

# MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 1 February 2003

## BAUCAU CRASH – THIRD UPDATE

The remains of the six Russian crew who died when their plane crashed in Baucau yesterday afternoon have now arrived in Dili. Russian air crew serving with UNMISSET solemnly carried the flag-draped coffins containing the remains to the UN Military Hospital in Dili where they will be preserved until an autopsy is carried out.

Earlier today the Timorese Prime-Minister Mari Alkatiri visited the accident site and announced the creation of a Government Commission of Inquiry to be headed by the Minister for Transport, Communications and Public Works, Ovidio Amaral.

An Australian investigation team is set to arrive in Dili tomorrow (Sunday) morning. They will be briefed by UNMISSET before being taken by helicopter to the crash site. The investigators will also meet with the Government Commission of Inquiry.

UNMISSET has made everything ready at the site for their arrival, including the installation of a power generator and adequate lighting so that investigations may continue in the hours of darkness. A tent-covered area for the parts of the aircraft to be brought in for examination has also been prepared, and UNMISSET is providing the investigators with cars, food, water and accommodation. PKF troops and UN and Timorese police are keeping the area secure ahead of the investigators' arrival.

Contrary to initial reports, it now appears that the Russian IL-76 aircraft did NOT crash in the mountains. While the area around Baucau is mountainous, the airfield itself is located in an open area. The aircraft made more than one attempt to land amid conditions of low clouds and dense fog. The crash, about 2km short of the western end of the runway, seems to have occurred during the second or third attempt at landing.

The aircraft, operated by Euro Asia Aviation (an air cargo company based in the Laotian capital), was transporting app. 50 tonnes of equipment for the Portuguese/Timorese joint company Timor Telecom from Macao in China to Baucau. The equipment was to be used for the building of the Timorese telecommunications network.

UNMISSET will release further details as they become available.

**ENDS**



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