

FACT SHEET 10

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By UNTAET Press Office

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

- A **Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor** has been formally established in East Timor. Seven National Commissioners were sworn in before the Transitional Administrator, Sergio Vieira de Mello, on 21 January 2002. In the coming weeks, they will select 25-30 Regional Commissioners and establish up to six regional offices in East Timor.
- The National Commissioners were selected following a **public consultation process** that was conducted in all 13 districts in East Timor, and with refugees in West Timor. More than 300 public nominations were submitted to the Selection Panel as a result of this process, for both National and Regional Commissioners.
- Based on a regulation approved by the National Council in June 2001, the Commission is an **independent authority** which aims to achieve dual goals of reconciliation and justice. **It will operate for two years, and has three primary functions:**
 - First, it will seek the truth regarding human rights violations in East Timor within the context of the political conflicts between **25 April 1974 and 25 October 1999**. The Commission will establish a **truth-telling mechanism** for victims and perpetrators to describe, acknowledge and record human rights abuses of the past.
 - Second, it will facilitate **community reconciliation** by dealing with past cases of **lesser crimes** such as looting, burning and minor assault. In each case, a panel comprised of a Regional Commissioner and local community leaders will mediate between victims and perpetrators to reach agreement on an act of reconciliation to be carried out by the perpetrator.
 - Third, it will report on its findings and make **recommendations to the government** for further action on reconciliation and the promotion of human rights.
- **The Commission does not have the power to grant amnesty** to perpetrators of human rights violations. However, those who fulfil the terms of a community reconciliation agreement will be **immune from any further civil or criminal liability** for those acts.
- **The Commission will complement the formal judicial process.** Any evidence of serious crimes such as murder, rape or the organization of systematic, widespread violence will be referred to the Office of the General Prosecutor. Serious crimes will continue to be handled exclusively by the Special Panels established under Regulation 2000/15.

The Commission is supported by the Timorese leadership. Recently, **Chief Minister Marí Alkatiri** wrote a letter to the donor community reiterating that the Commission is a



national priority. **“I am firmly committed to ensuring this Commission enjoys political and institutional support now and in the future,”** the Chief Minister wrote.

