

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNMISSET

United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor

UNMISSET PRESS RELEASE

DSRSG MEETS WITH HATOLIA RESIDENTS: ‘UNMISSET IS HERE TO SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT’

(Hatolia, 30 January) – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Timor-este, Mr Sukehiro Hasegawa, told community leaders and residents in Hatolia (a sub-district of Ermera) today that the role of UNMISSET is different from that of its predecessor, UNTAET. Whereas UNTAET was a transitional administration charged with governing the country in the run-up to independence, UNMISSET is a mission of support: Timor-Leste is now a fully independent country, and UNMISSET’s role is not to do the government’s work but to assist the government and the people. “It is your country and it is for you to decide how best to defend it”, said Mr Hasegawa. The DSRSG came to hear the concerns and views of Hatolia’s residents at the invitation of the District Administrator.

Some 200 residents turned out for the meeting and told the DSRSG and accompanying senior UNPOL and PKF officers that they feel insecure and fear intimidation from members of the Colimau 2000 group. They asked that the F-FDTL deployment in Ermera [due to end on 31 January] be extended, as they feel safe with the F-FDTL’s presence there. They also expressed their dissatisfaction at the release, ordered by a judge, of 39 people that had been detained by F-FDTL and handed over to the police earlier this month. The residents believe these people to be members of Colimau 2000 involved in acts of violence and intimidation. “I have heard your message”, said the DSRSG, adding that he would convey the views of the residents to Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and President Xanana Gusmão.

Mr Hasegawa also explained that the police and the armed forces have different roles. Referring to residents’ comments that Colimau 2000 members were engaging in intimidation and acts of violence in the area, the DSRSG said that “if these people live in this area and are engaged in criminal activity they should be questioned by police, not the F-FDTL: the F-FDTL is here to protect you from external attacks”. He added that the first step was for police to arrest suspects and send them to the courts. The courts can then decide whether they should be sent to prison. “In a democratic society like Timor-Leste, we cannot just say ‘arrest these people’: we must ask

the TLPS to build the case and take it to the Prosecutor's Office". The DSRSG urged the residents to help the police by bringing any evidence to their attention.

Mr Hasegawa thanked the community for sharing their concerns with him and reiterated that he would take back their views to the Prime-Minister and the President. He also invited three community members to come with him to Dili where he would facilitate a meeting with Prime-Minister Alkatiri so they could explain their concerns to him in person. Three community representatives travelled back with the DSRSG to Dili and met with the Prime-Minister, the Justice Minister (Ana Pessoa) and the Speaker of the RDTL Parliament (Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres) on Thursday evening.

- ENDS -

For further information contact:

Marcia Poole

Spokesperson/UNMISSET

Mobile: + 61 (0) 41 786 8485

Telephone: + 61 8 8946 3900 Ext. 6059