps, lacking

confidence in the security situation.

One of the world's youngest and poorest countries, East Timor became independent in 2002 after voting in 1999 to end 24 years of Indonesian rule. It was administered by the United Nations during the interim period, which quickly scaled down its operations after independence.

Youths attack Dili refugee camp

Agence France Presse - September 9, 2006

Peacekeepers have fired tear gas to stop fighting at a refugee camp in the East Timorese capital of Dili, in the latest unrest to hit the tiny territory.

Eye-witnesses say dozens of youths armed with slingshots and stones have attacked a refugee camp opposite the United Nations headquarters.

"The attack happened at 12.00 with tens of youths," Americo Marcal, a guard at the O brigado Barracks camp, said. "They threw stones and used catapults, and then the refugees fought back."

An AFP reporter says around 50 Australian, Malaysian and Portuguese police are trying to stop the brawl between the youths and the camp's inhabitants, who are also armed with rocks and slingshots. "One canister of tear gas was thrown into the camp," said the reporter.

The reporter says women and children have been evacuated from the barracks to the United Nations headquarters across the road.

A Portuguese policeman, who refused to give his name, has confirmed youths have attacked the refugee camp but says police have yet to arrest anyone for the unrest. "We haven't arrested anyone from either the group of youths or from the internally displaced people," he said.

East Timor has been plagued by sporadic violence since May, when the desertion of 600 troops sparked civil unrest that left 21 people dead and forced thousands to flee their homes.

Some 3,200 Australian-led peacekeepers have been deployed in Dili since the unrest started. The United Nations has agreed to send more than 1,600 international police to the impoverished country.

Don't treat me as a criminal, pleads East Timorese rebel

The Australian - September 9, 2006

Mark Dodd, Dili — East Timor's most wanted man, Australian-trained army rebel Alfredo Reinado, appealed yesterday for international forces in the country not to treat him as a criminal.

Major Reinado, who is believed to be hiding somewhere in the south of East Timor, said he was continually on the move and had no immediate intention of turning himself in.

"I hear the international police and Australian forces are asking me to hand myself in. I cannot do that — there is no justice in East Timor, laws in the country don't function, they don't exist," he told The Weekend Australian by telephone.

Major Reinado, 39, who has been on the run since breaking out of Becora jail in Dili with 56 other inmates on August 30, accused the East Timor Government of being disloyal to the people.

The UN-commanded police have rounded up about a dozen of the escapees in the past few days.

If the Government implemented credible and transparent justice, Major Reinado said, he would return to Dili and turn himself in.

The former head of East Timor's military police faces charges of attempted murder and illegal possession of weapons in connection with recent political violence. The UN last Sunday promised him a fair trial if he gave himself up.

"I've been moving around and I've been chased by the international forces. Why is this? Am I an enemy?" he asked. "Why are these guys after me?"

East Timor descended into chaos in May, when

fighting between factions within the security forces spilled into widespread gang warfare, with looting and arson attacks leaving at least 30 people dead and forcing 150,000 to flee from their homes.

Calm returned with the installation of a new government and the arrival of Australian peacekeepers, but tens of thousands of East Timorese still live in temporary camps, and sporadic gang fights have continued.

Reinado on the Line

SBS Dateline - September 7, 2006

It has been a week now since East Timor's most wanted man, rebel leader Major Alfredo Reinado with 56 other prisoners somehow managed to just walk out of Dili's jail, it has to be said, under extremely curious circumstances. As it happens, Dateline's David O'Shea was with Reinado and got caught in the cross-fire when the rebel leader fired the first shots of the violence. He was also on hand when Reinado was arrested, three weeks ago. And now, earlier today, still on the run, Reinado out of the blue, called David by mobile from wherever it is that he's hiding in the hills above Dili.

David O'Shea: Alfredo Reinado, where are you?

Major Alfredo Reinado: I'm somewhere in East Timor.

David O'Shea: Yes can you be more specific?

Major Alfredo Reinado: How come I can tell you that if there are Australian troops hunting me around, chasing me around?

David O'Shea: They are saying that you are destabilising the situation, increasing tensions. Aren't you going to give yourself up?

Major Alfredo Reinado: I'm never going to give myself up. Because I've already given opportunity for them, time to the process of the justice side of it. I know myself that I am not a criminal.

David O'Shea: So can you just explain clearly, what do you want?

Major Alfredo Reinado: What I want, to listen to the majority of the people. Because these people didn't want this government any more. People want justice, people want change.

David O'Shea: Are you still loyal to Xanana Gusmao? And have you been in touch with him?

Major Alfredo Reinado: I always loyal with him, I'm still in touch with him.

David O'Shea: If President Xanana Gusmao asks you or orders you to hand yourself in, would you do it?

Major Alfredo Reinado: No.

David O'Shea: So you're not following orders from Xanana Gusmao then?

Major Alfredo Reinado: Not all the orders you should follow. What is the justification of the order? You have to clarify. Not all the order if the order comes to you, "You go and eat the shit" you eat the shit? No way.

David O'Shea: There are reports here in the media today that you have been in communication with the Australian forces. Is that correct and, if it is, what have you been talking about?

Major Alfredo Reinado: I do have communication, been communicating with them, I just let them know that "Don't come after me because I am not a problem of this nation. The government is the problem of the nation and my people will not let that happen." Because my people will never hand me over. I'm willing to talk to anyone, to talk, to do any dialogue, anything. But to hand over myself, no way. When they after me, I will stop them. If they shoot me, I will shoot them back because I have a right to protect myself in my country. And I know I don't have anything to against Australians.

David O'Shea: Are you armed? How many weapons do you have with you? And how many men do you have with you?

Major Alfredo Reinado: I have all the people in

this country who ever support me. They are armed with machetes and spears, that's a weapon also. They are ready to defend themselves. With anything they have, even rocks and wood.

David O'Shea: But how many heavy weapons do you have?

Major Alfredo Reinado: Me?

David O'Shea: Yes.

Major Alfredo Reinado: All my weapons I already hand over.

David O'Shea: But you told me that last time, when I interviewed you, you told me that you'd handed in all of your weapons and then when they found you in the house that day, you had 4,000 ammunition, guns and magazines.

Major Alfredo Reinado: Look my friend, listen to me, the order they gave me was to hand over all of my weapons, not hand over all the equipment, all the military equipment. So I had over all my weapons, they ask for weapons, I gave them weapons, they didn't say it includes ammunition and everything. I still have the pistol.

David O'Shea: Can I just ask you, how did you escape from jail?

Major Alfredo Reinado: Somehow, under pressure I have to escape and arrange all the power I had. I knew that security of the jail was not that strong. Only a few people there and during that time I stayed with the visit time, so door is open, people coming in and out. So I use that opportunity to scare them with everything I have — wood, rock or whatever — and they run away so we come out. And by that time, already three or four days, the prison has been left empty by international group. Normally international group give security there, and they left. That means it was an opportunity for me to go.

David O'Shea: Prime Minister Ramos Horta has blamed foreign forces for letting you out of jail, for allowing you leave. Is that true?

Major Alfredo Reinado: Yes, because he's in a confusing... confusing situation. He says that because he's scared, he's scared the truth will come

out.

David O'Shea: So what do you mean "the truth to come out"?

Major Alfredo Reinado: Because Ramos Horta hide so many things. Ramos Horta is not in favour with the people any more. Because he's part of the Mari Alkatiri group.

David O'Shea: When I was with you in the hills in May, you called for Australian intervention. Now you've become public enemy number one. What's happened with that relationship?

Major Alfredo Reinado: Look, public enemy number one, that word doesn't suit me because my public didn't feel like I am the enemy. Ask everyone, but the government thinks that I am the enemy.

David O'Shea: You obviously feel like you've been betrayed, who has betrayed you do you think?

Major Alfredo Reinado: Ramos Horta of course has betrayed me. You know, because Ramos Horta, since he gained his power, everything has changed since he got the power. He never did talk to me any more. And he never implemented anything he talked to me about it.

David O'Shea: It could appear that all of this is just so you don't have to stay in jail.

Major Alfredo Reinado: Look I'm staying in jail, for what?

David O'Shea: Weapons possession.

Major Alfredo Reinado: If you go through what they blame me for, you don't have any basic legal side to it.

David O'Shea: Are you going to be starting any trouble? Are you going to be sitting waiting? What is your plan?

Major Alfredo Reinado: My friend, as you know, I never start any trouble all along. The trouble is being start by somebody else. I stand up to stop that until now. Why is everybody blame that I'm the problem of this country? I'm not a problem of this country. If I am a problem of this country, the people didn't stand for me. The government is

the problem of the country. I think I'm a solution.

Without me, there's already civil war. Without me, all ready the people, many of them already dying, been killing by the defence force themselves. Without me, there would be big chaos today. I just want Australian people not to think that I'm a rebel or I'm a renegade, because if I'm a rebel or a renegade my people, these people, didn't stand for me. And I want the Australian people to tell their government that their troops come here to stand for everybody, not to pick a fight.

David O'Shea: Alfredo Reinado, thank you for speaking to us.

Major Alfredo Reinado: You're welcome.

Reporter/Camera - David O'Shea
Cameraman - David Brill
Editor - Wayne Love
Producer - Amos Cohen

I'm willing to shoot Australian troops, Reinado warns

Melbourne Age - September 7, 2006

Leo Shanahan — East Timorese rebel leader Alfredo Reinado has vowed not to give himself up and says he is willing to shoot at Australian troops.

Reinado was contacted at his jungle hide-out by SBS program Dateline last night, but refused to confirm his location because "there are Australian troops hunting me around, chasing me around".

The fugitive escaped last week from Dili's local jail with 56 other men. He confirmed that he has been in contact with Australian troops and indicated he was willing to negotiate.

"I do have communication, been communicating with them. I just let them know that, 'don't come after me, because I am not a problem of this nation'. The Government is the problem of the nation and my people will not let that happen. I'm willing to talk to any one, to talk, to do any dialogue,

anything but to hand over myself, no way," Reinado told SBS.

He said he was armed and willing to fire upon Australian troops if necessary: "When they after me, I will stop them. If they shoot me, I will shoot them back, because I have a right to protect myself in my country."

His escape has once again put East Timor on the edge, with international forces already struggling to curb gang violence.

He also confirmed that he was in contact with East Timorese President Xanana Gusmao and was "always loyal" to the President.

Reinado and his rebel troops were blamed for the outbreak of violence in May that eventually led Australian troops to return to the fledgling nation.

He criticised new East Timor Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta, accusing him of siding with former prime minister Mari Alkatiri. "Ramos Horta is not in favour with the people any more. Because he's part of the Mari Alkatiri club... Ramos Horta, of course, has betrayed me."

Prime Minister John Howard dismissed Reinado's threats as propaganda. "I think Australian soldiers can handle that situation. I have every confidence in (Australian commander) Brigadier (Mick) Slater," Mr Howard said.

Australians know whereabouts of fugitive Timor renegade

Sydney Morning Herald - September 6, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch — The East Timorese rebel leader Alfredo Reinado has obtained weapons since he led a mass escape from Dili's main jail last week, his lawyer said yesterday.

"I have information that he and his men have guns and are in the hills not too far from Dili," Paulo Remedios said by telephone from the East Timorese capital. "I don't know his location exactly, but a

lot of people are telling me that the Australian police and military know where he is."

Mr Remedios said he understands the Australians have made contact with the 39-year-old Australian-trained Reinado, who within hours of his escape circulated a letter in Dili calling for Timorese to rise up in a "people power" revolution. "Maybe the Australian police and military think it is too dangerous to try to arrest him and his men at this time," Mr Remedios said.

Reinado is a former military policeman who left his post in May because he objected to orders, which he said the East Timorese Government gave, to shoot civilian protesters.

The Australian Army's commander in Dili, Brigadier Mick Slater, earlier confirmed he had sent messages to Reinado calling on him to surrender.

Several Australian Army officers developed a close relationship with Reinado before he and 20 of his men were arrested on July 26 on charges of possessing nine handguns, ammunition and grenades.

For weeks Reinado had lived with a group of Australian SAS soldiers at a walled, Portuguese-era fort in the mountain village of Maubisse. He had fled there after firing the first shots in East Timor's crisis in May.

Mr Remedios said that after he was arrested Reinado made repeated statements that he believed his life was in danger. Even while in Becora jail, from which he and 56 other inmates escaped last Wednesday, he had expressed concern about lack of security at the jail, Mr Remedios said.

None of the escapees, many of whom are convicted murderers, have been arrested. Two men who said they were escapees presented themselves on Monday to East Timorese police in the village of Alieu, in the country's western mountains, but they were not detained. Police in Dili could not explain why.

Almost 200 Australian and other international police in Dili are struggling to contain gang violence, which is breaking out in parts of the city almost every day.

The commander of the Australian police, Steve Lancaster, told ABC radio yesterday that boredom was a major problem among the trouble-makers. "We still have a lot of people out there who just join in and have nothing much better to do than get involved in a good rock fight."

He expects a 1600-strong United Nations police force, including 130 Australians, will be fully deployed in Dili by December, but the Foreign Affairs Minister, Alexander Downer, told ABC radio the UN force would not be enough to handle security. "I do think there should be military back-up in case the worst happens," Mr Downer said yesterday.

Australia to maintain presence in Timor

Reuters - September 4, 2006

Australia will continue providing military support to help maintain security in East Timor, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said on Monday, amid renewed concerns about stability in the fledgling nation.

Downer was speaking after holding three-country talks with East Timor's leaders and Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda.

"We obviously continue to be concerned about the security situation, the outbreak of violence in Dili, though the advice I've had is the situation is somewhat better than it has been," Downer told reporters in the capital, Dili.

The United Nations agreed last week on a new mission to East Timor, comprising some 1,600 police, despite a dispute over whether Australian-led troops already there should remain independent or be integrated into the UN force.

Downer said Australia backed the UN deployment, but that it needed to be backed up by a stronger military force. "I explained the Australian government's position, which is that we give consent that there should be military backup for the police," Downer said.

He said that "substantially" bigger numbers would be required to have a blue-helmet UN peacekeeping force operating alone, but said the issue would be discussed in New York in October. "Australia always stands by East Timor and endeavours to help it no matter what circumstances", Downer added.

Highlighting the fragile security situation in the former Portuguese colony, more than 50 prisoners escaped from Becora jail near Dili last week, among them rebel leader Major Alfredo Reinado.

Reinado was one of the figureheads of a revolt that plunged East Timor into chaos in May, prompting Australia to lead an international peacekeeping force to restore order.

Indonesian troops have been put on alert to prevent a possible border crossing by Reinado and the other inmates who escaped, Jakarta's military said on Monday.

East Timor Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta thanked Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal for providing security help and said he was confident about the situation. "As of yesterday, it is far more stable and peaceful than two months ago," he told reporters.

The United Nations refugee agency said on Friday it was concerned about an escalation in violence in Dili in recent days.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman Ron Redmond said there were signs of increasing polarisation of communities in and around Dili, where some displaced persons living in camps feared night-time attacks.

There have been sporadic flare-ups in violence involving gangs burning houses, or fighting one another with stones and homemade weapons since May.

Refugee attacks raise tensions

The Australian - September 2, 2006

Mark Dodd — Eight East Timorese refugees were

injured yesterday by thugs using police-issue pistols and machetes in Dili, in an attack diplomats fear was designed to trigger a new wave of violence.

The attack, which left two of the wounded with life-threatening injuries, occurred at 1.30pm in a park just metres away from the five-star Dili Hotel in the city centre.

Witnesses said up to four gunmen armed with police-issue Glock 9mm pistols and an FNC assault rifle opened fire without provocation. At least one of the assailants was said to have attacked the refugees, ethnic easterners, with a machete. Other refugees said the attackers were police from the western region of the country who supported army rebel Alfredo Reinado.

Major Reinado, a central figure in the unrest that racked East Timor three months ago, led an escape by 57 prisoners from Dili's Becora jail on Wednesday.

"This ratchets up the tension," said a Western security analyst based in Dili. "It's designed to scare the population — it's destabilising for the Government. I'm concerned about the claims they were police."

Several hundred UN and Australian police, backed by an international military force, were last night continuing the manhunt for the escapees, who include pro-Jakarta militiamen jailed for 1999 war crimes.

The Weekend Australian understands that East Timorese police have not been engaged to help in the search for the wanted men, ignoring a potentially vital source of local knowledge.

Repeated requests for additional security to be based around the Becora prison were ignored, East Timorese interim Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta said yesterday. "I presume the Australian forces — as experts in security — thought it was not necessary, although we had asked repeatedly," Mr Ramos Horta said on ABC radio.

Justice Minister Chris Ellison said on Thursday that prison security was the sole responsibility of the East Timorese Government. But the UN

mission in Dili has challenged that, saying "external security" around the jail was the responsibility of the international force — a veiled reference to the Australian Defence Force.

Under the security arrangements in East Timor, the Becora prison falls within the New Zealand army's area of operations, although command responsibility ultimately rests with Australia, whose 1500-strong military force acts independently of the UN.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, due to arrive in Dili tomorrow for crisis talks, said yesterday he hoped the escapees were rounded up quickly. "Our concern is these people have been convicted or in some cases perhaps they have been charged and they're awaiting trial, and it does concern me they should escape in this way," Mr Downer said on Adelaide radio.

Opposition foreign affairs spokesman Kevin Rudd has condemned the Howard Government for wanting to cut back the military in Dili, saying the jail break underscored the fragile security in the country.

The AFP has taken a prominent role in the hunt for the Becora escapees, with dozens of officers, including detectives, working round the clock, but they are handicapped by the lack of a radio room and operations centre to co-ordinate the search.

Maj Reinado was in the Becora prison awaiting trial. He was accused of attempted murder and possession of illegal weapons, charges stemming from his involvement in the unrest that led to the downfall of former East Timorese prime minister Mari Alkatiri.

Maj Reinado, a dual Australian-East Timorese citizen, was arrested on July 25. He received training in military leadership in Canberra and his wife lives in Perth. A former military police commander, Maj Reinado deserted from his unit on May 4 with 20 armed followers in sympathy with 600 army rebels angered by regional discrimination in the force.

Bob Lowry speaks to Quentin Dempster on East Timor

ABC Lateline - September 1, 2006

Quentin Dempster: Returning now to our earlier story, the shootings this afternoon in an East Timor refugee camp, and the so-far fruitless search for 57 men who broke out of a Dili jail earlier this week. Well, Bob Lowry is a military and political consultant and has advised the East Timorese government on national security issues. I spoke to him earlier from our Canberra Studio.

Quentin Dempster: Bob Lowry, we've had the prison walkout, open calls to rebellion by rebel leader Alfredo Reinado, now there are reports of four people in a refugee camp being shot by the East Timor police. It looks like a country that is ungovernable, impossible to secure, does it not?

Bob Lowry, Former security advisor to East Timor: It might look like that superficially but these are all relatively minor incidents in themselves. And the main thing is that the government, or the temporary government under Jose Ramos Horta, and the UN police and the military act together to overcome these minor things so they don't have the potential to escalate into something more serious. But certainly there is the potential there unless it's handled effectively and quickly.

Quentin Dempster: You're confident that they can get the 57 escapees back in custody?

Bob Lowry: Well, not necessarily all of them but these sort of people are not going to want to live in the depths of the jungle for very long, so eventually they will find out where they are. I think the thing to bear in mind too at the moment is that we've had the meltdown of the East Timorese police force and the East Timorese military, and the UN has just announced a new mission for East Timor of 1,600 foreign police. But at the moment there are only about 400 of them on the ground, so they're spread pretty thinly. As a result of that, there is a little bit of a vacuum at the moment which they have to fill in the short term before the new mission actually

builds up and has a greater capability to enforce the law in East Timor.

Quentin Dempster: So this build-up would still be months away?

Bob Lowry: Well, to reach 1,600 police officers they're probably a few months away, not too many hopefully. They should start adding to that force relatively quickly. I am not sure exactly what the timetable is but they've just put in a new commissioner of police about a week or so ago and he would obviously be pressing for the additional police assistance as quickly as possible. But it will take some time of course to prepare them. In the meantime, they have to use the resources they've got, backed up by the foreign military forces that are there, to maintain the situation in a relatively calm position.

Quentin Dempster: There's been a complete breach of command particularly at the jail, hasn't there?

Bob Lowry: Yes, that's an interesting case. I notice that the special representative of the Secretary-General of the UN, who is based in East Timor, actually visited it about two or three weeks ago and he commented at the time that the basic needs of the prisoners were being met but they needed to improve the facilities. But he didn't mention anything about a lack of security or a need to boost security, although he may have done that separately.

Quentin Dempster: Should international forces have been there securing the jail, as PM Ramos Horta has suggested?

Bob Lowry: We don't know what arrangements had been made between the government and the forces and the police to do that. In the first instance, it should have been the responsibility of the prison guards. If they were not capable of fulfilling their obligations, they should have been reinforced by police, and only then should you look to the military forces. But all of this depends, of course, on what specific arrangements had been made in East Timor between the various parties involved and that we don't know at the moment.

Quentin Dempster: Alexander Downer is going to

East Timor on Sunday. What can he practically do?

Bob Lowry: He can just make sure that the various elements of the Australian contribution at least are sufficiently well equipped to do the job they've got. Although there's been an announcement of a withdrawal, or with thinning out of the forces there, that obviously won't occur before the new UN police mission is built up and until the situation comes back under control and there's some understanding of what the escape of the 54 actually means. Of course, we've got to remember that those 57 or so people who escaped are not necessarily all going to join a specific team for a specific purpose. Many of them will want to go their own way and do their own thing, so we're still yet to see what the purpose of their escape is and whether it will cause any real ructions.

Quentin Dempster: What's your view of the likely long-term outcome? Can East Timor survive as an independent nation and overcome these seemingly intractable internal security difficulties?

Bob Lowry: Yes, there's no doubt about that. It will take a little bit of time to get people back into their houses and to get these institutions like the military and the police reformed and working effectively, the justice sector up and going and get through the elections next year. And, of course, in the whole process of that there will be a lot of politics and there will be a lot of effervescence but there's no doubt that in the longer term they can create a reasonably effective democracy, but a lot of changes are going to have to occur.

Quentin Dempster: You're an expert on Australia's relations with Indonesia. How are the Indonesians likely to be viewing and interpreting these events in East Timor?

Bob Lowry: I don't think they'll be too concerned about these particular events because in themselves they're fairly minor. As long as people act with a little bit of purpose they can be overcome reasonably quickly. I don't think there's any chance of a widespread insurgency occurring on a significant level. There will be gang violence, as we've seen in Dili in recent times, there will be undisciplined actions because of the weapons that are out there in the community and the

various political tensions that exist and will continue to exist in East Timor, but those are the sorts of things that are were there before this particular incident and they will continue for some time to come. But getting the Parliament up, getting the institutions of the justice sector working, getting through the elections next year, also the government has pumped another \$200 million-odd into the next year's budget to try and get some people back into the work force, all of these things will help to quieten it down a little bit. Nevertheless, it is one of the poorest countries in the world and certainly the poorest in south-east Asia, and it will take a long time before you actually establish a really viable and robust democracy.

Quentin Dempster: Bob Lowry, thanks very much for talking to Lateline.

Bob Lowry: My pleasure.

Fragile peace may shatter if fugitive rebels join forces

Sydney Morning Herald - September 2, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch, Dili — Australian security forces hunting Alfredo Reinado, who led a mass escape from Dili's jail this week, should know he has XXX tattooed on the back of his neck.

Reinado likens himself to Xander Cage, the extreme athlete and fearless adrenaline junkie in the 2002 movie XXX. "I don't care if I die tomorrow," Reinado said after he fired the first shots in a bloody revolt that plunged East Timor into crisis in May.

Three months after those shots rang out on the hillside above the jail from which Reinado escaped on Wednesday, East Timor's political factions are plotting their next moves in a bitter power struggle that could erupt again into violence, a number of well-informed figures said in Dili this week.

The Prime Minister, Jose Ramos Horta, concedes

wearily that the political problems that plunged the country into crisis in April, May and June are unsolved.

Speaking in his thatched villa overlooking Dili's harbour, he says it is still possible for the country to hold violence-free elections, due in April next year, but only through "strong international assistance and the role of the church and other leaders". "Obviously, there is no guarantee," Mr Ramos Horta says.

Reinado's escape with 56 others came only days after Vincente da Conceicao, a former guerilla fighter who likes to be called "Commander Railos", fled to the western mountains as the Office of Prosecutor-General was about to issue a warrant for his arrest for possession of illegal weapons.

Railos's allegation that he set up a hit squad to eliminate political opponents of the then prime minister, Mari Alkatiri, led to the latter being forced from office. The Opposition Leader, Mario Carrascalao, said the case of Railos, whom he knows well, had been mishandled by the Government: "Railos feels frustrated. He provided information to help solve the problem but they were going to arrest him."

The possibility that Reinado and Railos and their men could combine to form a renegade force is a nightmare for the commanders of foreign troops and police in Dili, who are struggling to control violence but cannot convince 70,000 people in makeshift refugee camps that is safe for them to return to their homes.

Like Xander Cage, whose mission was to save the world, Reinado apparently wants to save East Timor. Within hours of his escape he was circulating a letter urging East Timorese to rise up in a people-power revolution.

His escape shattered the illusion that hundreds of foreign police and troops in Dili have brought peace to the tiny half-island nation of just over a million mostly impoverished people.

The UN Security Council has agreed to send to Dili 1608 international police, 34 military liaison officers and about 500 civilian personnel, who will complement foreign troops already in Dili,

including 1500 Australians.

But a Western analyst in Dili said the "foreigners are just keeping protagonists apart". The analyst added: "The bad blood, grudges and dirty politics are still there, just below the surface."

Fretilin, the ruling party, which has 55 of the 86 seats in the parliament, appears to be fracturing as the combative and unpopular Mr Alkatiri vows publicly to lead it to an "unimaginable" election victory.

Security forces fear a violent backlash from Mr Alkatiri's enemies if the Office of Prosecutor-General fails to charge him over Railos's allegations. They also fear a backlash from elements within Fretilin if Mr Alkatiri is charged. "It's a no-win situation regarding Alkatiri," the analyst said.

A youth worker, Jose Sousa-Santos, said gangs of unemployed youths responsible for sporadic violence were being manipulated for political and criminal purposes. "The kids are a very buyable commodity," said Mr Sousa-Santos, who has worked with Dili's youths for six years. Two rival martial-arts gangs each have more than 30,000 members spread throughout the country.

Some former police, said to be manipulating the gangs, are believed to have high-powered weapons looted from the armoury of the 3200-strong police force that disintegrated during the violence in May.

An American doctor who has worked in Dili since 1998, Dan Murphy, warns that the health of people in the refugee camps is deteriorating. "The people tell me that this is their most worrying and depressing time since they gained their independence," Dr Murphy said.

Celestinho da Costa-Alves manages a refugee camp near Dili's main wharf, whose 2682 residents from the east of the country are often attacked by gangs from the west. "Every time our people leave and try to return to their homes they are attacked," Mr da Costa-Alves said. "The Government has told us to leave here because there has been trouble, but where are we to go?"

Since Mr Ramos Horta took office two months ago, he has shaken up the country's lethargic bureaucracy, telling officials that heads will roll unless they improve efficiency. Business people say that permits are suddenly being issued in hours, rather than days, containers are moving quickly off the wharf and corruption appears to have been curbed.

Mr Ramos Horta makes surprise visits to government offices, refugee camps, charities, UN and non-government-organisations. He has steered a \$US315 million (\$412 million) budget through parliament, a record in a country where the annual income per capita is \$US370 and 40 per cent of the population live in poverty.

He has emerged as the person many East Timorese see as their saviour at another terrible moment in their history, but he plays down a push from the US and some other countries for him to be the UN's next secretary-general, saying he feels committed to helping solve East Timor's problems.

"I would rather retire and take it easy on a beach somewhere," he says. "But it might be important for me to be here ... I'm not saying that I am the best person, but I am one of the very, very few with the trust of the people."

Escaped Timor rebel chief says not planning revolt

Reuters - September 1, 2006

International police and troops in East Timor were searching for rebel leader Major Alfredo Reinado after a mass jailbreak raised serious concern about fragile security in the fledgling nation.

Reinado, one of the figureheads of a revolt that plunged the former Portuguese colony into chaos in May, was among more than 50 prisoners who walked out of the Becora jail near the capital Dili on Wednesday.

The rebel leader said on a video tape obtained by Reuters Television that he did not want to stage a new revolt. "I have escaped from Dili not to

revolt but because the judicial system in Dili is not good enough. But I will account for my action and answer any charges against me when the system has been improved."

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer will fly to Dili on Sunday for meetings with Indonesian counterpart Hassan Wirajuda, as well as East Timor Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta and President Xanana Gusmao.

"It's obviously a matter of deep regret that this has happened," Mr Downer said. "It is going to be an important visit and in the light of the escape of these 56 prisoners, which is of very great concern to us, an opportunity for us to reinforce our support to the East Timorese."

Brigadier Mick Slater, the head of Australian troops in East Timor, said the prisoners walked out the jail's front gate during visiting hours.

Joao Domingos, head of Becora jail's administration, said grass cutters were used to intimidate guards during the breakout, in which he said all of Alfredo's men being held had escaped.

He said he was not aware whether guards helped in the escape. Another 148 prisoners remain in confinement. "They threatened us with grass shears. They said 'open the doors or you will die'. We opened the doors and 57 got away," Mr Domingos said.

The United Nations agreed last week on a new mission to East Timor, comprising some 1,600 police, despite a dispute over whether Australian-led international troops already there should remain independent or be part of a UN force. Mr Downer said the implementation of the new UN mission would be discussed at the trilateral talks, to be held on Monday.

City sealed off

Brigadier Slater said it was likely the escapees were now armed, although Dili remained quiet and calm after his troops quickly sealed off the city.

Dili suffered a series of protests that evolved into widespread violence in May after 600 members of East Timor's 1,400-strong army were sacked.

In late May, former military police commander Reinado led his followers into the mountains behind Dili and refused to give up weapons until then Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri resigned.

An estimated 100,000 people were displaced and at least 20 killed in the violence, which led to deployment of a 2,500-strong international peacekeeping force.

The revolt stemmed from divisions between troops from the east and those from the west of the country, which was ruled by Jakarta from 1976 until an independence referendum in 1999.

POLITICS/POLITICAL PARTIES

Timor says credible elections are key to reconciliation

Associated Press - September 27, 2006

Paul Alexander, United Nations — East Timor needs fair elections, reconciliation and a big injection of international aid to overcome the recent violence that battered the fledgling nation, Foreign Minister Jose Luis Guterres said Wednesday.

Addressing the UN General Assembly, Guterres bemoaned the fighting between rival factions of the armed forces, which gave way to gang warfare, arson and looting, as the consequence of an inexperienced government feeling its way along the path of democracy.

"As a post-conflict country, we have recently experienced a relapse of violence, due to institutional failures of our defense and police force, high-level unemployment and wrong political decisions that we took as leaders of a new country," Guterres said. Then-Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri dismissed 591 soldiers from the 1,400-member army in March after they waged a strike for months to protest alleged discrimination in the military.

Guterres said nearly 100 people were killed and almost 150,000 others were driven from their homes in fighting that followed the dismissal, but eased with the arrival of thousands of international

peacekeepers and the installation of a new government headed by Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta.

The foreign minister said East Timor welcomes an international commission of inquiry "to study the events surrounding the crisis and the allegations of human rights abuses." A major UN-led international presence will be needed for the foreseeable future to keep the peace and organize and supervise the country's first legislative and presidential elections next year, Guterres said.

"A free, transparent and fair election will definitely pave the way for a stable political and social environment," he said.

Also crucial are fostering reconciliation, investigating the causes of the violence and pumping in development funds to create jobs, both in towns and the rural countryside, Guterres said.

"The government is fully aware that reconciliation and justice need to be hand in hand with development," he said.

The national budget has been increased by 122 percent this fiscal year, focusing on job creation, he said, calling it "a pro-poor budget."

"We hope that this new economic policy, combined with policies of reconciliation and dialogue will help defuse the tension and will bring common understanding and will reinvigorate the trust and confidence in our common and shared future," Guterres said.

Heal splits or lose power, Ramos Horta warns Fretilin

Sydney Morning Herald - September 4, 2006

Lindsay Murdoch in Dili and agencies — East Timor's Prime Minister, Jose Ramos Horta, has warned that voters' hostility towards the ruling Fretilin party could make his country difficult to govern after next year's election.

Mr Ramos Horta says that Fretilin, which he helped

to form two decades ago, needs to quickly heal deep divisions and find new leadership.

He told the Herald in an exclusive interview there was a "very, very good chance" Fretilin could lose its majority and that smaller parties would almost certainly refuse to support it in government.

The comments will intensify political tension in Dili, where Fretilin's deposed prime minister, Mari Alkatiri, is still the party's secretary-general. He maintains he will lead the party to victory at the election, which is due in April.

Mr Ramos Horta took office in June after Mr Alkatiri was forced to quit over allegations that he had knowledge of a so-called "hit squad" that was allegedly armed to eliminate political rivals. Fretilin holds 56 of the parliament's 88 seats.

More political destabilisation in Dili would make it difficult for Canberra to keep withdrawing personnel from the almost 2000 Australian troops and police still deployed in the country.

Mr Ramos Horta said Fretilin members need to overcome factionalism and divisions and "reform and project themselves as a modern, all-inclusive, tolerant party" with a new leader, such as the former ambassador to the United Nations and now Foreign Minister, Jose Luis Guterres.

The Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, told reporters yesterday that East Timor must accept responsibility for its own affairs and find solutions to its problems.

"We have been, as a people, enormously generous to the East Timorese and will continue to provide them with support, but the East Timorese have to accept responsibility now, because they're an independent country, for their own affairs," Mr Downer said in Adelaide.

Speaking before trilateral talks between East Timor, Indonesia and Australia to be held in Dili today, Mr Ramos Horta said he was determined that an agreement with Australia to develop oil and gas reserves worth \$50 billion in the Timor Sea's Greater Sunrise field would be ratified by the East Timor parliament this year, declaring it an "issue of our credibility as a nation."

Referring to opposition among MPs who say they will refuse to ratify the agreement, Mr Ramos Horta said that "as long as I am Prime Minister, I intend to bring this to the parliament and defend it".

Mr Ramos Horta said he strongly believed that Indonesians responsible for committing atrocities in 1999, when the East Timorese voted overwhelmingly to reject Jakarta's rule, should not be pursued by the UN.

President Xanana Gusmao and Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirajuda, are also attending the talks, at which Mr Ramos Horta said he would provide a briefing on the security situation in the country after a mass break-out from a Dili jail last week led by the rebel leader Alfredo Reinado.

Major Reinado released video footage at the weekend showing that he has reached East Timor's mountains, where it will be difficult for international security forces to recapture him.

OPINION & ANALYSIS

Editorial: Toeing the line on Timor

New Matilda - September 27, 2006

This week The Australian published an opinion piece by Mark Aarons attacking journalist John Martinkus, and New Matilda, for articles we have published on the recent violence in East Timor.

Aarons argues that we are waging an "extraordinary campaign" against East Timorese President Xanana Gusmao to implicate him in the downfall of former East Timorese Prime Minister Marm Alkatiri.

Aarons makes a number of personal attacks on Martinkus which we need not dignify with a response, but what we can address directly is his questioning of two pieces of evidence presented by Martinkus in New Matilda.

Aarons rightly argues that a note written by Gusmao to rebel soldier Alfredo Reinado (available in full on our website) is not evidence enough to claim that the two "were in league to violently

overthrow Alkatiri." We would agree. But that does not make it un-newsworthy.

In fact, Martinkus and New Matilda, presented the letter for what it is: proof of a close relationship between Gusmao and Reinado at the height of the East Timorese crisis — extraordinary if you consider the facts in an Australian context. If John Howard dropped a friendly note to a renegade Australian soldier who had fired on the Australian Defence Force or the Australian Federal Police using stolen weapons, would Aarons suggest journalists ignore it?

There has been no refutation by Gusmao of this close relationship with Reinado.

In a follow-up article for New Matilda last week, Martinkus cited a statement by former police commander Abilio 'Mausoko' Mesquita, who is in jail for his role in the violence. In the document — which was leaked without Mesquita's knowledge or permission — Mesquita claims that Gusmao himself ordered him to attack the house of the Commander of East Timor's military, Brigadier Taur Matan Ruak, on 24 and 25 May.

Martinkus stresses that if legitimate, Mesquita's leaked statement implicates Gusmao in the armed violence in East Timor.

Aarons dismisses the document as 'absurd' but offers no evidence as to how he has come to this conclusion. He cites Australian journalist and East Timor correspondent Jill Jolliffe's claims on our website that the document is "demonstrably false." But Jolliffe has not demonstrated the falsity of the document or its contents.

Aarons also suggests that because other journalists ignored the story, Martinkus — and New Matilda — should have too. Sounds like pack journalism to us.

What Aarons conveniently ignores in his article — and fails to explain — are facts uncovered by The Australian's own Mark Dodd: that Gusmao paid at least a share of Reinado's hotel bill during the crisis.

John Martinkus and New Matilda have reported some inconvenient stories about the situation in East

Timor, without fear or favour. Where appropriate, we have made available the documents that substantiate those stories.

Like Aarons, we eagerly await the report of the International Special Inquiry Commission on the causes of the recent violence in East Timor. We will continue to present the facts as we uncover them. We would invite our critics to do the same.

East Timor drama had no hidden agenda

The Australian - September 26, 2006

Mark Aarons — East Timor remains unstable, although much calmer than in May and June when it was racked with civil strife. Non-aligned Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta has begun to put the Government on a stable course, given the shambles he inherited from Fretilin's Mari Alkatiri.

He has started to streamline the cumbersome bureaucracy that clogs daily life and commerce. He is trying to get money and services to the rural poor but is caught between unforgiving forces which crave victory in next year's election.

Former military police commander and prison escapee Alfredo Reinado has attacked Ramos-Horta as a stooge of Alkatiri's Fretilin faction. Reinado has been supported by the leader of the dissident soldiers, whose sacking caused the upheaval. The opposition parties, who support Ramos-Horta as Prime Minister, have also undermined him because he depends on Fretilin to govern.

The hardline Fretilin faction wants to be rid of Ramos-Horta so it can return to business as usual. Its likely candidate is Deputy Prime Minister Estanislau da Silva, a capable administrator who shares Alkatiri's politics.

This leaves Ramos-Horta without a party and dependent on his alliance with the President, former guerilla commander Xanana Gusmao. These two represent the best chance of thwarting the narrow, self-interested ambitions of the competing forces

and forming a national unity government that puts the country's long-term interests ahead of factional and personal ambitions.

As if Timorese politics were not fragile enough, an extraordinary campaign is being waged against Gusmao by journalist John Martinkus in the web journal New Matilda and The Age in Melbourne. Martinkus made his reputation reporting the bloody events before and after the August 1999 independence plebiscite.

Martinkus has been the main propagandist supporting the conspiracy theory that Alkatiri was removed by a coup. After months of failing to name names, he now insinuates that Gusmao was behind this supposed coup. In earlier articles he claimed to have confirmed Alkatiri's allegations of repeated coup attempts, supposedly involving approaches to senior army commanders by opposition and Catholic Church leaders and two foreigners whose nationalities could not be revealed due to "the sensitivity of the information".

These unsubstantiated claims were recently repeated on SBS's Dateline. In a lollipop interview, Martinkus allowed Alkatiri to repeat the allegation, although it was noticeable that he could not say whether the foreigners were Australians or Americans. Alkatiri and Martinkus cannot even name the Timorese "traitors" or the foreigners who supposedly suborned them.

More to the point, in an ABC TV interview last May, Alkatiri insisted that a coup conspiracy existed but pointedly said he did not know who was involved. However, he was sure that Gusmao was not.

Yet Martinkus now indicts Gusmao. In recent articles he has claimed that a letter written by the President to Reinado last May suggests they were in league to violently overthrow Alkatiri.

Furthermore, Martinkus has used an unsigned statement attributed to imprisoned former police commander Abilio Mesquita to allege that Gusmao ordered attacks against the army commander-in-chief. Mesquita alleges the President was behind the violence that led to Alkatiri's demise.

The facts do not support these fantastic claims

that the man who led the resistance to Indonesia has become a traitor. It is Martinkus's journalism that should be questioned, not Gusmao's patriotism. For example, Martinkus has claimed that Gusmao's "letter" to Reinado indicates that the President supported Reinado's violence.

On the evidence available to me, Gusmao's three notes to Reinado in late May (written on "with compliments" slips) ordered him and his supporters into cantons, consistent with agreements reached with the Australian forces sent to help restore order.

Martinkus has selectively quoted from one note while ignoring two others, one of which explicitly ordered Reinado to the town of Gleno, a designated canton for the dissidents. He has also ignored Gusmao's written orders insisting that Reinado and other dissidents surrender their weapons. It seems that Martinkus had access to all these documents but chose to use only the parts that fitted his fanciful theories.

While we must await the report of the international Special Inquiry Commission on the causes of the violence, there seems no reason to doubt that Gusmao was simply carrying out his duties as President to calm the situation, not using the rebels against Alkatiri, as implied by Martinkus.

Finally, there is Martinkus's reliance on the absurd "statement" of Mesquita that Gusmao was behind the violence, which also implicates Ramos-Horta and the bishop of Baucau by placing them at a meeting at which Gusmao allegedly discussed the need to overthrow Alkatiri. Reliable commentators have dismissed Mesquita as a liar who wants immunity for his own crimes.

Australian journalist Jill Jolliffe has labelled Mesquita's statement as demonstrably false and pointed out that it was doing the rounds in Dili for quite some time before Martinkus reported it in *The Age* and *New Matilda*. Every other journalist ignored Mesquita's claims as lacking veracity.

Martinkus is supported by some Australian leftists who believe that Alkatiri was the victim of malign Western forces (the Australian-American defence intelligence cabal) which linked up with Timorese

“reactionaries” hoping for an anti-Fretilin government that would do the bidding of Canberra and Washington.

No such case exists, and Martinkus and his supporters are actually damaging the future stability and development of the nation they claim passionately to support. Martinkus’s journalistic credibility has, however, been undermined by these unsubstantiated conspiracy theories.

In the end, his articles will be seen for what they are: propaganda for Alkatiri and his clique, who have thoroughly failed their people and now wish to make a comeback by concocting a conspiracy theory blaming Western imperialism for their political self-demise and by defaming the hero of Timor’s independence as a traitor to the cause he led for so long against almost impossible odds.

[Mark Aarons is the co-author of *East Timor: A Western Made Tragedy*.]

Evidence mounts against Gusmao

New Matilda - September 20, 2006

John Martinkus — Two weeks ago we revealed written orders from East Timorese President Xanana Gusmao to the rebel commander Alfredo Reinado that showed a close relationship between the two at the height of the crisis in Dili in May this year. That was followed by front-page revelations in *The Australian* that Gusmao paid at least a share of Reinado’s hotel bill during the crisis.

Now, former East Timorese police commander, Abilio Mausoko Mesquita, who is in jail for his role in the violence, has claimed in a leaked statement that Gusmao himself ordered him to attack the house of the Commander of East Timor’s military, Brigadier Taur Matan Ruak, on 24 and 25 May.

The statement is believed to have been written in Becora prison, where Mesquita is being held, and delivered to the US Embassy in Dili in order to help secure his release. If legitimate, it implicates the President in what was effectively

an armed coup to create the conditions for the resignation of the legally elected Prime Minister of East Timor, Marm Alkatiri. Until now, Gusmao has either remained silent about his role in the violence or dismissed his close contact with opposition figures as attempts to bring the situation under control.

Some Australian commentators maintain the simplistic line that somehow Alkatiri and his Interior Minister, Rogerio Lobato, engineered the recent crisis in East Timor. This view simply does not correlate with the facts on the ground, and does not take into account the details of who was actually shooting at whom. Now those commentators are either reduced to an embarrassed silence, or are making accusations of partiality about reporters who are simply uncovering uncomfortable facts.

Abilio Mesquita was arrested by the Australian Federal Police on 19 June with several Steyr automatic rifles in his possession. He was filmed at the scene of the third major incident of the crisis, the attack on Taur Matan Ruak's house, and is alleged to have led it.

According to the statement, Mesquita told the head of the UN mission in East Timor, Sukehiro Hasegawa, when Hasegawa visited him in prison shortly after his arrest that: "during the confrontations between PNLT [the police] and F-FDTL [the army] and the shooting at the Brigadier's house, the Supreme Commander Mr Xanana gave the command and ordered the shooting."

Mesquita said he then carried out the attack, but not until he had notified Taur Matan Ruak himself and four of the most senior commanders in the army, of his orders from the President. He repeatedly told Hasegawa that it was Gusmao who was the author of the crisis in East Timor.

Mesquita says he repeated these claims to Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta when Ramos Horta allegedly visited him in jail on 13 August.

The statement also details the visit of two Australian army Majors, who questioned Mesquita on his role in the violence and where his political allegiances lay.

(This line of questioning from the Australian Forces, which basically consists of are you with Alkatiri or Gusmao? is common in Dili. Countless individuals who had been questioned by the Australians, both police and military, told me that this was the first things the Australians always wanted to know. The implication was that if the person being questioned answered Gusmao, they were considered to be on the right side.)

Mesquita's statement also makes reference to a meeting held at the President's office before the crisis where, in the presence of local leaders including Chief of Police Paulo Martins, Jose Ramos Horta and the Bishop of Baucau, it is alleged the President discussed the need to get rid of the Government of Mari Alkatiri.

Other sources, from within the veterans' organisation for former independence fighters, independently confirm that in March this year they were invited to a meeting with the President at his residence in Dare, in the hills above Dili, in which the plan to remove Alkatiri was discussed. Although the meeting involved some serving officers in the F-FDTL, the commander, Taur Matan Ruak, was not invited. At this meeting it was discussed that it was necessary to remove Alkatiri and his Government because of their perceived communist sympathies.

This latest development only confirms to many East Timorese what they already knew. It is widely accepted in East Timor that the President threw his weight behind the push to get rid of Alkatiri — but what is only spoken of in whispers is the level of his involvement.

The attempts by the President to intervene in the arrest of Reinado on 26 July — and what was perceived as the Australian Forces reluctance to carry out the arrest — have only added to the rumours. Now, with Reinado and co's escape from prison being blamed on the Australians by Ramos Horta himself, and the seeming inability of the Australians to catch a man who appears on local television clearly on the outskirts of Dili, many East Timorese are highly skeptical of the motives of the Australian police and military.

The release of Abilio Mesquita's statement amounts to a trifecta for Gusmao: the leaders of the three

main attacks on the F-FDTL in May have now publicly acknowledged their allegiance to the President. Those who led the other two major attacks Reinado, in Fatu Ahi on 23 May, and Vicente Rai Los da Conceicao, in Tacitolu on 24 May have both publicly and repeatedly declared their support for and loyalty to Gusmao.

And as I wrote in New Matilda in June, senior sources within the command of the F-FDTL have also confirmed that in the 18 months leading up to the crisis they were approached on three occasions by foreign nationals to lead a coup against Alkatiri. They refused.

The facts are mounting and they paint a disturbing picture of the breakdown of constitutional democracy in East Timor.

Even more disturbing for East Timor's future is information given to me this week by a senior figure in the East Timorese Government that weapons are being sought from across the border in Indonesian West Timor by Reinado and his gang of escaped criminals, and that they are being sold by former Indonesian-backed militia in the border town of Atambua. The current price is US\$800 each for AR-15 automatic rifles and, according to the same source, Australian authorities are aware of the trade.

The question remains: if these allegations are true and the President is directly involved in the violence, then what was Australia's role in the alleged coup? Did Australia encourage Gusmao to remove Alkatiri, and if so, why?

Claim that Gusmao ordered Dili's days of rage

Melbourne Age - September 16, 2006

John Martinkus — Violence that ran over four days in May in East Timor and led to the resignation of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri was part of a plan instigated by the President Xanana Gusmao, according to new claims in Dili.

A statement by the former vice-commander of Dili district police, Abilio "Mausoko" Mesquita, alleges that Mr Gusmao ordered him to carry out an attack on the house belonging to army Brigadier Taur Matan Ruak.

Mesquita was arrested by the Australian Federal Police on June 19 with several automatic rifles. He was filmed at the scene of the attack on the brigadier's house on May 25, which he was alleged to have led.

In his statement taken from Dili's Becora prison, Mesquita says: "During the confrontations between PNTL (the police) and FDTL (the army) and the shooting at the brigadier's house, the Supreme Commander, Mr Xanana, gave the command and ordered the shooting."

Mesquita says in the statement that he told his story to the UN head of mission in East Timor, Sukehiro Hasegawa, who visited him in the prison after his arrest.

He says that before carrying out the attack, he had notified Taur Matan Ruak and four senior commanders in the army of his orders from the President.

He repeatedly told Mr Hasegawa that Xanana was the author of the crisis. Mesquita says he repeated these claims to Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta when he allegedly visited Mesquita in jail on August 13.

If true, the statement implicates the President in what was effectively an armed coup to create the conditions for the resignation of the legally elected Prime Minister. Mr Gusmao could not be contacted last night for comment.

The statement also details the visit of two Australian army majors who questioned Mesquita on his role in the violence and about his political allegiances.

Mesquita is still in the Becora jail, from which rebel leader Major Alfredo Reinado and 56 others walked out on August 30.

The statement was said to have been written in the prison and delivered to the US embassy in Dili as

a means for Mesquita to secure his release.

The statement refers to a meeting at the President's office before the crisis, where, in the presence of local leaders, including chief of police Paulo Martins, Mr Ramos Horta and the Bishop of Baucau, it is alleged that the President discussed the need to get rid of the government of Mr Alkatiri because of its perceived "communist" sympathies.

Other sources within the veterans' organisation independently confirm that they were invited to a meeting with the President at his residence in the hills above Dili in March, where a plan to remove Mr Alkatiri was discussed.

Investigation of the individuals involved in the three main attacks on the East Timor Defence Force in May shows that every one of them was led by leaders who have since publicly acknowledged their allegiance to the President.

Those who led the other two major attacks on the army, namely Major Reinado and Vicente de Conceicao, have repeatedly declared their support for Mr Gusmao.

Claim that President paid major's hotel bill

The Australian - September 12, 2006

Mark Dodd — Alfredo Reinado, the East Timorese army deserter whose actions ultimately led to the ousting of prime minister Mari Alkatiri, has allegedly received financial help from the country's President.

There are claims that the office of President Xanana Gusmao, a long-term rival of Dr Alkatiri, paid an outstanding hotel bill on behalf of Major Reinado while the rebel leader was on the run earlier this year. The bill covered the six weeks Major Reinado spent at an isolated, colonial-era mountaintop lodge called the Poussada, outside the coffee-growing town of Maubisse, 75km southeast of Dili.

Staff at the hotel, including assistant manager Julio da Costa, claim the bill was paid by the office of the President.

And Major Reinado, although sceptical of claims the bill was paid by Mr Gusmao, said he could not meet the entire account and he had heard reports it was picked up by the President or his Australian-born wife, Kirsty Sword Gusmao.

The claims, denied by Mr Gusmao's office, raise further questions about the coup-like strike by army officers that ultimately helped the President drive Dr Alkatiri out of office in late June this year. Angered by what he believed was heavy-handed treatment by Dr Alkatiri and his former interior minister, Rogerio Lobato, in quelling a political protest that left six killed, Major Reinado and 20 other supporters, mostly military police under his command, deserted for the hills.

While a deserter, Major Reinado remained loyal to his commander-in-chief, with Mr Gusmao issuing an order, seen by The Australian, for him and his group to initially base themselves in Aileu, 50km southeast of the capital. But following escalating violence in Dili, Major Reinado moved deeper into the sanctuary of East Timor's mountains, establishing a base at the Poussada.

During the peak of the political crisis in June, Major Reinado's staunch anti-government rhetoric and actions provided a rallying point for anti-Alkatiri forces. When Australian troops were deployed to the troubled nation, Special Air Service operatives went to the hotel to watch him.

Major Reinado spent six weeks at the Poussada but he moved out without settling his account, accumulating at a rate of \$US16.80 per day per room. There was also a modest food and beverage bill, although Major Reinado had a preference for fresh fish from a hatchery pond about 20km away.

According to Poussada staff, Major Reinado's bill was paid by the President. Mr da Costa, the 32-year-old assistant manager, was clear about this when questioned by The Australian last Tuesday. But within 24 hours, he was less certain. During that time, he had also been spoken to by his boss, lodge manager Maria-Isabel Benevides, whose suspicions had been aroused by the probing

questions of her only two guests that night.

The presidential payment is not confirmed by a receipt, although on Tuesday night, the hotel's accounting records, comprising several tatty invoice books scattered loosely on the office desk, had been rearranged and tidied up as if suddenly inspected.

Asked whether the payment claims were true, Mr Gusmao's chief-of-staff, Agio Pereira, said: "No, I don't think so. The President does not have enough money to pay his own police."

Mr Pereira said Mr Gusmao was unhappy about Major Reinado staying at the Poussada because "it was a private business". Major Reinado said he paid some of the bill but not enough to settle the entire account for himself and his armed colleagues.

The theory that Gusmao supports Reinado doesn't wash

[Comment by Associate Professor Damien Kingsbury, Director, Masters of International and Community Development School of International and Political Studies at Deakin University.]

A report that East Timor's President Xanana Gusmao paid the hotel bill for escaped rebel Major Alfredo Reinado is consistent with Gusmao's attempts to rein in the conflict he had threatened civil war in East Timor earlier this year.

Gusmao paid the hotel bill as part of his request to Reinado that Reinado stay in one location, to ensure there was no further conflict. In the circumstances of that time, that arrangement was key to limiting the then escalating conflict between factions in the military and police.

The inference that Gusmao supported or otherwise had links with Reinado remain unsubstantiated and inconsistent with Gusmao's public position on the conflict at that time. Such allegations, though, continue to be beaten up by misguided activists and journalists who appear to believe that support for East Timor means support for Fretilin means support for Alkatiri. This logic, though, does not follow.

Similarly, the inference that there was a link between the leader of the Democratic Party, Fernando de Araujo, and former pro-Indonesia militia leaders also remains unsubstantiated, and strongly denied by de Araujo, who spent eight years in Indonesian jails for his leading role in opposing the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

It appears that, as with allegations against Gusmao, Alkatiri supporters are having difficulty with coming to terms with the fact that he was genuinely, widely and increasingly unpopular, even in his own party, Fretilin, made a number of poor decisions, and was ultimately encouraged to resign from office on that basis.

It is a pity that journalists who have otherwise reported honestly and fearlessly in the past have so transparently allowed their personal preferences and prejudices to color their reporting on East Timor's recent troubles, confirming the old adage that one should never let the facts stand in the way of a good story.

Normality far off for East Timor

Canberra Times - September 9, 2006

George Quinn — It is hard to describe the air of lassitude that lies like a twilight over Dili. Pigs rifle through piles of rubbish. Grass runs wild in gardens and sprouts in wiry tufts through cracks in the pavements. A haze of smoke rises from cooking fires in the squalid camps where tens of thousands of people now shelter. Everywhere there are hundreds of blackened shells of houses and other buildings.

As night falls the ubiquitous taxis disappear, people hurry off the streets and an uneasy emptiness grips the city.

Dili has fragmented into ethnic ghettos. Many residents from the eastern end of the country have fled to their home regions or are living rough in the jumble of tents and plastic sheeting that fill the precincts of churches and spread like rubbish-filled pools under trees in parks. Less

than half the city's population remain in their houses.

A few enclaves of easterners are holding out in the suburbs but for the most part a kind of ethnic cleansing has occurred and westerners dominate.

Schools and universities are reopening, but here too there is creeping division. Because most state schools are in western-dominated areas, the children of easterners are afraid to enrol in them. They are flooding into the Catholic school system which they see as more tolerant and secure.

The National University stands on neutral ground in the centre of the city and is admitting both easterners and westerners, but the minor universities are losing their eastern students, a few of whom are even choosing to head for campuses in Indonesia. According to one young university student I met hawking bananas in the street, the situation is complex and seems to be getting more so by the day. Three factors stand out: ethnic divisions, urban unemployment and contempt for the Fretilin-dominated Government.

The Timorese have always recognised the idea of "westness" and "eastness". In East Timor loromonu westerners have often spoken disparagingly of those from the lorosae east, especially the Fataluku-speaking people whom some describe as crude and stumpy savages. Conversely easterners have tended to regard westerners as lazy and lacking backbone.

In colonial times these prejudices were kept in check — the Portuguese didn't allow their subjects to move around a lot and the two ends of the island didn't see much of each other. Under Indonesian rule ethnic prejudices were submerged in the suffering that all endured. The euphoria of independence too was dazzling enough to hide divisions for a few years. But freedom and the passage of time have removed the old constraints and prejudice is back.

Since East Timor's secession from Indonesia, villagers have flooded into Dili looking for work in the cash economy, with the Government or one of the host of NGOs that seem to dominate city's economy. The commercial sector is very small. The Alkatiri Government was fiscally conservative and

declined to sponsor a fat public service. Brutal competition broke out for the few jobs available. In the alienating environment of the city, far from the certainties and moral constraints of village culture, primordial stereotypes came back to life. The city became a tinderbox waiting for a spark.

The Alkatiri Government lost its hold on public popularity. Although new Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta is widely respected, many in Dili see his Government as a clone of Alkatiri's. He will have to perform if he wants to survive, and many doubt that he has the discipline and attention to detail the job demands. There is now a powerful disconnect between ordinary people and government. It is not just dissatisfaction with certain policies or with the Government's handling of the military rebellion.

There is a smouldering sense of outrage that the bright promise of independence has proved a mirage.

In Indonesia the perpetrators of serious crimes and human-rights abuses are thumbing their noses at the law, and many in East Timor see their Government as complicit in this. The Government's wacky insistence on the use of Portuguese in education is a millstone around the neck of those who want a good education quickly. Worst of all, the Government is perceived as less than interested in job-creation.

Ramos-Horta is taking steps to address these problems but he may be too late. It is clear that Fretilin is riding for a fall in next year's election. The campaign will be rough and, when the results are known, Fretilin hardliners will probably be unable to accept the loss of parliamentary power that will be inflicted on them. A move towards more authoritarian government is possible and could be popular.

Already many are disillusioned with the idea of parliamentary democracy, believing that cliques of unscrupulous politicians are stage managing and funding the current tension. People are asking why Xanana Gusmao doesn't take over from the parliamentarians and run the country himself backed by the military that still reveres him.

The big winner from the current turmoil is renegade soldier Alfredo Reinado. He has the status of a Scarlet Pimpernel among the disaffected "western" youth who rule Dili's streets. But we can expect no political or policy solutions from him, only a spoiling role and possible armed insurgency driven by personal ambition.

Most of the people I have spoken to are resigned, many are angry, all are bewildered about the causes of the violence. But all agree that there will be no quick return to normality. For the foreseeable future we are looking at a more-or-less permanent state of tension. This does not bode well for next year's general election.

[George Quinn heads the Southeast Asia Centre in the College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU.]

East Timor: The president's man

New Matilda - September 6, 2006

John Martinkus — What appear to be written orders from East Timor's President Xanana Gusmao to rebel former soldier Alfredo Reinado confirm the close relationship the now escaped criminal — who is wanted for murder and weapons offences — had with the President.

The hand-written note, seen by New Matilda and available [here](#) (in Portuguese), on the letterhead of the President and signed by him, sets the tone of the relationship between the two.

"Major Alfredo, Good Morning!" It begins. "We have already combined with the Australian forces and you have to station yourselves in Aileu," writes the President, referring to the inland hill town an hour south of Dili where Alfredo did go with his rebel soldiers. The letter continues "I am also going to write to Lieutenant [Gastao] Salsinha [the leader of the dismissed East Timorese soldiers who, unlike Reinado's men, left their barracks without their weapons] to implement this order. Abracos a todos [Embraces to all], Xanana".

Gusmao's office could not be contacted for comment on the document.

The letter is dated 29 May this year — only three days after the first Australian forces had landed in Dili and seven days after Reinado had led his men in an attack against the East Timorese national army, the F-FDTL, in the hills to the east of the capital.

The letter confirms the close relationship between the President and the breakaway officer at the time — a relationship Reinado himself has never tried to hide. When David O'Shea from SBS TV's Dateline program interviewed him in Dili just days before he was arrested on 26 July, Reinado said: Until 22 May I [was] still bound to my General, Taur Matan Ruak [F-FDTL Commander]. After I [was] attacked and I am defending myself I think I should only follow orders from my Supreme Commander, the President. Until today, anywhere I go, I always notice him and I always take order from him. Whatever I am going to do, whatever order is being [given], as long as it is clarified and justified, I'll do it.

Reinado also revealed that he had been in close contact with the President from 14 May, before the violence started. The exchange was as follows: 'On 14 May on the Sunday I heard that you met with the President,' says O'Shea.

"Yes" replies Reinado.

"What did you discuss then?" "I'm going to tell him why I left Dili. Because as the Supreme Commander he has to call me to ask me that. Why I left Dili on 3 May. I am going there to explain why I left Dili," says Reinado, referring to the day he left the army barracks in Dili with 20 of his men and two ute-loads of weapons and ammunition.

"And [Gusmao] accepted your explanation?" asks O'Shea. "Of course," replies Reinado.

When I interviewed Reinado on 11 June he was still in the hill town of Maubisse. He was there with his heavily armed men and eight Australian SAS guards. He said the guards were there for his security, but Head of the Australian forces, Brigadier Mick Slater, said the detachment was there to monitor him.

Reinado was his usual arrogant self — loudly proclaiming that he was fighting for the justice of his people and referring to so-called “atrocities” by the F-FDTL, which he greatly exaggerated. When pressed on his plans to disarm, he grinned and told me to talk to the President about that. He proclaimed he was not a rebel and that he was still a member of the army and had a right to carry weapons as he was still under the orders of the Supreme Commander of the armed forces, the President Xanana Gusmao.

The circumstances of Reinado’s arrest also require examination. I was in Dili that day, 26 July, and the incident started in the late morning. Reinado claimed that he had been offered the use of a house by the President himself. The house was situated directly across the road from the main gate of the Australian military base at Dili’s heliport in the suburb of Bairo Pite. As he was moving in, the Portuguese police (GNR), acted on a tip they had received, and came and searched the house. They found nine handguns, thousands of rounds of ammunition and grenades.

The day before had been the well publicised deadline for the handing in of weapons, and Reinado and his men were clearly in violation of that. The GNR wanted to arrest him. The Australian Federal Police were soon at the scene as well as several Australian armoured personnel carriers. It was a stand-off that lasted all day with the local and Portuguese press outside, and Reinado occasionally sauntering on to the verandah and issuing statements such as “I am a free man in a free country,” much to the amusement of reporters.

(Meanwhile, at the President’s office across town, a series of meetings were being held between officials and military and police representatives. No press access was allowed.)

Finally, after dark, the press were told to leave, the Portuguese police loaded the weapons in a vehicle and the Australian army moved across the road and cordoned off the house. I waited in the dark and filmed as the Australians led Reinado’s men out, one by one, bound in plastic cuffs, and photographed them before marching them across the road to their base. However, the Australians must have led Reinado out the back, as he was not with his men.

The sequence of the day's events and the way the Australians actively tried to play down the event, gave me the impression that they had only reluctantly arrested Reinado and his men, and that they had been forced to by the GNR's discovery of the weapons. The crisis meetings at the President's office also suggested Gusmao's close involvement in the case.

The fact that Reinado was not arrested earlier raised many questions among observers in Dili. Why, people were asking, was this man who was filmed shooting at the army, and even declaring on film that he had "got one," still remaining free? As one member of the UN investigation team said, "this guy has some serious political top cover."

The links between Reinado and the President are even more relevant now, following his "escape" from Dili's Becora prison last week, when he and 56 others simply walked out the door. He has since recorded a half-hour interview with local Timorese television. Those who watched it placed the interview as having taken place at Daralau, in the hills above Dili. Incidentally, the President's house is also in the hills above Dili.

It is inconceivable that the Australian military and Federal Police cannot place the backdrop to the interview — as so many people in Dili have — and locate and arrest Reinado.

But perhaps that is not a high priority. Perhaps they are taking the position of the President's Australian-born wife, Kirsty Sword Gusmao, who told ABC Radio this week that Reinado "has been portrayed somewhat incorrectly in the Australian media as being a renegade, a rebel." She added that "when he defected from the military police, it was a protest action against what he saw as terrible violations committed by our armed forces."

There is still little evidence that the armed forces committed violations. Claims of massacres and mass graves have never been backed up with facts, and appear to be politically motivated allegations designed to discredit the F-FDTL.

One of the most prominent opposition figures to repeatedly accuse the F-FDTL of massacres is Fernando De Araujo from the Democratic Party. When

I interviewed him for Dateline in August he told me that, even though former Prime Minister Marm Alkatiri had resigned, the "plan" had failed: "My plan was to have a transitional government that the President controls and in six months have a general election," he said.

It is similar to what Alfredo Reinado is now calling for, and from what one can divine from the supporters of East Timor's now famously silent President, it is what he is positioning himself for as well.

East Timor reality check

Sydney Morning Herald Editorial - September 6, 2006

A quick visit to Dili has sobered the Foreign Affairs Minister, Alexander Downer. Before setting off there, Mr Downer was jawboning the East Timorese about acting as an independent country which should take responsibility for its problems, "not just expect the international community indefinitely to solve all those problems for them".

By the time he left, Mr Downer was accepting that Australia would have to leave nearly double the number of troops it had been expecting to keep in Timor and maintain the force well into next year, past the elections due towards mid-year.

As the April riots in the Solomon Islands showed, elections are not always the solution to political tensions, but sometimes the precursor to new conflicts. Still, there is no better mechanism for connecting government and the popular will, and East Timor actually has more of the political party formation seen as remedy for the leader-voter disconnect elsewhere in the arc of Melanesia.

Mr Downer is wisely telling us that our security contribution is going to be substantial and likely to be measured in years, not months.

His earlier remarks were partly a reaction to

observations by East Timor's Prime Minister, Jose Ramos Horta, that the Australian-led international military force was partly to blame for the escape of Alfredo Reinado and 56 other prisoners from Dili's Becora jail. This is arguable, but fortunately neither Mr Ramos Horta nor Mr Downer lingered on the question, looking more at looming challenges, including those posed by Reinado's escape.

As the Herald has argued before, Australia's retention of a military command separate from the new United Nations police mission is neither helpful nor necessary. The tightest possible co-ordination is needed to close up the sort of loopholes that allowed the Becora escape.

Mr Ramos Horta also needs whatever help the outside world can give to restore calm and trust. Reinado — a former major in the East Timorese army — is a contradictory character, of mixed-up motives, but he has enough leadership ability, weapons, and familiarity with Timor's mountainous terrain to become a serious threat. His escape has already been followed by an upsurge in Dili's gang violence. The first emphasis has to be on persuading Reinado to surrender again, with the promise that his and other political cases will be speedily addressed.

For Australia the continuing fragility of security in Dili shows up our limited army manpower. The next year in our region is going to be extraordinarily demanding. In the Solomons, new violence could be sparked if its Prime Minister, Manasseh Sogavare, is successful in his apparent attempts to get political allies charged with instigating the April violence off the hook. Papua New Guinea is heading to elections next July with a run-down, understrength police force and downsizing army, both lacking transport. As much as its leaders would like to take responsibility for their problems, the region needs us standing by.

DAILY MEDIA REVIEWS

East Timor daily media review

[Compiled by the information office of the UN

September 29, 2006

New legislation on compulsory military service

A press communique issued yesterday from the Council of Minister states that if a proposed legislation from the second constitutional government is approved, military service would be compulsory for all Timorese between the ages of 18-30. (TP, STL)

Women facing political discrimination

Impoverished education and experience are some of the key factors of discrimination against women in their political participation, said Milena Pires, Director of UNIFEM in Timor-Leste. Pires stressed that time, change of mindset and establishment of institutions would help in the eradication of discrimination against women. She said UNIFEM is supporting greater women participation in the 2007 elections and the women's program in the political parties. The launch of the book on the conventions on the elimination of discrimination against women in four languages, Tetum, Indonesia Bahasa, Portuguese and English, according to Milena, is a first step for everybody to understand the importance of the convention. The book was launched in Dili on Thursday. (STL)

Australian satellite detects Alfredo

According to the Prime Minister, Australian Forces have identified, through the use of their satellite, Alfredo Reinado's location and the men who are with him as being in Same near the sub-district of Alas. He further said the Australians forces, some of whom are nearby the location, the President of the Republic and himself are happy that Alfredo has not committed any violence, adding that the forces have had direct contact with Alfredo. In relation to their arrest, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta said the troops have a dialogue and will allow him to surrender voluntarily. Ramos-Horta stressed that even though Alfredo is wrong he hopes dialogue is the solution to avoid further bloodshed. He said he did not order the arrest of Major Alfredo and he will not interfere in the justice process. (STL, DN)

Horta request bush visit East Timor

Speaking during a farewell gathering for outgoing US Ambassador, Grover Joseph Rees, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta requested Rees to extend his invitation to President Bush to visit Timor-Leste. In response, Ambassador Rees said he would transmit the message to his superior. Gary Gray is the new US Ambassador to Timor-Leste. (STL, TP, DN)

Annan decision on new SRSG

Acting SRSG Finn Riese-Nielsen said the UN Secretary-General is still searching for a new candidate to replace former SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa, following the decline of Mascarenhas Monteiro of Cape Verde. Speaking to the media following his meeting with Prime Minister Ramos-Horta, Nielsen said he discussed with the head of the government the important areas that need attention following the approval of the UN Security Council recently. The areas UNMIT will provide assistance to, said the acting SRSG, are in security, national reconciliation, justice and the election process for 2007 as well as establish good relations with the government, political parties and civil society. (TP)

Police detain 29 youths

United Nations police have detained 29 youth from the IDP camp in Kolmera together with some light weapons following allegations that they have been involved in rock throwing with an unknown group in that area. In the meantime, Timor Posts reports that the Timor-Leste Youth Organization from all the districts will hold a dialogue with youth from the west and east of the country. Francisco Amaral said that before jumping into national dialogue it is imperative that youth from both parts of the country participate in the dialogue. The event is scheduled to take place in Oecusse, Baucau, Lospalos and other districts, which have not yet been determined. Diario Nacional reported the Chefe Suco of Comoro, Eurico da Silva as saying the recent rock throwing, burning of houses, killings in Lurumata and Lafatik [Airport roundabout, Comoro] are not derived from the issue of east and west but it is a problem between martial arts groups from Lurumutu Fatu-Hada and Suco Comoro. Da Silva said he already requested

the Minister of Interior to set up a permanent police post in Comoro but it is not possible due to the small number of international police in the country. (TP, DN)

Big obstacle to regain PNTL credibility: Antero Lopes

Acting Police Commissioner, Antero Lopes said one of the obstacles for PNTL is to regain the trust of the population and the credibility of the police especially in Dili, reported Timor Post Friday. Lopes said some of the population have lost their trust in PNTL individual officers and not in the institution following the crisis, adding he believes not all the police were involved in the crisis that emerged therefore UNPOL has to be careful with the screening process for Timorese police officers. The Acting Police Commissioner said for those PNTL officers not involved in the crisis, their cases will be expedited in order for them to engage in operations together with the UN Police and be stationed throughout the country. He added that 25 PNTL officers have reactivated their duties following the screening process, another 900 have been registered and slowly they will receive training and resume their duties. On the issue of security, he said it has been calm and is certain there are still some problems but that it is a normal process, which is related to politics. In a separate article, Julio Tomas, Political and Military analyzer said the International Forces must make the effort to learn the root of the problem the country is facing as well as its culture in order for their work to be effective. (TP)

New judges to provide assistance

Two international judges, from Portugal and Brazil were sworn-in on Thursday (28/9) by the President of the Court of Appeal, Claudio Ximenes. Ivo Nelson de Camres Batista Rosa from Portugal and Telma Angelica Figueiredo from Brazil will work in Dili District Court and were recruited by UNDP. A group of one judge, two prosecutors and one defender arrived in Dili under the bilateral cooperation program between the government of Timor-Leste and Brazil to help with the judiciary system. (TP)

September 28, 2006

Return of F-FDTL must be thoroughly analyzed

MPs and President of the National Parliament have asked CPR-RDTL to thoroughly analyze the conditions of the National Armed Forces, F-FDTL, before they act in response to the current crisis. According to the MPs the mission of F-FDTL has been clearly defined in the Constitution and the demands of CPD-RDTL could lead to other major problems. CPD-RDTL has demanded that F-FDTL conduct special operations to stop the crisis. Their request has been presented to the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Commander of F-FDTL. (TP, DN)

Former Latvia PM to moderate national dialogue

A team of Clube Madrid headed by former Latvia Prime Minister, Valdis Bircavs, will facilitate a national dialogue. The team arrived in Timor-Leste on Wednesday and will remain in the country until October 4. (TP)

Petitioners' concentrate to participate in meeting

Around 300 members of the 591 petitioners' group have been concentrating in two areas namely Gleno and Aileu to participate in the next meeting with the Notable Commission. Interim spokesperson of the Commission, Pedro da Costa said as soon as the petitioners are gathered in the designated areas, the commission will start working on the calendar for the meetings. Da Costa also said F-FDTL Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak is ready to participate in the investigation. Still in relation to the petitioners' case, Franciscou Lu'Olo Guterres, President of the National Parliament, said allowances for the petitioners would not be the solution; the solution, said Guterres, would be the result of the investigation of the Notables Commission. (DN, TP)

Portuguese minister pledges continued support

The Portuguese Minister for State and Interior Administration, Antonio Costa arrived in Dili on

Wednesday for a three day official visit amidst disturbances by some youth groups in the streets of Dili. A GNR source told Lusa news agency that the recurrent incidents in various parts of Dili are related to the visit of the Portuguese Minister. Upon his arrival on Wednesday, the Minister said Portugal will continue to support Timor-Leste in the area of security. (DN)

September 27, 2006

Petitioners solution depends on commission

The meeting between Prime Minister Ramos-Horta and the petitioners group in Gleno, Ermera District on Tuesday is reported in the three major dailies today (27/09). Ramos-Horta told journalists following the meeting that he is happy with the maturity shown by the petitioners, their willingness to cooperate in resolving the problem and their refusal to get involved in politics. He said the government is waiting for the results of the Notables Commission before making any decisions, adding he will not interfere in the work of the Commission. (TP, STL, DN)

STAE must be under IEC

MP Vicente Guterres (UDC) said the opposition party has proposed that Secretaridu Tekniku Administrasaun Estatal (STAE) be under the Komisaun Eleitoral Independent to prevent bureaucracy should any problems arise. Guterres said there were many problems during the 2005 suco elections, and STAE was not independent and did not show professionalism. On the other hand, MP Cipriana Pereira (Fretilin) said the question of independence depends on STAE staff. (TP, STL)

Fretilin will not expel Lobato

Fretilin Central Committee will not expel its Vice-President until the court process is complete, said MP Francisco Branco, adding that the Prosecutor General has only just decided to process Lobato's case. He said his party has been following the case closely and will not make a decision until the case process is concluded.

(STL)

Some people using security for political interest

Minister of Interior, Alcino Barris said some international people are trying to impede activation of PNTL due to their political interests, and are using the security issues as a joke, reported DN. Barris said it is important for PNTL to resume their duties in order to help restore law and order and be placed in permanent posts as planned. He said the population has been complaining about the lack of security and the return of PNTL is important, as there are only a small number of United Nations Police (UNpol) in the country. In the meantime UNpol Acting Police Commissioner, Antero Lopes did not want to comment on the Minister of Interior's remarks. He did say, however, that UNpol is working in implementing the Council of Ministers' resolution with the aim for PNTL to resume their duties which has the support of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior. (DN)

September 26, 2006

Horta meets petitioners

Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta is scheduled to meet the petitioners' group in Railako, Ermera District today. According to the media, the purpose of the meeting is to assess the humanitarian conditions and to discuss ways to resolve the problem. The media also report that the petitioners would also like to discuss the subsidy assigned to them, which has not been paid in the past months. On the same occasion, the Prime Minister will also visit and speak to the population about their economic conditions. Salsinha Gastao, the petitioner's spokesperson, stated that the group is willing to work with the Notable Commission to try and resolve the current crisis. The statement has been confirmed by a member of the Commission, Pedro da Costa, who said there is a will from the petitioner's side to put an end to the problem in the country. (TP, DN, STL)

MPS praises Hasegawa's work

MP Mariano Sabino (PD) has praised the work of former SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa describing that there were many successes under his leadership that the people of Timor-Leste benefited from. Sabino said this must be acknowledged with gratitude stressing that the UN should not be solely blamed for the various crises. He said some institutions are still weak and the Timorese are partly to blame. The MP said that the role of the UN in Timor-Leste at present is to provide support, and different from UNTAET where it had full responsibility of the administration. Another MP, Alexandre Corte-Real (UDT) said the former SRSG worked hard to strengthen the democratic institutions, the judiciary system and security, adding that the work performed by Hasegawa also boosted the image of the UN in Timor-Leste. In a separate article, MP and President of ASDT Xavier do Amaral said the new UN mission (UNMIT) must help resolve the national crisis of the nation. (DN, STL)

September 23, 2006

Veterans willing to support return of IDPs

Veterans from 13 districts are voluntarily meeting to coordinate and assist the return of IDPs to their homes, said MP Riak Leman. According to Leman, NGOs and the government have created programs to help the crisis but in reality violence continues and it is not getting any better as people are still living in fear. He said many rumours including a 'clean up and rebuild of capital Dili' [violence] caused panic among the population when FJNP planned to stage a peaceful protest for further government changes.

In light of the fear instilled in the people, the MP contacted Major Tara and asked him to cancel the protest as the people are living in a traumatized and divided situation Leman said his main concern is that President Xanana Gusmao and Prime Minister Ramos-Horta might give up their duties and no longer concern themselves with the well-being of the people as their appeals are

ignored and Timor-Leste's struggle for independence would be in vain. The MP has presented the proposals of the veterans to Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and President Xanana Gusmao who have all welcomed the plan to help overcome the crisis. (STL)

Horta wants to meet Alfredo

Prime Minister Ramos-Horta has expressed willingness to meet Alfredo Reinado and listen to his group demands, adding his door is open to all and he's ready to talk to Alfredo. Ramos-Horta stressed that the duty of the Prime-Minister is to speak to everybody but at times it is not possible due to work overload. On the issue of justice, he would like the people to understand that the government cannot comment or interfere in the justice process. Both are separate issues.

The Prime Minister said the arrest of Major Alfredo by the Australian troops, and not Portuguese police, came as a surprise to him and that he would guarantee security during his meeting with Alfredo. Ramos-Horta plans to meet the petitioners next week in Gleno to oversee their humanitarian assistance.

On the demands by Frente Nacional Justisa no Paz (FNJP), according to Vital dos Santos, the Prime Minister has received the documents and totally agrees with the demand for the establishment of a special panel to assess those responsible for the crimes that led to the crisis. The demands for government restructuring, he said, would not be possible as he is not affiliated with any party, and was elected by Fretilin's political commission, President Gusmao, and the two bishops. (STL, TP)

Investigation results will make certain people cry: Hasegawa

Speaking at his last press conference in Dili, SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa said the result of the special Independent Commission of Inquiry which would be released soon, would not be welcomed by some people and for some it would bring tears.

But Hasegawa said the leaders must be responsible because the result of the investigation of the incidents in April and May is based on facts and

truth. He added that the result of the conflict that started in April until June was the culmination of many factors and he appealed to the leaders to be patient and wait a little longer for the results of the investigation, as it is very complex. SRSG stressed that despite the complexity of the whole situation there is an opportunity for Timor-Leste not to fall again into the trap of conflict. He is also of the opinion that the Timorese leaders must listen to the population and hold regular dialogue with them, noting that the open governance forum led by the former Prime Minister was a success.

In Saturday's edition, STL reported SRSG Hasegawa encouraged the national media to continue working closely with the new UN mission, UNMIT, in supporting the dissemination of information to all the districts. According to his point of view, communities in Timor-Leste require information on the developments and problems the country is facing, adding that during his time in Timor-Leste he noticed the lack of information disseminated in the districts. SRSG Hasegawa said although he was leaving the country, he would continue to follow Timor-Leste media through the Internet and he stressed that the role of media is crucial for democracy in a new country.

During the press conference SRSG told the media the UN Secretary General is carefully selecting the new SRSG because his representative must be someone with capacity and of top calibre, adding that Kofi Annan had not yet nominated a new SRSG.

Before departing Timor-Leste he officially visited the population in the districts of Baucau, Lospalos, Viqueque, Suai, Maliana and Ainaro and they all expressed the need to get information such as the newspapers as the information they receive from third parties is not reliable.

In a separate article in TP, MP Francisco Branco (Fretilin) said the decision of the UN Secretary General to replace Hasegawa was good because during the crisis Hasegawa did not maximize his contribution to resolve the recent conflict. He hopes the new SRSG will do his work better in order for the people of Timor-Lest to benefit from it and help resolve the crisis the Timorese are facing. (STL, TP, DN)

ASDT Congress

Associacao Social Democrata Timorese (ASDT) concluded its three-day congress on Sunday resulting in Francisco Xavier do Amaral and Gil da Costa Alves being re-elected as President and Secretary-General of the party. According to a communique to the media, four candidates participated in the election with a low number of votes. According to Gil Alves the priority of the party now is to concentrate and focus on the program as already agreed upon by the party for the 2007 elections. (STL, TP, DN)

Lobato's case processed in court

President of the Court of Appeal Claudio Ximenes said the Court of Appeal had received the process of Rogerio Lobato alleging the distribution of guns to civilians groups. Ximenes said the court has been waiting for the case adding such a case would determine the judicial system currently in process. He said the judges would be independent and impartial to carry out the process and would make a decision without any influence or based on the person's profession, group or institutional affiliations, but rather the court's decision would be based on law and facts. Aderito de Jesus, Human Rights advocate said the process of Rogerio Lobato's case by the court is providing hope for the public, but it must be a just and quick process.

In a separate article in Timor Post Saturday, the President of the Court of Appeal, Claudio Ximenes said more international judges and public prosecutors are required to respond to the increase in cases during the crisis. Ximenes said the internationals likely to come from CPLP countries, Portugal and Brazil, would work together with their Timorese counterparts. A total of 8 judges, 8 public prosecutor and 8 defenders would be recruited by UNDP to continue to assist in the judicial system. (STL, TP)

Court rules in favour of Alkatiri

A Washington District Court has ruled in favour of former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri for allegations of embezzlement. Oceanic Exploration Company accused the former Prime Minister of receiving US\$2.5 million of bribery from Conoco

Phillips for the exploration of Timor Sea. The decision was made by the Washington Court on Friday afternoon, Fretilin deputy-secretary general, Manuel Fernandes told the media Sunday, adding that Alkatiri won the case due to unsubstantiated evidence. (STL, TP, DN)

September 22, 2006

Youth group commemorates peace day

The International Day of Peace has been commemorated in Timor-Leste with messages from Members of Parliament appealing for peace, especially now that the country is going through a crisis. Youth for Unity, Transparency and Justice (UJTJ) commemorated the day distributing white flowers as a sign of peace, to passers-by in various areas in Dili. According to the coordinator, Joao 'Choque' da Silva, over one hundred people wearing white t-shirts with the message "Peace World" participated in the event by walking, cycling and driving very slowly to Lecidere, the venue where the event started. The theme for the event was "Love yourself, Love others and Love your country". On this day, the International Day of Peace, Da Silva appealed to all the youth to stop the violence and make peace adding if people choose to be quiet and refuse to speak up and make peace it would be impossible for the Timorese to find peace. He says as per the group's banner "We Must Make Up And Make Peace?", that means people must stop the violence, stop provoking each other, and stop throwing stones at each other and peace would slowly return. (STL, TP)

President establishes traditional structure

President Xanana Gusmao has nominated the Vice-President of the National Parliament, Francisco Amaral, Dili Administrator, Ruben Braz and President of National Unity Forum, Marito Reis to be part of the traditional structure. The aim of the mandate of the traditional structure is to coordinate with the "keepers of the sacred customs" to discuss the sacred custom in order to minimize the political crisis Timor-Leste is

facing. The three nominees would be responsible for different zones of the territory with Marito Reis in charge of the Eastern part, Francisco Amaral for the Central part and Ruben Braz for the western part of the country. The establishment of the structure has been consulted with the Bishop of Baucau Diocese, Don Basilio do Nascimento who said all Timorese must make every effort to stabilize the country rather than having other people doing it. (STL)

Ramos-Horta not allowed to form cabinet

Despite demands from various civil society groups that Prime Minister Ramos-Horta cannot make changes to his government cabinet because Fretilin does not allow it, MP Joao Goncalves (PSD) is reported as saying that Fretilin is stopping the changes because they want the cabinet of the former Prime Minister to remain the same to show they were not to blame for the crisis. But in reality, added the MP, those that continue to work lack maximum capacity to carry their work. On the other hand, he also said, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta must govern according to Fretilin, because he was selected for the job by this party. In a separate article, Jose Luis de Oliveira, the Director of Fundasaun Hak, said the demands by FNJP for government reshuffle is rational as the structure of the first constitutional government and then the second, shows that many ministries are un-functional due to impoverished capacity. But he said it is the responsibility of the National Parliament to look into it and act rather than be MPs with focus on only one political interest. De Oliveira said the MPs must reflect that groups like FNJP emerged as a result the Parliament are not doing its work correctly. He said he disagrees with the demands of FNJP to dissolve the Parliament as it would not help the current situation. FNJP has demanded the reshuffle of the government, judicial system, limited function for the Parliament and recuperation for PNTL and F-FDTL institutions. (TP)

September 21, 2006

Ruak welcomes Tara

Major Agosto de Araujo, also known as Tara, met with Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak on Wednesday after five months of incommunicado due to differences of ideas between the two. Tara said he is happy Ruak extended his hand and is open to discussions about the future of F-FDTL and the return of the petitioners. He suggested F-FDTL Brigadier General Ruak accept the return of the petitioners as a means to resolve the crisis within the institution. Major Tara said the meeting with the head of the Defence Force is a first step to try and resolve the problems of the petitioners as well as the problem of fighting in Dili. He said there are also plans for Brigadier General Taur to meet with the spokespersons of the petitioners, Gastao Salsinha and Major Alfredo Reinado. In the meantime, Ruak said the return of the group would give a bad image to the Armed Forces and might create a precedent for other soldiers to stage a military coup against the command. (STL)

Ramos-Horta supports Kofi Annan's decision

Prime Minister Ramos-Horta said although he has not officially received information on the new SRSG for Timor-Leste, if it is former President of Cape Verde Mascarinas Monteiro, it would be good because of his past experience in dealing with troubling democratic, economic and security issues of a small, poor nation. The Minister said Cape Verde is the poorest nation in Africa but its economy is progressing and if he is the new SRSG it would help not only the UN but the people of Timor-Leste. But, he said, the government welcomes whoever Kofi Annan nominates. (STL, TP)

Actual judges should be replaced

MP Lucia Lobato (PSD), is of the opinion that to better the judicial system in Timor-Leste, the international judges, including the President of the Court of Appeal, Claudio Ximenes, must be replaced. Lobato said Claudio Ximenes' decision has left many people discontent and there has been injustices because he interprets the laws according to his wishes and he has not been impartial. She points out that the tribunal should not be fully under the responsibility of expatriates because justice must be decided by the Timorese themselves. The MP said people have been critical of the court procedures and this reflects

the court's failings. (STL)

Salsinha questions work of commission

Gastao Salsinha said that although he had met with members of the Notables Commission he has little confidence in the work of the commission, as the team was not complete when they traveled to Gleno, Ermera on Tuesday (19/9) to meet the petitioners. Salsinha said the head of the commission and the spokesperson did not take part in the meeting leaving him to question their work as did the lapse in time the commission took to meet with the petitioners since it was established. He has also appealed to all the petitioners to gather together in the areas designated. According to Salsinha, during the meeting they discussed discrimination within F-FDTL and not the incident of April 28 as it is under the international independent commission. He also said the petitioners are concerned with the crisis situation as the people are paying the consequences. He said the group would like to see an end to it.

Government reshuffle must start with PM: Ramos-Horta

In response to some demands that there be changes to the government cabinet, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta said the reshuffling of the Government he is heading must start with him. In relation to the position of premiership, Ramos-Horta said he is happy to hand it over to anyone who wishes to exchange with him and who might be able to resolve the crisis the country is currently facing. He said his door is open to anyone that wishes to help put an end to the crisis the government is facing. (TP)

September 20, 2006

Alkatiri and Lobato cases must taken to court:
Egidio

Egidio de Jesus, leader of Grupo Fretilin Mudanca (GFM) said the case involving the 13 weapons found in the residence of Mari Alkatiri must be taken forward to the court He said the Prosecutor

General must not cover up the problem and keep it from the realm of justice. De Jesus said if the weapons were claimed to belong to Alkatiri's personal close protection guards, it should have been handed over to the Australian troops stationed at his residence at the time. He said the former Prime Minister should be processed in court and be detained in Becora prison just like Alfredo.

In a separate article, Vital dos Santos, the Secretary General for FNJP, said the cases of Mari Alkatiri and Rogerio Lobato have remained stagnant due to the political influence instilled upon those responsible for the court, by the former Prime Minister, which is dominated by CPLP countries including the President of the Court of Appeal, Claudio Ximenes. Dos Santos said the conspiracy was clear following some decision made by Claudio Ximenes. (STL)

Dialogue must be led by Xanana and Dom Basilio

A member of Grupo Fretilin Mudanca (GFM) Vicente 'Maubocy' Ximenes said his group is prepared to dialogue with Alkatiri and Lu'Olo's group provided the moderator would be someone independent like President Xanana or the Bishop of Baucau Diocese, Dom Basilio do Nascimento. Ximenes said political differences have led to a division within Fretilin and therefore only an independent moderator can help to resolve the problem.

Diario Nacional reported that the Government has presented the program 'Simu Malu', to President Gusmao. According to Deputy Prime Minister, Rui de Arazjo the program is to encourage people to return to their homes and strengthen unity among the communities. (TP, DN)

Who is responsible for the April 28-29 Incident:
Salsinha

Lieutenant Colonel Salsinha Gastao, has asked the Notable Commission to extend the time allotment to investigate about 42 members of F-FDTL expelled in 2003. According to Salsinha, some of the 42 members were expelled as a result of continued absence but other left as a result of discrimination within the institution. He said he would like the commission to also investigate former veterans, specially Ernesto Fernandes

'Dudu' and Samba Sembilan saying, discrimination did not only affect the petitioners because it started a long ago in Aileu. He also asked the Commission who is responsible for the incidents of April 28-29, Fatuahi and the PNTL officers killed in Caicoli.

In a separate article in STL, Salsinha Gastao said the crisis occurred because the leaders were not concerned the problem that emerged. Gastao said if the petitioners are at the root of the problem then they should sit together and resolve the problem. He said the petitioners are now divided into two groups, one stationed in Aileu District and the other in Gleno in the Ermera District. Gastao said the group wants a transparent investigation and justice process to resolve the problem.

In the meantime, MP Leandro Isac (Independent) said in order to overcome the crisis, F-FDTL Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak must show goodwill to resolve the internal problem by inviting the former generals who fled the Defence Forces Headquarters to discuss the cause for their desertion and the division among them. (STL)

Civil society rejects Kofi Anna's decision

The decision of the UN Secretary General to appoint the former President of Cape Verde to head the new mission, UNMIT is not welcomed by some groups of Timor-Leste civil society, reported STL Wednesday. FNJP, LABEH, ETPA and Liga Estudanes Timor-Leste disagree with the decision of Kofi Annan. The groups met on Monday and decided they would write to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan presenting the argument that they would like the present SRSG, Hasegawa, to continue in Timor-Leste due to his full understanding of the situation and stressing that the timing is not appropriate to bring in a new person. Another argument, says Vital dos Santos of FNJP, is that the decision is not a good one, as many of the government advisors come from CPLP countries and this has added to the crisis in Timor-Leste. He added some of the advisors might have political interests rather than being advisors. (STL, DN)

UNDP Provides Assistance To Judicial System

Minister of Justice, Domingos Sarmento has met

with UNDP to ask donors countries to provide assistance for strengthening the judicial system in Timor-Leste. The Minister said according to coordination plans, UNDP will recruit more international judges and public prosecutors to attend to the communities in the Districts of Baucau, Oecussi and Suai noting that the current international judges, prosecutors and public defenders are doing good work. (DN)

Swearing-in of new ambassador

Timor-Leste Ambassador to Japan was sworn in on Tuesday by President Gusmao in a ceremony attended by the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Adalgisa Magno, former Minister of Transport and Communications, Ovidio de Jesus Amaral and Minister of Public Works, Odete Vitor. Speaking to the media following the swearing-in, Domingos Sarmiento Alves said one of his tasks is to invite investors to Timor-Leste but it would all depend on the security situation of the country. He said the leaders and the community must work to provide peace and security. (TP,DN)

Government Allocates Allowance For Villages

According to government plans, the heads of villages will receive financial assistance ranging from US\$50-US\$80 depending on the number of sub-villages. The government will also rehabilitate the basic needs like head offices to enable meetings to take place once a month and will provide motorbikes as a means of transport. (TP)

September 19, 2006

Protest re-scheduled and FNJP meets government

The planned organized protest by FNJP for September 20 has been postponed and will take place at another time if the demands of the group are not met, said the Secretary General of FNJP Vital dos Santos. According to Vital dos Santos, the group's priority will be to speak to the government and the National Parliament and present the four main demands, which he refused to reveal, saying it is related to the concerns of the

current situation. Dos Santos said if there is a solution following the meetings, the protest will be cancelled, adding, some members of the government, concerned with the current situation, called the meeting with his group.

In the meantime the coordinator of Unidade Joventude, Transparencia e Justisa (UJTJ), Joco "Choque" da Silva said his group totally rejects the planned protest by FNJP with its aim of dissolving the National Parliament. According to Da Silva, the protest would not be conducive with the actual situation or help to resolve the problems that have emerged. He agrees that the protest would be more appropriate to push for improvements in the judiciary system but not to dissolve the Parliament or change the government, adding time is of the essence to resolve the problem and it cannot be accomplished overnight. The Coordinator of UJTJ said protests should not be used with the intention to disintegrate the nation. He appealed to all the youth not to become victims of political interests.

In relation to talks of protest for September 20, Minister of Interior, Alcino Barris said his ministry had not received a request, noting that without an authorization a protest will not take place. (STL, TP, DN)

Dissolution of parliament would not resolve problems: Lu'Olo

President of the National Parliament, Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres said the dissolution of Parliament will not resolve any of the current problems; on the contrary, it would aggravate the crisis. Lu'Olo said the protest in the month of June following burnings, looting and killing of some people was to pressure Mari Alkatiri to step down in order to stop the crisis but it still continues. He said the best solution would be for everybody to reflect, sit together and find a solution to safeguard the nation rather than dissolve the Parliament. The President of the Parliament said as per the Constitution of RDTL anyone is entitled to protest provided they obey the rule of law. (STL)

Election preparations

Political parties are gearing up for the 2007

elections. According to the media, Partido Democrática Cristco (PDC) is holding preparations at the grass root level in the districts. Antonio Ximenes, President of PDC said part of his party program is to provide political education to its members.

President of ASDT, Xavier do Amaral said his party is holding a national congress in its headquarters in Lecidere, Dili on September 23. Pending the security situation, each district is scheduled to send 34 delegates, totaling about 400, the numbers of members expected for the congress. But Xavier Amaral said some districts might send only 10 members due to financial and logistical problems. (STL, DN) National dialogue

Around 150 participants from 13 Districts left Dili on Monday to participate in the National Dialogue in Oecussi. Aurelio Ribeiro, the National Dialogue Organizing Committee said the participants are from various organizations from the districts as well as organizations that used to be part of the resistance like Ojetil, religious organizations, student movements and about 10 friends from Indonesia. Ribeiro said one of the objectives of the dialogue is to cultivate trust between the students and the youth from the 13 Districts, to clear the issue of Loro Monu, LoroSae and to provide a solution to help resolve the crisis of the nation ultimately strengthening peace and national unity in the country. STL reported that Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta would participate in the dialogue, which will conclude on September 25. (STL)

Population Should Not Listen To False Information: Hasegawa

During his official visit to Ainaro on Monday (18/9) SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa appealed to the population of that district not to listen to false information as it would be harder to overcome the crisis. He appealed to the population to continue working to put an end to the crisis that emerged a few months ago. SRSG Hasegawa stressed that the population must work together to strengthen peace and unity. In return, the population of Ainaro asked Hasegawa to help find ways to resolve the political crisis. They expressed concerned with the PNTL institution and want it to be reorganized and stronger in future. On the same occasion, UN

Acting Police Commissioner, Antero Lopes also showed photos of Becora Prison escapees and asked them to contact police if any of the escaped inmates are sighted in the area or if anyone has any information on the whereabouts of the escapees, including Major Afredo. (STL)

China Donates 500 Tonne of Rice (DN)

Popular Republic of China donated around 500 tonnes of rice to the government of Timor-Leste to help the vulnerable people and victims of natural disasters. The donation was officially presented to the Minister of Labor and Community Reinsertion Arsenio Bano on Monday(18/9). According to China's Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Su Jian, his government has been providing food assistance once a year to Timor-Leste to help the Timorese people. (TP, DN, STL)

September 18, 2006

Political parties should make joint statement before elections

Timor Post (16/09) reports that Human Rights Lawyer, Aderito de Jesus Soares, said that all Timorese political parties should make a joint statement (promise) before competing in the up-coming general elections in 2007. He argued that this would avoid creating conflict among them or conflict that has links with the political crisis that is currently taking place in Timor-Leste. He added that the political parties would show the population their willingness and seriousness to be a part of the up-coming process (general election). (STL)

Demonstration cause Horta bows down to Alkatiri's politics

Vital dos Santos, the Secretary-General of National Front for Justice and Peace (FNJP) said that the demonstration planned on 20th September is to create justice, peace and strengthen stability and not to incite instability. He also argued that FNJP organizes the planned demonstration because Prime Minister, Josi R.

Horta compromises too much with the politics of Maputu or the Mozambican group, which then leads him to play along with the politics of the former Prime Minister, Alkatiri. It was also reported that PM Horta's compromise on the politics of his predecessor is considered to be the main cause of the current endless crisis. (TP)

CTF mandate extended but still cannot meet Wiranto

Jasinto Alves, a commissioner for Commission of Truth and Friendship (CTF), stated that the mandate of CTF had been extended for another year to review the final reports of the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation or CAVR, Serious Crimes Unit, KKP HAM, and Ad Hock Tribunal on the involvement of Indonesian Army in 1999 (Human Rights Violations). He added that CTF could not meet the former Indonesian General, Wiranto, because CTF needs time to prepare for the meeting. Timor Post also quoted Alves, who stated that it is a daunting task to review the reports of those four institutions. The report also mentioned that CTF have only managed to meet and interview the former Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas, Director of Peace and Stability Commission, and the public prosecutor, who submitted their allegations to the Ad Hoc Tribunal. (TP)

September 15, 2006

Leaders have lost the will to resolve crisis:
Martinho Gusmao

President of the Peace and Justice Commission, Fr. Martinho Gusmao said political leaders and the government have lost the goodwill to resolve the political crisis that emerged, citing the latest accusation by former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri against Ramos-Horta of staging a coup d'etat against Fretilin. Fr. Gusmao said as the situation gets better, misunderstandings between the leaders surface contribute to the insecurity among the population to carry out their daily activities. On the other hand, Fr. Martinho Gusmao said he's aware that some people are contributing to the destabilization in order to continue receiving humanitarian assistance which is

counterproductive.

On the issue of justice and security, Fr. Gusmao said justice is an insistence of the society and security must be immediately put in place as per the sentiment of the people. He said that the former Prime Minister and the President of the Parliament must recognize that the crisis that emerged is their responsibility and to resolve the problems many others must acknowledge their mistake. The Priest and President of Peace and Justice Commission is of the opinion a special panel must be established to resolve the problem including the distribution of guns which he considers to be an extraordinary crime. Speaking to the media following a roundtable discussion on the draft of the electoral bill, Gusmao also said there is dual justice system. For 'small people' or ordinary people it is a faster process but for the 'big people' there tends to be extended (dada lia) discussion.

In a communique, Frente Nasional no Justisa ba Paz (FNJP) considers the current leaders incapable of resolving the problems. According to the document, to respond to the concerns of the people, FNJP have met with various components of the country including political parties and NGOs on 12 September in Gleno/Ermera and all reached an agreement that the leaders no longer have the capacity to resolve the crisis. Therefore the 'people' are thinking of removing the powers handed to the National Parliament and the government to find a solution according to their will. FJNP also stated the purpose for their establishment is to respond to the current crisis and not to govern the nation.

In a separate article in Suara Timor Lorosae (STL), FJNP Secretary-General, Vital dos Santos said his group is not concerned with the threats that if Prime Minister Ramos-Horta does not resign there will be an anti-government protest. He said a protest is being planned because according to the population, the crisis emerged from the National Parliament and Fretilin government. Therefore, Timor-Leste does not need a government with a big structure like the present one. Dos Santos further said in June 2006, FJNP organized a protest to dissolve the Fretilin government as a result of their lack of capacity to resolve the

problems of the nation. But at the end there were compromises and President Xanana inducted Ramos-Horta as Prime Minister to continue the government of Fretilin which had lost the trust of the people, said the coordinator of FJNP. He further said if the leaders only want to listen to the suffering of the people through protest then, FJNP would organize a protest. (TP, STL)

Population should not generalize police work

MP Clementino Amaral appealed to the Timorese not to generalize the work of the International Forces as not good. Amaral said for those who asked for the withdrawal of the forces to carefully measure it, as there could be consequences without their presence. He said the work has been positive in minimizing the problem. He further said if one or two members of the International Forces acted inappropriately all the forces should not be blamed. In a separate article, Timor Post reported families of the youths shot by GNR police with rubber bullets in Mercado Lama (old market place) are critical of the police conduct. The head of the village of Caicoli, Domingos dos Santos went to the President's Office to inform him about the incident and to ask him to resolve the problem, adding that the police have not acted in a professional and impartial manner. (TP)

STAE should be independent

To have a credible and clarified voters, STAE must be independent to avoid favoritism, Dr. Faustino Gomez told Timor Post Thursday following a discussion on electoral laws with all political parties in Dili. Gomez said it would be better to have more organizations involved in political and voters education under the criteria of STAE. He said the project of law from Fretilin and the opposition must be analyzed in depth in the interest of the nation.

MP Lucia Lobato (PSD) in her intervention during the roundtable discussion on the electoral law said some of the issues that also need to be debated are the 5 percent members for a party to have a representative in the Parliament as presented by Fretilin, the quota for women and the status of STAE. According to Lobato, the opposition would like the Independent Electoral Commission and the National Electoral Commission.

(TP)

September 14, 2006

One youth death and three injured following attack

One youth died following attacks by an unknown group in the area of Kintal Bo'ot on Wednesday evening around 19:00hrs. The victim identified as Abento was hit on the forehead by the dart-Like weapon known as rama ambon. According to Timor Post, three youths were injured following shootings by the UN police. The population in the areas of Kaikoli, Mascarenhas, Balide, Matadouro and Mercado Lama claim to be in shock and are traumatized by the actions of the UN police for arbitrary shooting at the population. One of the injured, Mateus Droga who was treated at the Canossian Sisters Residence in Balide said before the problem started he and some youths were sitting in a kiosk, opposite the President's Palace, and upon hearing information of the conflict they went to the vicinity of the incident and saw Ambeno on the floor. As they tried to help him, Mateus said the international police arrived and rather than chase after the attackers they started shooting at him and his friends. He further said they fled from the scene and started yelling that the international police were supposed to provide security for the people and not to harm them. Mateus Droga said the police composed of GNR chased him and his friends all the way into the President's Palace, where one of them had already been injured in the head from a bullet wound, and then as they approached the vicinity, Mateus claims that the police shot him in the neck. The three injured received medical treatment at the Canossian Sisters Residence in Balide. According to Timor Post, the UN police commander has not confirmed the actions of the police and it is reported police used rubber bullets. (TP)

700 PNTL registered

About 700 PNTL have registered with the Commission of Evaluation in a first phase of screening process for PNTL officers, Minister of Interior,

Alcino Barris said on Wednesday. Barris further said PNTL Commander General Paulo Martins, Operational Commander Ismael Babo and Deputy Administration Commander Lino Saldanha will also take part in the screening test. The Minister of Interior further said some members of PNTL have not yet handed in their weapons and pistols because they are scared. He said the police have the original list and know who still have guns. In the meantime, Paulo Martins has reportedly said the International Forces have not considered him as Commander of PNTL and searched his house in Bairro Piti without notifying him. (TP, DN)

Commission of Inquiry collects 3000 documents

The UN Independent, Special Commission of Inquiry headed by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro held a press conference on Wednesday to update the public on the progress of their work. According to Pinheiro, the Commissioners have visited the country for the second time and in the last 10 days have worked intensively with members of the commission's team and the information gathered from interviews and follow-up interviews. The Commissioners are scheduled to leave the country at the end of the week and resume their work towards the end of September in order to finalize the report which would be handed in to the UN Secretary General, and the Timor-Leste National Parliament. (DN, TP, STL)

Ramos-Horta blames media partly for crisis

Prime Minister Ramos-Horta reportedly said if he steps down as the head of the government the journalists would receive the burden and the consequences for their acts, reported STL Thursday. Ramos-Horta also blames the journalists partly for contributing to the crisis, noting some of the reports have not been accurate and appealed to them to verify their reports as it can have an impact on the destabilization of the country. He further said 'it is not only the politicians misinforming but also some journalists sometimes provides wrong information. The Minister added, some of the journalist reports instigate the leaders and destabilize the situation.

September 13, 2006

I do not intend to be involved in Timor politics:
Horta

Prime Minister Ramos-Horta stated his intention of not participating in the country's politics as of next year due to the insistence by some people that he is seeking power. Therefore, Ramos-Horta stressed, the population must start thinking of who they want to elect to be the next Prime Minister and President. He said his purpose of being in Timor-Leste is to assist the people and not to seek power. The Prime Minister stressed he did not do any political maneuvering during the crisis adding that he alone acted as a bridge between Mari Alkatiri, President Gusmao and Fretilin's President to find a solution to the crisis. Ramos-Horta said if he wants power he would try his luck in 2007 but because he doesn't want that. He said he opted to stay in Timor-Leste because of the crisis and as result he lost a bigger seat in the United Nations as the Secretary-General. He said he wanted to stay in Timor-Lest and not run away to New York. The Minister said that during the crisis no one pointed a finger at him for being involved in distributing guns or stones or wanted to bring down Alkatiri as he was part of the government and gave 100 percent over the last four years to the nation out of loyalty He said only a mad person would want to become Prime Minister during a crisis and for a short term.

In a separate article, in Suara Timor Lorosae, Ramos-Horta said his main concern is that Major Alfredo will opt for violence although he believes he will voluntarily surrender as he is intelligent and knows what is best for this nation. (STL)

Timor Post reported Prime Minister Ramos-Horta who is also in charge of the Defence Force as saying during an interview with RTTL that F-FDTL has not been engaged in joint operations with the international forces. He said some members of F-FDTL have been working with the International Forces in the districts to inform the population about the current situation. (TP)

Horta should not interfere in Fretilin's affairs:
Lu'Olo

President of the National Parliament Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres said Fretilin was the one supporting Ramos-Horta to become the Prime Minister for the II Constitutional Government and would continue to provide support until his mandate concludes. But, according to Guterres, Fretilin asked Ramos-Horta, as an independent person not to interfere in the affairs of Fretilin and other parties. (STL, DN, TP)

In a separate article, Francisco Guterres said as an immediate measure, Parliament would formally present the complaints of the IDPs about the Australian forces to the UN executive in Timor-Leste. A group of IDP presented their complaints to the Parliament on Tuesday.

According to Diario Nacional, MPs Feliciano de Fatima (ASDT) and Maria Paixao (PSD) said that Parliament must request Australian Commander Mick Slater to provide clarification on the complaints presented by IDPs in Comoro. (DN)

FNJP gives ultimatum to government

Frente Nacional Justisa no Paz has given an ultimatum to the government to urgently resolve the crisis or face actions to dissolve the Parliament, Vital dos Santos, the groups' coordinator told the media on Tuesday following a meeting with all interested parties that they want peace for the country. The government has been given one week (12/9-19/9) to resolve the problems. He did not reveal what type of actions the group is planning.

In the meantime, MP Madalena da Silva (Fretilin) demands the President of the Republic present the report on the implementation of emergency measures especially in the areas of defence and security to Parliament. According to Madalena, until now the Parliament has not received a report and does not know where the defence development stands since President Xanana declared a state of emergency. She would like the Parliament to present her request to President Xanana. (TP, STL)

Fretilin reformer prepared to dialogue

A member of Fretilin's Reformer Group, Vicente Maubocy said his group is prepared to dialogue with Mari Alkatiri and Lu'Olo's group in order to resolve Fretilin's internal problems. Maubocy said the main theme of the dialogue would center on Mari Alkatiri's image as he is the reason for the downfall of the Fretilin government. (DN)

STAE violates constitution Cecilio Caminha Freitas, Chairperson of East Timor People Action (ETPA) said the census process launched by the Technical Services of the Electoral Administration (STAE) is against the constitution of RDTL. Freitas said according to the Constitution of RDTL, census can only be processed when an Independent Electoral Commission has been established in order to oversee the work of STAE. He said STAE must wait for the legislation on the electoral law and the Independent Electoral Commission, noting there would be some changes to STAE as per the new legislation. He recommends it would be better for STAE to wait until the legislation is approved by the Parliament and the President. (STL)

Band tours for peace

In order to promote peace and commemorate the International Day of Peace, the bank 5 do Orient is touring the enclave of Oecussi, Ego Lemos, the bank coordinator said in a communique. The band hopes to further encourage the communities in Oecussi to maintain and strengthening peace. The theme of the tour will be "Peace and Nature/Environment" and involves activities such as screening of films, music concert and festival gathering with the communities which kicks off in the sub-districts of Nitibe on Sunday 17 September, then Oesilo, Pasabe and conclude on Pante Makassar the International Peace Day, 21 September. The government of Ireland, Oxfam Australia, IOM-Timor-Leste, Caritas Australia, Concern Timor-Leste, civil society and the people of Oecussi have sponsored the tour. (TP)

September 12, 2006

Alfredo is not the only one demanding justice:

Bishop Basilio

The Bishop of Baucau, Don Basilio do Nascimento said Major Alfredo is not the only one demanding justice, everybody is demanding it. The Bishop stated he doesn't know whether the slowness of the justice process is due to the conditions or the lack of capacity and hopes there are no other interests preventing the process from taking place. Don Basilio is of the opinion there must be an explanation for the escape of the prisoners from Becora jail. He said the biggest threat is the loss of faith in the State institutions. He appealed to the community to fully understand the justice process because it is a fundamental that everybody demands justice and it is also important that that accused are provided a fair court hearing and should not be punished merely by public demands. The Bishop of Baucau said all citizens must obey the law regardless of whether they are ministers or from the majority party and each group should not make their own laws. In the meantime, MP Leandro Isac said the population would create a popular revolution if the International Forces and F-FDTL will join forces to recapture him.

STL reported Cecilio Caminha Freitas, Chairperson of East Timor Person's Action (ETPA) NGO as saying that the joint patrol by Australian Military and F-FDTL is a mockery and like asking the people to kill each other. Freitas said the time is not appropriate yet to involve the Timorese on these activities, stressing F-FDTL and PNTL were in conflict four months ago and their involvement in patrolling should be delayed until the investigation process and evaluation is complete. He stressed that the fact that the President and the former Prime Minister requested international forces means that the two national forces can no longer provide security and stability. The ETPA chairperson said the involvement of members of these two national institutions might have a negative impact on the community due to the recent conflict between the two institutions and it is not yet know who was involved in different cases. According to STL, in an interview with RTTL, Prime Minister Alkatiri rejected that there is a joint patrol between F-FDTL and the international forces explaining that the F-FDTL members are cooperating with the international forces under their

guidance. (TP, STL)

Justice progressing well, Claudio must be replaced: De Jesus

According to Aderito de Jesus, a human rights advocate, the justice in Timor-Leste is progressing well and in a fair manner but he wants to ask SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa to replace the President of the Court of Appeal for many mistakes that he has made, including the decision in favor of Fretilin's second congress. De Jesus said Claudio Ximenes does not have the capacity to sit on the Court of Appeals as he is working in the capacity of a Timorese but earning an expatriate's salary due to his contract as a foreigner while in charge of a sovereign body of Timor-Leste. He said SRSG Hasegawa must have the courage to expel Ximenes and replace him with an international judge that has the capacity and experience to carry out a judgment in an impartial manner in the country. The human rights lawyer says Claudio Ximenes must be replaced by a capable and experienced judge for Timor-Leste to get out of this crisis. He said the UN should not contract Timorese with Portuguese passports who do not have the capacity for this job because it only increases the problem in the country. Aderito wants the UN to be responsible for the weakness of the justice system and not to wash their hands of it. On the judges from CPLP countries, Aderito de Jesus said their contribution had worsened the situation in Timor-Leste. But the President of the National Parliament, Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres said the justice system is functional in Timor-Leste therefore it should not be touched. He said it has been impartial and has achieved a lot for the Timorese including providing training, said Lu'Olo. On the question of Ximenes having a Portuguese passport, Lu'Olo said the constitution of Timor-Leste allows dual citizenship therefore he is not denied Timor-Leste citizen even though he holds a Portuguese passport.

In a separate article, Aderito de Jesus said Mari Alkatiri's accusation stating that Ramos-Horta manipulated him to step down as Prime Minister is a political waste of time and there is no strong evidence to substantiate the accusation.

MP Jose Nominado Buras (PD) said the leaders should not use political compromises to cover each

other in relation to justice. MP Xavier do Amaral (ASDT) said the accusation by Mari Alkatiri against Ramos-Horta is a statement to shift the attention of the people from the allegations against Alkatiri alleging that he distributed guns to civilians and puts the blame on the current Prime Minister for the crisis that emerged.(TP, STL)

September 9, 2006

Mari accuses Horta of coup d'etat

Former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri has accused Ramos-Horta of staging a coup d'etat against Fretilin. In response to Horta's statement that Fretilin needs leadership changes, Alkatiri said the current Prime Minister made every possible move to force him out of government and then pretended to present the names of candidates for the premiership knowing he was the one who would become Prime Minister. Speaking during a gathering with Fretilin's Central Committee from the 13 districts on Saturday, Alkatiri clarified to members of his party that the reason he stepped down as Prime Minister was due to the manipulation by the current Prime Minister. Alkatiri further said Horta knew that Jose Luis Guterres did not have a chance to become Fretilin's secretary general but used a way of dividing Fretilin by siding with the 'Fretilin Group for Changes'. The Secretary General of Fretilin said all members of CCF have agreed to hold a dialogue with 'Fretilin Group for Changes' or suspend the group for no longer obeying the party's rules. (TP, STL)

Commissioners should not be scared to meet us: Salsinha Salsinha Gastao, the petitioner's spokesperson asked members of the Notable Commission not to be scared of the petitioners stationed in Aileu and Ermera. Gastao said the petitioners would not harm anyone visiting them to carry out the investigation. He said since the establishment of the commission, no one has met with them and stressed that the petitioners are prepared to cooperate with the commissioners in order to settle the problem in a fair manner. Due to past experience with Alfredo, Salsinha said the

group is concerned about traveling to Dili to participate in the investigation process and is happy that Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak has authorized investigation within the F-FDTL institution. In the meantime, the Commission's spokesperson, Pedro da Costa has requested F-FDTL and the International Forces not to impede those petitioners wishing to travel to Dili to participate in the process. (TP)

AFP and GNR beats child and PNTL member

Timor Post today reports that AFP and GNR forces have beaten a youth and one PNTL member in the area of Bidau Masau. According to Tomas Silva Pereira, the PNTL officer, the incident occurred on Saturday, around 22:00hrs when he woke up to knocks on his door and was then punched in the face with a torch by an Australian police officer when he opened the door. Angered by the behaviour of the Malaysian and Australian police, Pereira showed them his PNTL card. Upon seeing the card, the police stopped beating him and apologized but Pereira said the apologies were not welcome and warned that he would present his complaints to PNTL National Commanders, the Human Rights Commission, Commission for Social Affairs and Administrator of Dili Sub-District. He said when he presented his complaint to the human rights commission, they suggested that he process the case in court but he says he prefers to speak to the police commissioner and the international forces first regarding the incident. The PNTL officer said the police beat him based on information which is unfounded — that he was involved in the conflict between Bidau Masau community and the IDPs. Another case involves 16-year old, Januario Pereira Soares whom GNR accused of being involved in the conflict between the IDPs and the community of Bidau Masau. According to Timor Post, Januario was not aware of the conflict when GNR went to his house and beat him.

Special mass for Major Alfredo

The National Front for Justice and Peace is organizing a special mass for Major Alfredo Reinado in Gleno on Tuesday aiming to pray for his protection and courage to continue the fight against injustice in the country. An advisory notice sent to the media on Friday said the mass would be held on Tuesday at 2:00pm. Meanwhile, MP

Manuel Tilman (KOTA) said according to juridical consciousness he disagrees with the population that wants to conceal Alfredo and his members because justice has not been processed. On the other hand, Tilman says in terms of politically consciousness he agrees with the pro-Alfredo, as usually the small people are the one's that suffer the consequences. He cited as an example the cases of allegations involving Mari Alkatiri and Rogerio Lobato. Tilman said guns were found in the former Prime Minister's house but he was not detained. But in the case of Alfredo, he came to Dili on the orders of President Gusmao and was arrested when police found guns in his house, adding that the whole situation has confused the people. He said the problem is not within the judiciary but with the political process which has not been going well. (TP)

September 8, 2006

Commission mandate extended

The Notable Commission mandate has been extended until 30 October 2006 to complete their work. Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta made the decision to extend another 60 days to allow the Commission to complete its work, which had been stagnant since May due the crisis. According to Pedro da Costa, the Commission's spokesperson the extension would help reactivate the contacts with the petitioners in order to get further information. He said the Commission would guarantee their safety for any information they wish to present, as they do not have sufficient information. He encourages anyone wishing to present their complaints on the issue of discrimination within F-FDTL to contact the Commission. (TP)

We will protect Major Alfredo: Eduardo

The community leader of Ermera District, Aduardo de Deus, also known as Dusae said the population will protect and conceal Major Alfredo Reinado until justice and truth are in place. Dusae said the youths from the 10 districts would protect Reinado and wait for the truth and justice of those involved in the crime adding they want a

fair justice procedure. He said the youth in Ermera is holding a small activity in Gleno today (8/9) to ask the international forces not to proceed with their search for Alfredo and his members. They also do not want members of F-FDTL to travel to the 10 districts especially Ermera. The population has rejected the presence of three members of the national armed forces who visited that area with the international forces According to Timor Post, three members of F-FDTL are working with the international forces and went to Ermera to try to speak and win the sympathy of population but were asked to leave. Dusae said members of F-FDTL would be allowed to return to that district only after the problem of discrimination within the institution is resolved. (TP) Four injured following GNR attack

The population of Aldeia 30 Agosto in Comoro has expressed anger against the international forces, GNR, for attacking and shooting in that area right into the homes of the population. The incident occurred around midnight on Wednesday and according to Baltazar Bartolomeu, his younger brother was injured when GNR members shot into the house from the front door and hit his brothers. He said following knocks on his front door, he opened the door and was slapped on the face when he tried to question the presence of the police force. He said the loud noise scared all those inside the house including his pregnant wife who woke up crying not understanding what was happening. Barlolomeu said his two brothers who had come to Dili to sell coffee had their hands tied and were taking to the airport roundabout with other youths by the GNR who started interrogating and punching them. The two young men were later released. Baltazar Bartolomeu said his house door, window including his small shop were destroyed by the international force during the assault. Dismayed by this incident he went to GNR Headquarters in Caicoli to present his complaints but was told by a GNR sergeant to go and complain somewhere else. He is a pre-secondary teacher at in his village. (TP)

Appointment of acting police commissioner and DSRSG

Suara Timor Lorosae today (8/9) published the information released by UNMIT on the appointment

of Acting Police Commissioner Antero Lopes and the nomination of DSRSG Reske-Nielsen. Both documents were release by UNMIT Public Information Office on Wednesday. (STL)

September 7, 2006

Xanana must reconcile himself: Tilman

MP Manuel Tilman (KOTA) stressed that the important path to resolve the current crisis, is for President Gusmao to first reconcile himself, then with other competent political leaders such as the President of the National Parliament Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres, F-FDTL Commander Taur Matan Ruak and other commanders in the Armed Forces. Tilman said these individuals have the moral responsibility to reconcile among themselves and to resolve the problems since they are aware of the problems within F-FDTL. He further said the next step is for President Gusmao and his team to sit with each leader representative (lia nain) from Kabalake, Matebian and Ramelau and proceed with reconciliation according to Timor-Leste custom. Manuel Tilman hopes that this process will help the IDPs return to their homes, and that the justice process will follow. (TP)

SRSG visits Lautem community

SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa met with members of Lautem District community and IDPs during a visit on Wednesday where he informed the public about the assistance the UN has been providing through the Ministry of Labor and Community Reinsertion. The Head of the UN in Timor-Leste also informed those he met that the government is making an effort to help the communities in the districts and highlighted examples in the areas of education and health. He also said there is a possibility to amend the security situation in Dili, adding that the police and AFP are cooperating to recapture Major Alfredo and the prisoners that fled Becora prison and are taking measures to stop them from fleeing the country. SRSG and his delegation visited Salesian Dom Bosco orphanage and the new market. (TP, DN)

Weakness of justice is minister's fault: Corte-Real

The injustice process in the country is not due to political intervention but a result of the weakness of the Minister. MP Alexandre Corte-Real (UDT) said on several occasions the Public Ministry and the court have presented difficulties encountered, like lack of human resource, infrastructure, and finance but the Ministry has not taken any measures to respond to these concerns. Corte-Real said due to the lack of human resources and finances the court is non-functional and the Minister himself has not approached the Council of Ministers or the National Parliament to attend to these concerns, adding it only shows that the Minister does not have planning capacity. The MP stressed that the judiciary power must be reactivated urgently to allow the international police to capture and condemn the people committing crimes.

Tiago Sarmiento, Director of NGO JSMP said the court cases of Rogerio Lobato and Mari Alkatiri are pending because the judges, prosecutors and defenders in charge of the process have all ended their contracts and left the country. Sarmiento said the cases would proceed when the new judiciary personnel arrive this month. He points a finger at the UN and UNDP for stopping their contracts in a situation where the population is eagerly waiting for justice, adding that other international judges, prosecutors, and defenders should be on the ground and have the work transferred in order to determine justice in Timor-Leste. The Director of JSMP said the court has not processed any case since August. (TP)

I had guns to protect myself: Isac

MP Cipriana Pereira (Fretilin) said any Member of Parliament in possession of guns and involved in the social crisis is an act of crime as it is against the Constitution. Pereira raised her concern with the media following MP Leandro Isac's (Independent) statement during a television interview where he said he was in possession of a gun to defend himself. She said if a civilian caught in possession of a weapon is considered a crime and this also applies to any Member of Parliament. She said she would like the Parliament to take action and investigate all Members of

Parliament in relation to the crisis. In the meantime, Leandro Isa said he had a gun on May 24 and 25 to protect himself, his family and about 300 people that took refuge in his house. Isac said he has evidence he was a target because on April 29 he came to Dili to get some food and was stopped and told not to proceed or he would be shot upon his return. (DN, TP, STL)

Women returned to East Timor

Three women allegedly reported to have been abducted and taken to Atambua a few months ago have now returned to Timor-Leste via Mota'ain border on Tuesday, reported Diario Nacional Thursday. Jasti Norina, one of the three girls told DN, due to lack of employment opportunities in Timor-Leste they went to Indonesia with the intention to find work in Malaysia. (DN)

Population congratulates Major Alfredo

According to DN, the population of Comoro has extended their congratulations to Major Alfredo and his members for fleeing the prison. The population claims that Alfredo will establish conditions for the people who have not found justice, peace and unity. Duarte, representing Comoro people, said when Alfredo fled the prison, the Comoro population were overwhelmed because Alfredo feels he has become the victim since some leaders involved in crime have not been condemned and are still not in jail. He is of the opinion that justice should not only be for the 'small people'. (DN)

September 6, 2006

STAE launches pilot program

Secretariadu Tekniku Administrasaun Eleitoral (STAE) launched its electoral census pilot program on Monday with the aim of distributing voter photo ID cards. Director of STAE, Tomas Cabral said the pilot program will run until October 5 in Dili District and the cards are free. He further said the new card would replace the UNTAET voter registration cards thus making it also a

legitimate ID card, as well as an official registration card as both are required in Timor-Leste. (TP)

Two members of AFP attacked

Two AFP members were hit by rocks while trying to stop attacks of rock throwing between two groups in Lurumata, next to the American Embassy in Dili. Two youths were injured including two Australian police and their car seriously damaged. According to Timor Post, youths staged the attack due to their discontentment with the way the Australian police have acted in arbitrary detention. One youth, who refused to give his name, told TP his friends attacked the police because instead of detaining the attackers at the scene they detain those defending themselves. He said they have been observing the international police and they are not performing their duties correctly, especially in stopping group fights.

In a separate article, it is reported that attacks of stone-throwing in the area of Balide resulted in the damage of 8 houses and one burning. The fight was between the youths from Mascarenhas Aldeia 1 Balide and Caicoli beginning on Sunday (3/9) night and lasting until Tuesday.

Marcelino Martins, the head of the youth from Caicoli said the root of the problem started in Casossa Balide on Sunday following stone throwing at the IDP compound while they were praying.

In the meantime, the IDPs in Colmera, opposite Hotel Timor claim they have not received food from the government and NGOs for over a month.

According to Celestino da Costa, camp coordinator, the stopping of assistance is not a concern for the people as all they want is for the government to focus on security in order to enable them to return home. (TP)

Judges accused of influencing court decision

The debate on the court of appeal decision, ruling in favor of the result of Fretilin second congress continues to be an issue of debate in the Parliament. MP Joao Goncalves (PSD) has accused two judges of influencing the decision of the court recently. Goncalves said judges Maria

Natercia Gusmao and Jacinta Correia were part of the panel that influenced the decision of the court, because their spouses are members of Fretilin Central Committee. Meanwhile, President of the Parliament, Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres said the accusation of Goncalves must be presented with facts on how the court was influenced and whether the process was constitutional or not.

Guterres also asked MPs not to meddle into areas not of their competence. (TP)

Lu'Olo inconsistent with statements

MP Leandro Isac said the President of the Parliament has been inconsistent with his statement adding that he says something on one day and the following day he says something different. In relation to the guns in Mari Alkatiri's house, he first said it was false but later acknowledged during the Parliament's plenary session on Tuesday that there were guns stored in Alkatiri's house but the Minister of Interior has not had the time to collect them. In a separate article, Francisco Guterres said the pistols still in the former Prime Minister's house belonged to his personal protection security and that Alkatiri himself did not want the guns stored there. The President of the Parliament said people should stop creating propaganda about international forces collecting weapons at Mari Alkatiri's house and should provide the correct information. STL reported MP Juliao Mausiri (PD) as saying the Parliament is the root cause of the problem because on April 10, a resolution project was presented to the plenary to help resolve the issue of the petitioners. It was put on the agenda as the last issue but was ignored and never debated, he said. (STL)

September 5, 2006

Wirajuda and Downer meeting with President Gusmao

Ministers of Foreign Affairs for Indonesia and Australia met with President Gusmao, following the trilateral gathering in Dili on Monday. According to the media some of the issues discussed by President Gusmao and the foreign ministers were

economy, politics, security and support of the neighboring countries during the 2007 elections.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ramos-Horta said ties between Timor-Leste, Indonesia and Australia remain the same as the previous government under the premiership of Mari Alkatiri. He said the trilateral meeting was to review the ties between the three countries, especially the cooperation at the commercial exchange level between the three nations and the means to be able to encourage more investment in the respective economies. The Prime Minister also briefed the foreign ministers on the current situation and the security conditions of the country, the election for 2007 and ended with a confidence note of trust that Timor-Leste would overcome the actual situation. (TP)

Escape of prisoners not international forces responsibility: Slater

Commander of the international forces in Timor-Leste, Brigadier General Mick Slater said the escape of Alfredo and his members from jail is the responsibility of the government, especially the minister of justice and not the international force. Slater said the duty of the force is to patrol the town and that securing law and order is and coordinated with the international police. A representative of the New Zealand force is of the same opinion as Slater.

In a separate article, Steve Lancaster, commander of the International Police said during a press conference on Monday that three people have been identified as being involved in the attack in Kolmera, which left 9 people injured. Lancaster told the media on Monday that some of those involved are PNTL officers and the international police needs the cooperation of the community to find and detain them and hand them over to the court for the crimes committed. He said the international police would not be able to do anything if the community is not providing information on their whereabouts which will be damaging to stability. STL reported Lancaster as saying publication of posters with the fugitives' photos has been done with the intention to limit their movement in order to have the opportunity to recapture them. The Prosecutor-General authorized the publication of the posters. He also appealed to the escapees to surrender peacefully.

During a public gathering on Monday, organized by the NGO Lao Hamutuk, the international police representative Emir Bilget said that sooner or later the international police will capture Alfredo and his members. Therefore he appealed for them to surrender. Bilget also explained that the new United Nations mission would set up new structures for the international police in Dili and in the districts and that the police need the contribution from everybody including the Timorese. On the efforts of the international police to recapture Alfredo, MP Leandro Isac said he disagrees with the Police Chief Superintendent Emir Bilget because in reality part of the population welcomes Alfredo and they would be inclined to protect him therefore undermining the efforts of the international forces to maintain stability. Isac said the international police made the appeal because they are unaware of and have not been following Alfredo's whereabouts believing the appeal would satisfy everybody, which is not the case. He further said if the international forces want to be successful they must try and learn from the case of Major Alfredo.

In relation to claims of attempts on the lives of Alfredo and his members, Director of Becora prison, Carlos Freitas Sarmento refuted the statement saying there was no group that wanted to kill or defend anyone. Sarmento said during the last four months, members of HAK had not visited the prison to collect data therefore the statement made by them is unsubstantiated. He added that the case of Alfredo occurred due to lack of equipment in the prison and that such incidents occur in other parts of the world. The Director of the prison said the prisoners fled following attacks on the guards, some of them using scissors.

Institution capacity of public ministry still weak: Aderito de Jesus Human Rights lawyer advocate Aderito de Jesus said the judiciary capacity of the courts and the public ministry is still weak. De Jesus referred to the many cases still unresolved apart from the pending ones. He said the government must support the means to facilitate the court and the public ministry in order for them to be more effective.

The human rights advocate says the judiciary process is now on phase one and it should be

questioned whether it can proceed with the cases. If not he suggest that maybe a special panel should be established to attend to the crisis. De Jesus said this is one of the propositions for the international commission to look into involving the cases starting from April up until now. He said the state law applies to everybody. (TP)

No extraordinary congress: Lu'Olo

The demand for extraordinary congress by the group of Fretilin for changes (Fretilin Mudanca) have been rejected by the party's Secretary-General and President. According to Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres, even though Fretilin's constitution foresees extraordinary congress, the demands of the group will not be realized.

Guterres said the structures of the districts are aware that the group for changes want the extraordinary congress but there is no room for it as per the court of appeal decision. In the meantime, Egidio de Jesus of the 'group for changes' said the majority of the people that participated in the congress and members of Liquica District have rejected the leadership of Fretilin under Mari Alkatiri and Rogerio Lobato.

He said the 'group for changes' would go ahead with the congress following further consultations with more districts. (STL)

September 2-4, 2006

Prisoners fled due injustice process

Aniceto Neves the Program Manager of local NGO HAK said Major Alfredo's escape is likely due to constant threats and attempts on his life, as confirmed by his lawyers. According to Neves the situation faced by Alfredo and his members in Becora jail showed that the security management is not safe for any citizen and that is precisely why the former Interior Minister Rogerio Lobato and Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri are under house arrest. Therefore, the government should not have detained Alfredo and his members in Becora jail. He further said, based on the monitoring from his

organization, HAK, that there were various threats by the prisoners and guards alike to kill Alfredo and his members. For instance, a guard from the eastern part tried to kill him but a guard from the west intervened to stop the killing. The head of HAK said these are the reasons Lobato and Alkatiri are not in jail so why should Alfredo and his members be subject to it, adding everybody, from government officials to MPs have blamed the police and international forces for the prisoners getaway but have not looked at their own mistake. Aniceto Neves stressed that the international forces are doing their work based on the politics of the government not the forces' politics. He further said he totally disagrees with the accusations by some MPs who express concerns with the international forces work but who, themselves, are not learning the legal process of the country created by them because all they do is sit and raise their hands without understanding the substances. The escape of Alfredo and his members, said Aniceto Neves, is the responsibility of the government of Prime Minister Ramos-Horta because it has failed to establish a politics that guarantees justice, security and freedom of the prisoners, and the escape of the prisoners is an accumulation of protest to the problem of injustice that the people of Timor-Leste are currently facing. In an interview aired by the national radio and television, Alfredo Reinado appealed to the youth to stop the current actions and maintain calm and understand each other because the country now needs peace. He said he fled the jail because the trial detention had expired but he has not fled justice and is prepared to appear in court when the system is implemented impartially. (STL, TP)

Interference from some leaders on justice process:
Carrascalao

PSD President, Mario Carrascalao said the justice process to the former Minister of Interior and Prime Minister is in an impasse due to interference from some components in the country.

On the getaway of the prisoners from Becora jail, Mario Carrascalao said Alfredo fled with the support of the population because if he did not have the support the population they would have announced his whereabouts. He said there has been

lots of injustice therefore it is time for drastic measures to solve the problems and see what is best for the public. He further said the national dialogue proposed by the government is not enough, the important thing is to take measures, adding that no solution to the problem of kaladi (west) and firaku (east) has materialized. The president of PST stressed that one of the problems faced in Timor-Leste is the IDPs, and how to bring the people from the east and west to live together as there has been so much hatred created.

In a separate article, Aderito de Jesus, Timorese human rights advocate and lawyer said that the escape of Alfredo and his members are still under the judiciary system therefore the issue has become more complex and it needs political will to resolve it.

PNTL must establish unity among the population:
Hasegawa

Speaking at PNTL parade in Dili headquarters on Friday, Acting UNPOL Police Commissioner, Antero Lopes said PNTL must show its professionalism because PNTL has good capacity, respects human rights and can be part of other missions under the United Nations, noting the current PNTL officers working in Kosovo. He reminded PNTL officers to be happy, as there are many good PNTL officers. He stressed his sadness for the circumstances leading to his return but hopes to reorganize and develop PNTL capacity, loyalty and honesty to better the services and show greater professionalism. He appealed to PNTL to have faith in the UN police and asked for unity and cooperation to work together. He said the evaluation team is continuing to screen each PNTL officer's availability, integrity and loyalty within the institution, in order for them to carry out their duty better, adding that the UN police will work together with PNTL. On the same occasion, SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa said PNTL must create unity among the population avoid past mistakes. He said many PNTL were involved in the crisis and appealed to them to reflect and to try to find an answer to the solution to end the violence that emerged in the country. (DN)

Nine injured during attack at refugee camp

Nine people were reported injured on Friday

following rock attacks and shots at the IDP camp opposite Hotel Timor in Dili. According to Timor Post, a 12 year-old was seriously injured with gun shoots. According to an eyewitness, who wished to remain anonymous, an unknown group including some members of PNTL, one of them from Baucau, went to attack the camp with two big guns and pistols. The eyewitness said they recognized two of the attackers and PNTL officers. SRSG Hasegawa said the international police are investigating the case and the people involved in order to process them in the court. (STL)

CVA not transparent: Aderito de Jesus Soares

Aderito de Jesus, human rights lawyer, said the public is concerned with the transparency of the Comissao Verdade e Acolhimento (CVA) [Truth and Friendship Commission] that has been extended for another year to complete the work. De Jesus said the public must know the budget of CVA and the result of the work. He said right from the start CVA's mandate has not been clear and transparent and its significance is unknown in Timor-Leste.

He said relations can be implemented through other means and that money should not be wasted to establish negotiations for justice, adding he is also confused with the extension of the mandate because there has not been a public debate about it. (TP)

PD wants Ian Martin or Hasegawa to lead new mission

The Democratic Party (PD) disagrees with the notion that of new representative leading the new United Nations mission in Timor-Leste. MP Rui Menezes said information that the new SRSG would come from a CPLP country would not be appropriate due to lack of experience and knowledge which could lead to new problems. Menezes said the person following Timor-Leste process has been former United Nations Representative to Timor-Leste, Ian Martin, but his party would recommend to UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan to maintain the current SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa to lead UNMIT. In a separate article, MP Quiteria da Costa (UDT) said whoever is replacing the current SRSG must have the conviction to bring the people of Timor-Leste together. She is of the opinion the current representative of the United Nations in the

country should continue to hold the same position with the new mission. (DN)

September 1, 2006

Minister of justice responsible for prisoners' getaway

MPs have raised their concerns in relation to the prisoners that escaped from jail on Wednesday saying Minister of Justice is responsible. The President of the National Parliament, Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres lamented the incident noting that such an incident had not occurred in the past four years. Guterres considered the case to be serious for the trial process. He said the fundamental problem of the incident rests with the Ministers of Justice and Defence and the trainers. He added that the Minister for Justice should have looked into the security of the prison following the withdrawal of the international forces. Some of the MPs were of the opinion that the Minister of Justice, Domingos Sarmiento, should be asked to resign as a result of the prison escape; others raised the concern that the escape of Alfredo and other prisoners would have a negative impact on the elections in 2007 and some said it would stop the reconciliation process that has been organized by President Gusmao. In the meantime the Minister of Justice, Domingos Sarmiento said he is prepared to step down but it is up to the Prime Minister to decide.

In a separate article, the Director of NGO Yayasan Hak, Jose Luis Oliveira said the getaway of Alfredo and other prisoners would not only have an impact on the government but greatly on the population of Dili. Oliveira said it is likely that some people have already packed and left for the districts. According to *Diario Nacional*, Oliveira said another impact would be on the reconciliation process, which is part of the government program to resolve the recent crisis.

Still on the escape of the prisoners, Aniceto Neves, an observer from Hak said the government has given big expense salaries to the international judges to strengthen the judicial

system in Timor-Leste but it continues to remain the same. He further said there are many people in the jails in Becora, Ermera and Baucau whose status has not been revised, adding he is of the opinion that the contract with the international prosecutors is not fortifying the Timorese justice. Neves is of the opinion the getaway of the prisoners on Wednesday is the government's fault. He pointed out that Alfredo and his group were on trial detention up until 28 August but did not receive a court justification. He questioned why they were detained beyond the set date and prolonged until the 30th to be the start of investigations which did not happen. He also said Alfredo received many threats while in detention, reported STL.

Diario Nacional reported Minister of Justice, Domingos Sarmiento as saying that the prison guards were threatened with grass scissors when visiting time was coming to an end, adding that a team has been formed to work with the international police to investigate the 60 prison guards on duty.

Prime Minister Ramos-Horta appealed to the population not be concerned with Alfredo's escape because he is not the "giant of Timor-Leste", adding Major Alfredo was in detention for carrying illegal weapons. In relation to reports of F-FDTL in possession of weapons, the Minister told heads of villages and districts during the gathering in Maubara that the information gathered must be concrete in order to have these people detained. (TP, STL, DN)

UNPOL and international police will detain escapees: Antero SRSG Sukehiro Hasegawa said the UN together with the International Forces and International Police have the responsibility to locate and detain Major Alfredo and other prisoners that escaped from jail on Wednesday. Speaking during a press conference Thursday, Hasegawa said the new UN mission, UNMIT, had established a joint task force to maintain peace and stability in Timor-Leste and he has requested the police commissioner to head the task force. According to Diario Nacional SRSG Hasegawa said he has already requested the government to review the joint security arrangements for the prisoners especially during visiting hours. SRSG said security for the prison is the responsibility of

the government, but the international forces would conduct frequent patrols to that area as agreed to by the military commander, Brigadier Mick Slater, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution which says the international forces were invited to support the implementation of the UNMIT mandate which includes provision of security to the public. On the same occasion, the Acting Police Commissioner, Antero Lopes said the international forces are working together to provide security for the population and are trying to bring Major Alfredo back to prison in order to process his case legally. Australian Federal Police commander, Steve Lancaster said there are cooperation efforts from all the international forces in Timor-Leste including the UN to recapture the getaway prisoners. Lancaster said the military had also set up checkpoints to search vehicles entering and leaving Dili as well as in the capital. He said he believes Alfredo is still around in Dili and appealed to anybody with information about the prisoners to alert the police. (STL)