



**MINISTÉRIO DA DEFESA E SEGURANÇA  
SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA SEGURANÇA  
“2009 – Ano das Infra-estruturas”**

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Thank you for the opportunity given to me to speak at this important event. It is my honor to present to you some information about Timor-Leste's police development after its creation in 2000.

My presentation will be divided into three parts: first, a short history of policing in Timor-Leste; second, the reform process and, in conclusion, some broadly applicable lessons ongoing that we have learned, the resonance of which goes beyond Timor-Leste.

Before discussing the Timor-Leste's Police Development I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the United Nations for its tremendous help in 1999 by providing 50 civilian Police to help ensure the ballot was able to take place in 1999, and the addition of further civilian police in a series of successive missions to assist Timor-Leste especially in building our policing capacity.

### **1. Short History of Timor-Leste's Police**

On August 30, 1999, Timorese in vast numbers voted to secede from Indonesia and to become our own, independent, country. Following the results, a United Nations transitional administration was formed, to help prepare Timor-Leste for full independence. The United Nations mission provided interim policing services while, at the same time, creating a Timorese policing to take on the long-term task of policing our territory.

Since our independence was restored on May 20, 2002, the Timorese Police created by the UN was transformed into Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL).

Building our policing capacity has not been an easy road. We have hit many obstacles on the way. Perhaps the largest was what occurred in 2006. We the Timorese, in partnership, with the UN appeared to have successfully laid strong foundations for sustainable peace in the recently established state. Among the cherished successes was the National Police of Timor-Leste (Polícia Nacional de

Timor-Leste, PNTL). As a result in 2003 the UN started the handover of policing responsibility to Timor-Leste National Police.

These plaudits proved premature. In the space of a few bloody months in 2006, large parts of the PNTL leadership unraveled. Police who were relied upon to provide security and protection were now involved in the crisis. This was due to a number of factors: (1) The police institution at the time was highly politicised. Many police officers were more concerned with issues relating to groups and political parties rather than serving the interests of their country. Thus, the police was internally divided; (2) the new recruits of police were inadequately trained. Three months training is insufficient to change the new recruit's mentality from that of civilian to that of a police officer. It results in lack of dedication to the job which can be easily influenced by the politicians to serve the interest of the parties; (3) no career development. For many police officers, police institution can not guarantee their future since there was no promotion, salary and pension regimes in place. It results in lack of motivation in the profession as well as politicisation. Police officers tended to align closely to the politicians in order to be promoted.

The crisis caused the loss of 37 lives, and more than 100,000 Timorese (10% of the population) were driven from their homes.

The situation was so bad that our foreign minister, and now President, Jose Ramos-Horta, requested international police and military assistance from a range of countries. After a few months, a new United Nations mission returned with a large mandate, including police reform. I believe that the United Nations mission in Timor is the second-largest presence in terms of police across the world.

## **2. Reform Process**

In the grand scale of things, six and a half years was insufficient to develop and institutionalize new state institutions. Judged with the benefit of hindsight, many of the institutions created and bequeathed to the new state were simply not fit for their given purpose. There was insufficient equipment – many of the PNTL officers were, quite simply, not even able to patrol or to travel to crime scenes in a prompt manner. There were hardware issues but as pressing were what I would like to call 'software' issues. The PNTL was without legal frameworks, mechanisms for control, and well-functioning managerial systems. The same observations held true for the civilian ministry in charge of the police. Moreover, the human material required to make these institutions work was sometimes of a low grade.

Many officers and functionaries had insufficient bureaucratic and managerial experience in how to make an institution function and how to make it deliver services.

These are not problems that could be resolved within a week, a month, or a year, but ones that would take many years of dedicated effort in order to resolve.

Eighth of August 2007, is the date of the formation of the Fourth Constitutional Government led by Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao. The formation of this government has been tinged with political tension which culminated in violence in Dili and other districts in the eastern part (Baucau, Lospalos and Viqueque). In addition the new government also inherited ongoing conflicts of the 2006 crisis which mainly affected Dili.

After the swearing in by the President of Republic, the Fourth Constitutional Government in its first Council of Ministers in the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2007, took a strategic decision to respond to the situation, by declaring the first six months (August to December 2007) as the period of stabilization. This decision was in line with the Prime Minister, Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao inaugural speech in which he stated that stability is the priority for the first year of this government, as it is the basis for the development of the country.

In responding to the Fourth Constitutional Government's priorities, the office of the Secretary of State for Security which is responsible for Police Development has taken several initiatives to provide a basis for the stabilisation of the country, the reform of state security institutions and future planning.

Two important areas were identified, the first is Security Reform Development and the second is Public Safety. These two areas needed to be addressed in this first year, and also in years to come to provide a basis for the stabilisation of the country and security reform development in the future.

In Public Safety, the focus was in crime and violence control. Although the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2007 were relatively quiet and successfully achieved, the violence and crime inherited from the 2006 crisis continued to persist. Fighting between gangs was visible in many suburbs and streets of Dili. Killings between gang members and leaders continued to occur in Dili streets. Ordinary people continue to experience terror and intimidation by the gangs. We can no longer tolerate this situation. Thus, major actions such as (1) the reactivation of the Police Task Force to routinely patrol the vulnerable areas, (2) the reactivation of Rapid Intervention Unit to support the Police Task Force, (3) the improvement of the intelligence unit to collect information, and (4) improvement of police investigation to support the justice system to reduce and prevent crimes and violence were taken to control the situation.

These actions produced an immediate impact on the situation. The basic everyday security has returned to the country. Even after the shocking attacks on the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister on 11 February 2008,

relative calm has returned to the country as evidenced by many of the IDP's peacefully returning to their homes.

Meanwhile in Security Reform, a few programs were adopted to create security institutions that are effective, efficient, and accountable. These were essential for the security of our citizenry, and creating an environment for wider economic, social and political development. Without security, there can be no development. Our goal is a set of security institutions that only criminals and wrong-doers need to fear. This is our commitment. This is our promise. In doing so, we start focusing on policy formulation which can serve as basis for reforming the security institutions.

National Security Law was drafted to clarify the respective roles of our security agencies to define their areas of responsibility, and where they will work together. This is in accordance with our constitution. National Security Policy is currently being drafted to identify threats that we are facing and how we should respond to the threats, as well as-to regulate the coordination mechanisms between state institutions and a civilian oversight, over security agencies in the country. The draft of this policy has been fully supported by the United States through Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies, APCSS. The policy is broad-based and recognizes that there is a wide-degree of threats facing our country. In the old days, we worried about threats from beyond our borders. We were right to do so. Now, we worry equally about the threats within and the insecurities that come from hunger, unemployment and being without hope. The implication of this is that the responses to these wide threats require a broad response.

In addition, we start restructuring the security institutions by creating laws or policies on career regime including a promotion policy for police officers to ensure their future in the institution. We also revised the Police Organic Law in order to create a national police force which, by nature is community policing oriented. However, to ensure the discipline, we adopted a semi-military training and organization. This policy was deliberately made to transform the police mentality in order to improve their professionalism in serving our society.

To ensure the security reform in Timor-Leste, I have established a Security Reform Committee. At the same time, we are restructuring the Secretariat of State for Security to enable to provide maximum support for police development and other institutions under it. This includes enhancing the capacity and authority of institutions charged with oversight such as Inspection and Audit, Finance and Procurement.

It is my sincere belief that these two documents, the National Security Law and the National Security Policy will be living policies that later guide to ensure the security reform goes well.

I believe that we have begun the long process of addressing these issues. We have worked to deliver increased logistics to the PNTL, improving existing stations, and building new ones, to enhancing communications capacity and improving the quality of life for officers through salary raises.

These are improvements one can see but we are also working to develop more intangible areas in order to develop personal capability, strengthen vocational habits, bolster good personal leadership and improve policies, procedures and governance.

The United Nations attests that our PNTL are becoming ready to police fully independently of their assistance. Control of three of the thirteen districts in Timor-Leste has been handed back to PNTL. United Nations Police are going from police officers to monitors and plans are in train to reduce their number. I expect that the process will conclude by 2010. We believe we are now ready – to reclaim our policing authority.

I also believe that, the reform that my government is doing are taking ground. A good example is the Joint Command in February 2008 where our Armed Forces were working together with our Police to resolve the issues surrounding the 11 February 2008 attack. Without firing a single bullet, the joint command successfully subjugated the rebellion. All the rebels surrendered and now they are facing the court.

### **3. Conclusion**

In conclusion, I'd like to present some of the lessons, sometimes, the painful lessons that we have learned, in the development of our police services

First, is that we Timorese must take the ownership that comes with the office. We know the country, its people, its language and its history much better than anyone else possibly can. It is up to us to set the strategic course; no one else can do this for us. With ownership however, comes responsibility. Oftentimes this may make us very unpopular. The nature of making decisions and setting plans, is that we hope that the maximum may benefit but we should know that we will encounter resistance. We must learn to wear this occasional unpopularity as part of the job.

Second, the nature of leadership is one that must begin to find a way to marshal and direct the assistance that is incoming. In Timor-Leste, we have been blessed with many forms of assistance that has come in many shapes and sizes. We are grateful for it. But, to maximize this assistance, it is important to direct it, not to let it direct us. Each week, I meet many individuals and donors who want to do this, want to do that, or that, they want to do it here or there. I must say to them 'wait', and ensure that their plans fit in with my plans, not the other way around. My

model is that donors should complement – but not seek to take over or direct – the government's effort.

Third, this is an undertaking that takes a commodity that we never have enough of...and that is, time. The painful lesson of Timor-Leste in 2006 is that we – and the international community – felt the police were ready too soon. To our cost, we found out that we were both gravely mistaken. We must not forget that lesson again.

Police reform is a task of continual improvement and incremental positive change, and to some extent, a process that has no end. It is a process essential to state-building, to securing peace, and to securing development, and one that must remain at the forefront of our attention

I thank you for your time, I regret I did not have more and I look forward to discussing police reform in Timor-Leste with fellow participants further during the course of the conference.

THANK YOU