

MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 25 November 2003.

UNPOL on Dec 4th report: police must work 'with available evidence'

Acting UNPOL Commissioner Alan King this morning said that UNPOL has not yet received any documents from the Prosecutor-General Longuinhos Monteiro in connection with the report on the investigation into the December 4th riots but that police would look into any new evidence that may be brought to their attention. He made these comments in reply to queries from journalists.

UNPOL handed in all the evidence it had – a 89-page summary as well as two full boxes containing interview transcripts, video and photographic evidence, forensic test results, ballistic test results, etc. – to the Prosecutor-General. “By law, our job is to hand in the evidence to the Prosecutor-General and he then decides whether or not to file charges”, said Alan King, adding that “as the Commissioner herself said when we handed in the report, we would all have liked the results to have been more conclusive but we cannot go beyond the evidence itself”.

The Acting Commissioner explained that where there was evidence, as in the case of the looting incidents and the burning of the Prime-Minister's house, police had arrested suspects and taken them to court. With regard to the fatal shootings, police could not identify any suspects because while they could identify which weapons had been discharged, they could not identify which weapons had fired the fatal shots. “It would be improper to accuse anyone – be they PNTL, UNPOL, anyone – without the proper evidence. To accuse someone without evidence is like finding a escape goat, and this is not how police should work. We must work within the law and with the available evidence”.

He added that, as the Commissioner herself had already indicated, if police receive any instructions from the Prosecutor-General in connection with the investigation they will act on it. Police will also look into any new evidence that may be brought to their attention.

