

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 23 December 2002

PORTUGUESE AND THAI MILITARY DELEGATIONS VISIT TIMOR-LESTE

A Portuguese military delegation, including Lt. General Antonio Bento Formosinho Correia Leal, Sub-Chief of the Army Staff and Rear Admiral Fernando Manuel de Oliveira Vargas de Matos of the Navy, paid a courtesy call today to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Mr. Kamallesh Sharma. The Portuguese delegation is on a week-long goodwill visit over the Christmas holidays to the Portuguese PKF Contingent (Porbatt) in Timor-Leste.

In their meeting with the SRSG, the Portuguese military leaders discussed UNMISSET and its mandate. Mr. Sharma thanked them for the valuable contribution that Porbatt has made to peace and security in Timor-Leste during its first months as an independent nation. The delegation confirmed Portugal's continued commitment to assisting in the continued peaceful development of the country.

The Portuguese delegation, which is also scheduled to meet with Timor-Leste President Xanana Gusmão, with the Secretary of State for Defence Roque Rodrigues and with Timor-Leste Defence Force Commander Taur Matan Ruak, will visit Portbatt troops in Dili, Liquica and Aileu.

The SRSG Mr. Sharma also received a courtesy call today from General Surayud Chulanont, the Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces. The Thai Commander is heading a 17-member delegation which is on a two-day visit to Timor-Leste to meet with Thai Battalion troops stationed in Suai and medical personnel at the Thai-provided military hospital in Dili. They will also hold meetings with the Peacekeeping Force Commander, Major Gen. Huck Gim Tan, and with Timor-Leste Defence Force Commander Taur Matan Ruak.



MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

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In their meeting with the SRSG, Mr. Sharma thanked Supreme Commander Gen.

Surayud Chulamont for Thailand's long and valued involvement in helping the people of Timor-Leste. He also recalled that two Thais, General Boonsrang Niumpradit and Lt. General Winai Phattiyaakul, have served with distinction as UN Peacekeeping Force Commanders in Timor-Leste.

Mr. Sharma thanked the Thai Commander for the contribution Thailand has made to technical cooperation in several areas in Timor-Leste, including the training of suco chiefs and the provision of equipment to the Timor-Leste Police Service and the Defence Force. Supreme Commander Gen. Surayud Chulamont indicated in his meeting with SRSG Mr. Sharma that some members of the Defence Force would be able to receive advanced training in Thailand.

End

