

By UNMISSET Spokesperson's Office

Dili, 25 November 2002

UN VOLUNTEER MISSION FROM BONN ENDS VISIT TO TIMOR-LESTE

A special mission of officials from the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Headquarters in Bonn, Germany, ended a four-day mission on 23 November. While in Timor-Leste, the UNV mission explored possibilities for further involvement of the UNV Programme in the country, and held meetings with officials from the Timor-Leste Public Administration, UN Agencies, NGOs and UN volunteers currently working in the newly independent nation.

The UNV mission included Andre Carvalho, Chief of the Development Programme and Operations Group; Junko Sazaki, Chief of the Asia, Pacific, Europe and CIS Section; Amareswara Rao, Management Officer; and Thuan Nguyen, Programme Specialist.

In a meeting the UNV mission had with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Jose Ramos-Horta, he spoke with appreciation of the contributions UNVs have made in many areas of the country as it progressed toward Independence and in its initial months as a full fledged nation.

Mr. Ramos-Horta is scheduled to pay a formal visit to UNV Headquarters in Bonn on 27 November, to meet with UNV Executive Coordinator Sharon Capeling-Alakija and administrative staff there.

The Bonn UNV mission left Timor-Leste confident that its meetings will lead to further UNV programme involvements in the country. According to Douglas Campos, Programme Manager for UNV Operations in East Timor, "The visit reaffirmed the important contribution these dedicated and professional volunteers have made in Timor-Leste. I'm confident that the work and results shown by the UN Volunteers will lead to even greater UNV involvement in helping the country develop."



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In a meeting with the UNV mission attended by more than 200 UNVs who are currently working in Timor-Leste, Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General and UN Resident Coordinator Sukehiro Hasegawa said, "I believe in you. You are making a difference. Even the UN Security Council has taken note of it."

Mr. Hasegawa, who has had a long association with the UN Volunteers, also expressed his hope that many of the volunteers would rise in the UN system in the years to come. "We are watching you". He said. "The United Nations needs well-qualified, considerate, kind and culturally sensitive people such as you".

At the same session with UN Volunteers, Andre Carvalho, Chief of the Development Programme and Operations Group in Bonn, cited the high praise the mission heard regarding the contributions of the UNVs currently employed in Timor-Leste: "Everywhere we have gone this week, they tell your stories. You are the ultimate expression of what the UN is all about."

The UNV Programme in Timor-Leste, currently with some 267 UN Volunteers employed here, is the largest in the world. Most of these UNVs work with the United Nations Mission in Support of East Timor (UNMISSET), however the number of UNVs working with UN agencies is growing as projects focussing on sustainable development come on line.

During the previous UN mission in East Timor, UNTAET, UN Volunteers played key roles in all operations of the UN Transitional Administration. Many were involved as well in the civic education, voter registration and electoral campaign processes and in helping administer violence-free Constituent Assembly and Presidential elections that paved the way to Independence. Some 800 UNVs served in East Timor prior to Independence.

The global UNV Programme was established in 1971. Since then it has deployed tens of thousands of committed volunteers worldwide in support to the regular programmes of development of the UN agencies and in support to the Peacekeeping and Peace Building Operations of the United Nations. Currently nearly 5,000 UN



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Volunteers are working worldwide in more than 140 countries and the programme is recognised for its contribution to peace and development.

BODIES OF TWO UNMISSET PKF SOLDIERS IDENTIFIED IN BALI

Authorities in Bali yesterday identified the bodies of Sergeant Marco Antonio Farias of the PKF Brazilian Military Police Contingent and Private Diogo Miguel Ribeirinho Dantas of the PKF Portuguese Battalion. The two UNMISSET PKF members who had been on holiday in Bali had been unaccounted for since the bombings on 12 October 2002.

A UNMISSET PKF memorial service for the two peacekeepers was held at the Montael Church in Dili on Wednesday, 13 November 2002.

Sergeant Farias served in the 19th Infantry Battalion before being deployed to Timor-Leste on 18 June 2002. Private Diogo entered the Portuguese Army on 26 May 2000, and served in Timor-Leste since 9 June 2002.

The repatriation of their bodies to Brazil and Portugal will be announced once the details have been confirmed.

NEW COMMUNITY RECONCILIATION HEARINGS

The Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) conducted four Community Reconciliation hearings this past week. More than 1,000 people turned out in the village of Bebop, in Nitibe, a subdistrict of Oecussi, on 22 November, for the largest CAVR reconciliation hearing to date. Thirty-one Timorese made admissions of guilt and offered apologies for destroying the houses of three CNRT leaders, assaulting several people and stealing livestock and other belongings during 1999.

The reconciliation panel for the public hearing consisted of four village representatives, three men and one woman, plus the District CAVR Commissioner.



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They facilitated the mediation process between the 31 perpetrators -- all of whom had already made formal statements of their crimes -- and the victims and community members.

As part of the reconciliation process, the perpetrators agreed to pay each of the three former CNRT leaders whose houses were destroyed two traditional Tais, 10 Dutch Guildas and other ceremonial gifts. The perpetrators also made individual compensation agreements with the other victims who were assaulted or had property stolen from them.

In the case of one perpetrator, the issue of his possibly having committed more serious crimes was raised. The panel explained that it did not have jurisdiction to deal with such serious criminal allegations, and will refer the case back to the Serious Crimes Unit. The public reconciliation hearing process deals only with somewhat minor crimes with serious crimes handled by the Serious Crimes Unit.

The Oecussi Community Reconciliation Process hearings were particularly notable for the level of community participation in the proceedings. The perpetrators and the victims and community members were reportedly happy with the outcomes. The perpetrators even hosted a party for the victims in the aftermath of the reconciliation hearing.

FORMER UNTAET EMPLOYEE KILLED IN WEST BANK CAMP

Iain Hook, a former UNTAET employee in East Timor during 2000-2001, was shot dead by Israeli Army forces in the midst of a raid on a Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank city of Jenin on Friday, 23 November. The British, UN worker formerly served as UNTAET's Director of Infrastructure in East Timor during the period the UN administered the country.

At the time of his death, Mr. Hook was Project Manager of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Jenin. He was helping to evacuate the UN compound when he was shot and killed. The killing of Mr. Hook drew criticism from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Mr. Annan said he was "deeply disturbed" by Mr. Hook's death.



MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE

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