

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

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SRSG STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

SRSG Kamallesh Sharma today said that protecting the rights and interests of children is especially important because they are among the most vulnerable sectors in East Timorese society.

The SRSG's comments came on the eve of tomorrow's briefing at which Mehr Kahn, the Director of UNICEF's Southeast Asia division, and representatives of East Timor's Government will address the issue of "The Protection of East Timorese Children and the Convention on the Rights of the Child."

Kahn arrived in East Timor on Tuesday for a four-day visit during which she is reviewing UNICEF programmes, meeting with government and civil society leaders and inaugurating a number of UNICEF projects including a community school and a breastfeeding counseling room at the Dili National Hospital.

The objective of tomorrow's briefing, to which press and members of civil society have been invited, is to raise awareness about the protection of children's rights as guaranteed in East Timor's Constitution and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights treaties.

Senior East Timorese officials have indicated the country may soon accede to these conventions and treaties, possibly around the time the country becomes a member of the United Nations in September.

The SRSG said today that the accession to international human rights treaties is a significant step that implies a permanent commitment by the Government to the rights of its people, adding that the protection and promotion of human rights have a special place in East Timor because the nation was born out of a global concern for the human rights abuses being perpetrated here.

PKF HOSTS TAUR MATAN RUAK VISIT TO SECTOR WEST

Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, the Commander of the newly formed East Timorese Defence Force (FALINTIL-FDTL), traveled to Sector West today for a two-day trip during which he will visit with the Australian and New Zealand contingents and tour and be briefed on their areas of operation.

This is the Commander's first official tour of Sector West since assuming the post of FALINTIL-FDTL Commander.

Meanwhile, the fortnightly Tactical Coordination Working Group meeting was held yesterday between representatives of the PKF and the TNI in the border town of Atambua. The main item on the agenda was planning for a fourth reconciliation meeting between East Timor's government and ex-militia leader João Tavares and his supporters.

