

UNITED NATIONS



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UNMISET

United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor

PRESS RELEASE

Passabe, 9 September 2004.

PASSABE COMMUNITY COMMEMORATES 1999 MASSACRE

The Passabe community in the district of Oecussi, an isolated Timorese enclave located on the Indonesian side of the island, commemorated today the fifth anniversary of the 1999 massacre, which left a profound mark on the region.

In 1999, during the violent aftermath of the popular consultation that led to Timor-Leste's independence, members of the Sakunar militia attacked several villages, murdering 65 people in the communities of Tumin, Kiobiselo and Nibin.

The case was brought to a Special Panel for Serious Crimes, which investigates crimes against humanity in Timor-Leste. One of the leaders, Florencio Tacaqui, has been convicted to 12 years in prison, while two others are awaiting trial and 10 more are at large in Indonesia.

The commemoration was organized by the community through CAVR (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor-Leste) with support from the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Government, as well members of the diplomatic corps, including the Ambassadors of the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Australia and the European Community.

Dr Sukehiro Hasegawa, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, also attended the event and concluded his speech by saying : " I hope that the people of Timor-Leste with the support of the international community will continue to rise from the ashes of destruction and devastation to build a nation of peace and respect for all citizens".