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PKF HANDS OVER LAST JUNCTION POINT TO BPU

(Batugade, 18 October) – The PKF Commander Lieutenant-General Khairuddin Mat Yusof today congratulated the Border Patrol Unit (BPU) of the Timorese police force (PNTL) on their taking over day-to-day management of Junction Point Alpha, the last remaining junction point on the Tactical Coordination Line [the ‘soft’ border between Timor-Leste and Indonesia, pending formal border demarcation] under PKF control. “The BPU has made significant improvements, and PKF has confidence that it will continue to develop”, said Lt.-Gen. Khairuddin during the hand-over ceremony in Batugade [Bobonaro District].

The Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Timor-Leste, Sukehiro Hasegawa, RDTL’s Vice-Minister of Interior Alcino Barris and the PNTL Commissioner Paulo Martins presided over the signing of the hand-over certificate, followed by the lowering of the UN flag and raising of the RDTL flag.

The PKF Commander told the BPU that PKF will continue to assist them with patrolling and border management duties. He added that PKF continues to have responsibility for overall border security until the end of UNMISSET’s mandate [May 2004], and will respond to any external threat if the need arises.

The Vice-Minister of Interior thanked UNMISSET and the Australian Battalion of PKF in particular for training the BPU. Alcino Barris said that the Timorese government is continuing its efforts to obtain international assistance to strengthen the capacity of the BPU.

The PNTL Commissioner said that the BPU officers face a hard job and that they have to work closely with the villagers who live near the TCL to ensure border security.

After the ceremony the A/SRSG and the other guests toured the JP- A facilities vacated by PKF which were donated to the BPU after the hand-over. The compound includes sleeping cabins, toilets, and kitchen and leisure areas.

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Background information:

There are 6 junction points on the main border and 5 on the border between the Oecussi enclave and West Timor.

(photos available)

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