

UNITED NATIONS



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UNMISET

United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor

Public Information Office

Press Release

UNMISET Donates Two Specially Designed Vehicles For Transportation Of Prisoners

22 February 2005: The United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) today handed over to the Government of Timor-Leste two specially designed vehicles for the transportation of prisoners.

The vehicles, customised by UNMISET's Transport section, were received by the Secretary of State for Public Works, Communications and Transport, Mr Joao Baptista Fernandes Alves, at Obrigado Barracks in Dili. Mr Alves will hand over the two vehicles to the Ministry of Justice.

According to Mr Douglas Manson, co-Chair of the Steering Committee for Donations of UNMISET's assets, the request for the vehicles was made to the Mission because of the difficulties the Government was facing in transporting prisoners for court appearances.

"UNMISET made sure that the vehicles were designed in a way to ensure a level of comfort for prisoners as well as being a safe and secure means of transport. The vehicles' doors were fitted to open from the outside and not from the inside, and no windows were fixed in the part of the vehicles carrying the prisoners for security reasons," said Mr Manson.

The request for the vehicles was made to UNMISET during the meetings of the Transitional Working Group on Justice at the end of last year. "During the meetings, we were asked for a list of things we needed, and properly fitted vehicles for the transportation of prisoners was on the top of it," said UNMISET's Prison Advisor, Maria Leticia Bairrada.

"This will make things much easier because in the past we encountered many problems due to the lack of availability of vehicles to transport prisoners to court, as well as the necessary resistant vehicles required to take prisoners into various districts for court appearances," said Ms Bairrada.

"The timing of the hand over of the vehicles could not be better, especially now that the Suai court has been reactivated. Hopefully, we can now use the vehicles for a trial in Suai on March 10," she added.

The handover of the two vehicles is part of an overall \$35-million donation of UNMISET's assets to the Government of Timor-Leste. It was announced last week that UNMISET has already handed over nearly 30 per cent of the \$35-million worth of assets, which include a list of items such as office data processing equipment currently being used for example by the Serious Crimes Unit; medical equipment, including a laboratory and surgical theatre; communications

equipment; generators as well as vehicles. In his regular discussions with UNMISSET leadership, PM has expressed his thanks for these valuable donations.

The liquidation process of UNMISSET assets has been ongoing since 2002 but will increase when the mandate of the mission ends on 20 May 2005. The last phase, which will involve the handing over of 12 properties, including UNMISSET's current headquarters at Obrigado Barracks as well as the Transport and Engineering compound, is expected to take place from 1 July to 30 September.

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