

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

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END OF AN ERA IN EAST TIMOR

After nearly three years of distinguished service in East Timor, the United Nations Military Hospital at Comoro has closed.

The UN Military Hospital ceased operation on Saturday night with the new United Nations Hospital behind O brigado Barracks taking over the responsibility for the medical care of UN civilian and military personnel.

Since September 1999 contingents from Australia, Egypt and Singapore have provided medical assistance to tens of thousands of local East Timorese people and United Nations personnel.

In the last six months alone over sixty surgical procedures and 8000 pathology tests have been carried out. There have been almost 3000 outpatients, in addition to physiotherapy, dental and X-ray support having been provided to over 1500 personnel the Hospital has participated in many evacuations and resuscitations.

As part of the United Nations downsizing process in East Timor, the Singaporean UN Military Hospital personnel were repatriated home in February this year and their Egyptian colleagues headed home in late March.

Australian Contingent 6, made up mainly of personnel from the 1st Health Support Battalion in Sydney, have been in East Timor since February and took on sole responsibility of the Hospital following the repatriation of the Singaporean and Egyptian personnel.

The 68 Australians are now in the midst of packing up the UN Military Hospital in preparation to leave the mission within the next couple of weeks.

Commanding Officer of Australian Contingent Six, Lieutenant Colonel Reg Crawford said, "the United Nations Military Hospital has a long and proud history in East Timor. Originally established by Australia in 1999 during INTERFET, it quickly grew to a strength of 146 personnel with Egypt and Singapore joining Australia in providing health support to UNTAET and UNMISSET".

In recognition of the support of East Timor, Lieutenant Colonel Reg Crawford said, "the people of East Timor have been warmly receptive of our presence in their country and I would like to make special mention of the Locally Employed Staff who have offered their tireless support all



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along. They have become part of our unit and we will remember them fondly”.

Thailand has taken up the health support role at the new UN Hospital providing Level 2 Medical care to UN civilian and military personnel in East Timor.

Level 2 medical care includes the provision of life and limb saving surgery, emergency resuscitation, inpatient care including an Intensive Care Unit, laboratory services, and x-ray capabilities.

The new UN Hospital will be one of two UN Level 2 facilities in East Timor, the other being the Slovak Forward Surgical Team in Suai.

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