

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: TLS31357
Country: East Timor (Timor L'Este)
Date: 2 March 2007

Keywords: East Timor (Timor L'Este) – Armed forces – Security crisis April/May 2006 – “Petitioners” – Dismissal of troops – East/West Division

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

- 1. Please provide background information on the April-May 2006 conflict in East Timor and the dismissal of 600 troops.**
- 2. Is there a history of division between the east and west? If so, what is the basis for this division?**

Please base this research on a few major reports and analysis post April-May 2006.

RESPONSE

- 1. Please provide background information on the April-May 2006 conflict in East Timor and the dismissal of 600 troops.**

The conflict in Timor-Leste in April and May 2006 has been the subject of a United Nations Commission of Inquiry. In June 2006, the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste was created with a mandate “to establish the facts and circumstances relevant to incidents that took place on 28 and 29 April and 23, 24 and 25 May and related events or issues that contributed to the crisis, clarify responsibility for those events and recommend measures of accountability for crimes and serious violations of human rights allegedly committed during the mandated period.” A report dated 2 October 2006 by the Commission includes background information regarding the crisis (pp. 16-22) and a detailed narrative of events that occurred in April and May 2006 (pp. 22-42). The report also looks at responsibility for the events (pp. 43-64) and accountability measures (pp. 64-74).

In relation to the background to the crisis in Timor-Leste in April and May 2006, the report indicates that:

The crisis that occurred in Timor-Leste between 28 April and 25 May can be explained largely by the frailty of State institutions and the weakness of the rule of law. However, this

explanation can only be understood fully in the historical and cultural context of the country. Both the Portuguese and Indonesian eras created and subsumed internal divisions within Timor-Leste. Political competition within Timor-Leste has been historically settled through violence. Accordingly, many Timorese view the events of April and May 2006 as a continuum starting from the decolonization process in 1974/75 and encompassing the violence and factionalism of the Indonesian occupation and the violence that accompanied the United Nations-sponsored Popular Consultation in 1999.

The report refers to the existence of earlier “tensions between Xanana Gusmao and much of the FRETILIN leadership” that “still reverberate within Timor-Leste today.” It also notes that while the FRETILIN administration that “assumed total control over the Government under Prime Minister Alkatiri” in 2002, had “met many challenges inherent in nation-building, the power imbalance between it and its political opponents has been an issue since 2002 and informed the crisis of April and May 2006.”

According to the report, the first signs of the “crisis emerged with the advent of the group now known as the petitioners and the subsequent manner in which F-FDTL [FALINTIL – Forças Armadas de Defesa de Timor-Leste] managed their allegations of discrimination within F-FDTL.” It is stated in the report that:

33. The first signs of the current crisis emerged with the advent of the group now known as the petitioners and the subsequent manner in which F-FDTL managed their allegations of discrimination within F-FDTL. A petition dated 9 January signed by 159 officers and other ranks of F-FDTL alleged mismanagement and discrimination within F-FDTL. The petitioners were drawn from almost every unit in the defence force. The petition, addressed to President Gusmão and copied to the Chief of the Defence Force and the Minister of Defence, was received by the President on 11 January 2006. As of 1 February no response had been received by the petitioners. On 3 February the petitioners abandoned their barracks, leaving their weapons behind. They gathered in Dili and sought an interview with the President on 7 February.

34. On 8 February 418 petitioners held a march at the Presidential Palácio das Cinzas. Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak refused the request of President Gusmão to attend the march and instead sent F-FDTL Chief of Staff Colonel Lere Annan Timor. The Minister of Defence attended at the invitation of the President. President Gusmão ordered the petitioners to return to the F-FDTL training centre at Metinaro and to participate in a commission of investigation which would examine the allegations raised in the petition. On 10 February the Commission was established; it comprised F-FDTL officers and two Members of Parliament. The Commission conducted its activities from 12 to 17 February. The Commission failed to resolve the problems extant between the petitioners and the F-FDTL command. On 17 February the petitioners left their barracks after being granted leave. They elected not to return.

35. In mid-March Brigadier General Ruak announced the dismissal of 594 soldiers with retroactive effect as at 1 March. There is no evidence before the Commission of Inquiry that the dismissal was officially executed. The Commission notes that approximately 200 of the personnel dismissed were not petitioners, but officers and other ranks who had been chronically absent without leave in the months and years prior to March 2006. On 21 March the Prime Minister expressed his support for the decision. The dismissal was not accepted by the petitioners, who announced their intention to appeal the decision to President Gusmão.

36. On 23 March the President addressed the nation on the issue. He stated that the dismissal was within the competency of the Chief of the Defence Force, but also stated that the decision was unjust. In quoting the words of the petition, the President gave credence to the

petitioners' claims that the problems within F-FDTL were due primarily to discrimination by easterners against westerners. The Commission does not question the intention of the President, but most interlocutors have told the Commission that his speech was perceived as being more divisive than helpful and as fostering rather than resolving communal conflict. Between 25 and 31 March multiple disturbances in Dili assumed an east versus west dynamic as youths from both regions became embroiled in the petitioner issue. On 3 April the petitioners moved to the place known as the Carantina in Taci Tolu. On 17 April the petitioners commenced preparations for a five-day protest.

The report indicates that "Between 24 and 28 April 2006 a demonstration was staged outside the Government Palace in Dili. Ostensibly organized and controlled by the petitioners, the demonstration sought resolution of alleged discriminatory practices against westerners within F-FDTL." There were negotiations between the petitioners and the PNTL [Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste] prior to the demonstration. "The negotiations culminated in a press conference on 23 April 2006, during which the petitioners guaranteed that the demonstration would be peaceful and the PNTL General Commander stated that the demonstration would be stopped immediately if it became violent." The report notes that "from the second day of the protest onwards," the petitioners and their sympathisers had their ranks "augmented noticeably... by the arrival of third parties, particularly members of the group known as Colimau 2000." It is further stated in the report that:

41. Isolated incidents of violence occurred with increasing frequency throughout Dili during the week of the demonstration. On 25 April a kiosk and goods were destroyed in the Lecidere beach area, two youths were assaulted and market stalls belonging to easterners in the Taibessi area were burned. On the same day Ozório Leki, the spokesman for Colimau 2000, made a speech at the protest site in which he threatened to unleash the crowd if the police failed to stop the attack on market stallholders. He stated further that violence would be used to secure a change of Government. Market stalls in Taibessi were burned again the following day and an off-duty PNTL member in the area was attacked. Lieutenant Salsinha [the spokesman for the petitioners] allowed Mr. Leki to make a further speech on 26 April in which he used inflammatory anti-eastern language. Prime Minister Alkatiri was informed about the presence of Ozório Leki among the petitioners and the expression of anti-Government rhetoric.

42. The petitioners expected that a government representative would visit the site of the demonstration and speak with them. The issue assumed critical importance during discussions between the Government and the petitioners on 27 April. Prime Minister Alkatiri proposed a government commission to report within three months about the issues raised by the petitioners together with a subsidy to assist reintegration into districts, but refused a request to address the petitioners at the Government Palace about the proposal. Minister for Foreign Affairs José Ramos-Horta agreed to address the petitioners the following day.

The morning of 28 April 2006

43. With the demonstration scheduled to end at 1 p.m. on Friday, 28 April, a tangible change in the atmosphere of the crowd gathered in front of the Government Palace was evident by early morning. The Minister for Foreign Affairs was expected at 9 a.m. The Minister believed, however, that he was scheduled to arrive at 3 p.m. Slow-burning anger at his failure to appear reached boiling point at about midday. From about 10 a.m., threats of violence and sporadic incidents of fighting had begun to occur. Stone throwing began at about 11.30 a.m. Additionally, the number of third parties among the petitioners, which had been increasing since 25 April, suddenly spiked. Lieutenant Salsinha was unable to control the anger of the youths who had joined the protest. In this atmosphere the feeling that the petitioners were willing to die for their cause gained currency.

The report provides a detailed account of violence that occurred on 28 April 2006 at the Government Palace, the Comoro market and Rai Kotu. At the Government Palace, the protestors began to move towards the palace about midday. “The two PNTL lines broke almost immediately and many PNTL officers simply fled. While the Commission has heard the view that it was only western PNTL officers who abandoned their posts, perhaps at the invitation of the crowd, the available information suggests that the division between those who fled and those who did not is not so easily made. Further, at least some PNTL officers were instructed to return to the PNTL headquarters by the Dili District Commander.” The report indicates that:

48. The protesters entered the Government Palace. Two vehicles were burned. Ground-floor offices were ransacked. The crowd threw stones at police. One police officer was attacked with a machete. The protesters yelled words to the effect of “shoot us if you want to” to both the UIR [Unidade Intervencao Rapida (Rapid Response Unit)] officers and Military Police at the Hello Mister intersection. The PNTL General Commander arrived at the scene and authorized the use of tear gas. PNTL officers also fired shots. General Commander Martins told the Commission that he had not authorized this. By about 1. p.m. senior PNTL officers had returned to the PNTL headquarters leaving a limited number of ordinary and UIR PNTL officers at the scene. Minister of the Interior Lobato arrived at the headquarters wearing a flak jacket and in a highly agitated state, yelling “kill them all”. The PNTL Chief of Operations told the Commission that the Minister of the Interior instructed him to move URP [Unidade de Reserva da Policia (Police Reserve Unit)] from Taibessi to the Government Palace. PNTL records show that one F2000 fully automatic machine gun and 2,000 rounds of ammunition were signed over to the Minister of the Interior by the PNTL General Commander. By about 1.30 p.m. the demonstrators had dispersed. Two civilians had been killed. Three civilians and one PNTL officer had suffered firearm injuries. One civilian and one PNTL officer had suffered other serious injuries.

A chronology of significant events in the report provides a summary of the violent incidents that occurred on 28 April 2006 and indicates that F-FDTL forces were deployed to assist the PNTL. It is stated in the chronology of significant events that:

28 April 2006	Violence erupts outside the Government Palace on the last morning of the demonstration. Two civilians are killed, four persons suffer firearm injuries, two persons suffer other serious injuries. More violence occurs at Comoro Market. One civilian is killed, eight persons suffer firearm injuries, four persons suffer other serious injuries. At Raikotu/Taci Tolu violence occurs within the F-FDTL operational area. Two civilians are killed, five civilians suffer firearm injuries. F-FDTL is deployed to assist PNTL to restore order and contain the petitioners.
---------------	--

The report notes that at a meeting at Prime Minister Alkatiri’s residence on 29 April 2006, it was decided “to withdraw the F-FDTL forces from the city to the outskirts of Dili, but to continue joint Military Police and PNTL patrols within the city. The withdrawal did not take effect on 30 April 2006 as planned, but was achieved by 4 May when F-FDTL forces returned to both Taci Tolu and Metinaro bases, leaving some soldiers stationed at the Military Police headquarters. Joint Military Police and PNTL patrols operated throughout Dili from 30 April to 3 May. These ceased when Major Alfredo Reinado, the Commander of the Military Police, abandoned his post on 3 May 2006.” The chronology of significant events in the

report notes that when Major Alfredo Reinado abandoned the F-FDTL Military Police, he took “with him other military police officers, PNTL officers and weapons.”

A further incident of violence took place in Gleno on 8 May 2006. According to the chronology of significant events in the report:

8 May 2006 Incident of violence in Gleno in which eastern PNTL officers are attacked. One officer killed, one officer seriously injured. Minister of the Interior Rogerio Lobato arms two groups of civilians – the Rai Los and Lima Lima groups – with weapons and ammunition belonging to the Border Patrol Unit (UPF) of PNTL.

The chronology of significant events also notes that on 21 May 2006, “Minister of the Interior Lobato” distributed “additional UPF weapons to the Rai Los group.”

The report provides a detailed account of further violence that occurred on 23, 24 and 25 May 2006. The chronology of significant events provides the following summary of the violence:

23 May 2006 F-FDTL and PNTL officers are ambushed by Major Reinado and his group. Five persons are killed, 10 persons are seriously injured.

24 May 2006 Attack on F-FDTL soldiers in Taci Tolu/Tibar by the Rai Los group, petitioners, and PNTL. Five persons are killed two persons are seriously injured.
Attack on the house of Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak. One person is killed, two persons are injured.
F-FDTL arms civilians with the knowledge of Minister of Defence Rodrigues.

25 May 2006 The house of in-laws of Minister of the Interior Lobato is burnt. Six civilians trapped inside the house are killed.
An armed confrontation between F-FDTL soldiers and PNTL officers centred on the PNTL headquarters is followed by the shooting of unarmed PNTL officers escorted under United Nations protection. Nine persons are killed, twenty-seven persons suffer serious gunshot injuries.
A shooting occurs at Mercado Lama. One civilian is killed, two civilians are wounded.

The chronology of significant events for 23 May 2006 indicates that “F-FDTL and PNTL officers” were “ambushed by Major Reinado and his group.” The more detailed description of the incident in the report indicates that F-FDTL soldiers who “arrived in Fatu Ahi to rendezvous with PNTL officers” to make “a field site assessment of” a proposed joint post, instead saw men from Reinado’s group. Two journalists had arrived earlier to videotape an interview with Reinado and the start of the armed confrontation was “captured on that footage.” The confrontation started when Reinado initiated the shooting “on the count of 10 after issuing a warning to leave.” The F-FDTL commander “ordered the soldiers to return fire.”

The report indicates that the Minister of the Interior Lobato and the Minister of Defence Rodrigues resigned on 1 June 2006. On 25 June 2006, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Ramos-Horta resigned. Prime Minister Alkatiri resigned on the following day. On 10 July 2006, José Ramos-Horta was sworn in as Prime Minister.

The report notes that weapons were transferred to civilians during the crisis. In relation to “the distribution of PNTL weapons to civilians”, the report refers to a meeting on 8 May 2006 that included then Prime Minister Alkatiri and “Vicente da Conceicao, aka Rai Los”. According to the report, although the Commission did “not accept that at the meeting on 8 May the former Prime Minister gave instructions to Rai Los to “eliminate” his political opponents, on the basis of all of the information before it the Commission is satisfied that there is a reasonable suspicion that the former Prime Minister at least had knowledge about the distribution of PNTL weapons to civilians.”

In relation to the distribution of F-FDTL weapons, the report indicates that “The evidence before the Commission establishes that F-FDTL began to arm civilians on 24 May 2006. This was done on the order of Brigadier General Ruak and with the knowledge of the Minister of Defence.”

In relation to the impact of the events in April and May 2006, it is stated in the report that:

100. Significant loss of life, injury and widespread property damage resulted from the events of April and May as examined as part of the mandate of the Commission. At the conclusion of its inquiries, the Commission had information that up to 38 people were killed: 23 civilians, 12 PNTL officers and 3 F-FDTL soldiers. The Commission repeats that there is no evidence of a massacre of 60 people at Taci Tolu having taken place on 28/29 April. The Commission also has information that 69 people suffered injuries: 37 civilians, 23 PNTL officers, 7 F-FDTL soldiers and 2 UNPOL officers. The Commission notes that such figures are difficult to confirm and accepts that there may be discrepancies in the exact numbers.

101. Further, the events and incidents considered in this report had a devastating impact on the community at large. In addition to those killed or injured, approximately 150,000 persons were displaced (some 73,000 persons in IDP camps in and around Dili and a further 78,000 having moved to districts outside Dili). While displacement built up progressively after 28 April, the largest increase in displacement occurred after the events of 25 May. The population of the IDP camps increased by 300 per cent in 24 hours. An estimated 1,650 houses were destroyed in the aftermath of events recounted here, with the majority occurring in late May and early June. The impact not only related to housing, but impeded men, women and children’s enjoyment of a number of their economic and social rights, including to food, education, employment, and the highest attainable standard of health. According to UNICEF surveys, 15 per cent of children in the IDP camps needed immediate treatment for malnutrition; 57 per cent of respondents to a World Food Programme survey reported that they had ceased their primary income or livelihood activity. Shortages of food occurred both in camps and as a result of the pressure on extended family, who were hosting displaced persons outside Dili. In the case of the national medical hospital, access has been impeded by a perception that it is unsafe for western persons to go to the hospital. Freedom of movement has also been restricted. While there has been a well-coordinated humanitarian response, involving collaborative work between Government and the NGO community, and many persons have returned to their employment, the affects of the incidents remain evident in the continued displacement and associated problems.

In its conclusions, the Commission was “of the view that the violent events of April and May were more than a series of criminal acts. They were the expression of deep-rooted problems inherent in fragile State institutions and a weak rule of law. The events exposed many deficiencies and failures, particularly in the two institutions at the centre of the crisis, F-FDTL and PNTL, along with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior charged with their oversight. The absence of comprehensive regulatory frameworks and the bypassing

of existing institutional mechanisms, even if underdeveloped, contributed significantly to the emergence and growth of the crisis.” The Commission made the following findings:

224. The Commission finds that:

- (a) The Government was insufficiently proactive in addressing the lack of a national security policy and problems evident within and between PNTL and F-FDTL;
- (b) The Government failed to follow the requisite legislative procedures in calling out F-FDTL on 28 April 2006, a matter for which those members of the Crisis Cabinet who made the decision, and in particular the former Prime Minister, bear responsibility;
- (c) F-FDTL had limited preparedness to provide military assistance to the civil power, a matter for which responsibility lies with the Minister of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force;
- (d) The operational planning and response to the violence by PNTL during April and May was deficient, a matter for which the PNTL General Commander and the Minister of the Interior bear responsibility;
- (e) No massacre of 60 people occurred at Taci Tolu on 28 and 29 April 2006;
- (f) The abandonment of post on 24 May by the PNTL General Commander was a serious dereliction of duty and the Minister of the Interior failed to take sufficient steps to respond to the breakdown in the chain of command of PNTL;
- (g) The Chief of the Defence Force cannot be held criminally responsible for the shooting of PNTL officers by F-FDTL soldiers after the ceasefire had been established on 25 May;
- (h) The Chief of the Defence Force failed to exhaust all avenues to either prevent or stop the confrontation between F-FDTL and PNTL on 25 May;
- (i) There was an absence of systematic control over weapons and ammunition within the security sector, particularly within PNTL. The Commission finds that the Minister of the Interior and the General Commander bypassed institutional procedures by irregularly transferring weapons within the institution;
- (j) Both PNTL and F-FDTL weapons were distributed to civilians. In arming civilians, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence acted without lawful authority and created a situation of significant potential danger;
- (k) The former Prime Minister failed to use his firm authority to denounce the transfer of security sector weapons to civilians in the face of credible information that such transfer was ongoing and involved members of the Government;
- (l) The speech given by the President on 23 March 2006 was perceived as divisive and the President should have shown more restraint and respect for institutional channels by exhausting available mechanisms before giving the speech and by communicating directly with Major Reinado after the latter’s desertion;
- (m) The President did not order or authorize the armed group of men under the command of Major Reinado to carry out criminal actions;
- (n) Certain individuals are criminally responsible for the incidents of violence during April and May 2006 (United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste 2006, ‘Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste’, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights website, 2 October, pp. 2, 5-7, 16, 17, 19, 21-42, 74-76
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/docs/CoIReport-English.pdf> – Accessed 30 October 2006 – Attachment 1).

An International Crisis Group report dated 10 October 2006 also includes information on the violence in Timor-Leste in April and May 2006. The report indicates that the crisis in Timor-Leste “is widely portrayed as stemming from the sacking of a third of the country’s defence forces in March 2006, after which the disgruntled soldiers became part of a power struggle between President Xanana Gusmao and the now deposed prime minister, Mari Alkatiri. However, the problem is far more complex.” According to the report:

The roots lie partly in the battles and betrayals that occurred within the Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of East Timor (FRETILIN), just before and during the Indonesian occupation. Ideological and political disputes in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly between FRETILIN central committee members and Xanana Gusmao, then commander of the guerrilla army FALINTIL, carried over into the post-conflict government.

They are also to be found in the poorly implemented demobilisation of FALINTIL fighters in 2000 and the creation of a defence force for the new country in 2001 that absorbed some of the veterans but left others unemployed and resentful while donors and the UN devoted most of their attention to creation of a new police force. That many of the police, vetted and retrained, had worked for the Indonesian administration, was more salt in the wounds of the ex-fighters.

The old ideological splits and the frustrations of the ex-FALINTIL were manipulated in particular by Rogerio Lobato, a FRETILIN central committee member who had lived in Angola and Mozambique for the duration of the conflict. As interior minister, he controlled the police, encouraged rivalry with the defence force, most of whom were personally loyal to Xanana Gusmao, and created specialised police units that effectively became a private security force. The police under him were in charge of law and order, border patrol, riot control and immigration. It was never clear what the role of the defence force was.

All these problems had been festering for years. When 159 soldiers in January 2006 petitioned the president as supreme commander, alleging discrimination in the defence force by officers from the eastern part of the country (*lorosae*) against people from the west (*loromonu*), many interested parties saw political opportunity. More soldiers from the west joined the petitioners, while personal and institutional tensions between a president committed to pluralism and a ruling party with distinctly authoritarian tendencies, politicisation of the police, lack of any regulatory framework for the security forces more generally and the inbred nature of a tiny political elite with 30 years' shared history allowed matters to spiral out of control.

The report provides information on the events leading up to the violence in April and May 2006 and the incidents that occurred during those months. According to the report, "President Gusmao and Jose Ramos Horta were locked in mortal political combat with Alkatiri, and at some stage, Gusmao's supporters, if not Gusmao himself, appear to have decided to use the petitioners in that struggle." In relation to the demonstration by the petitioners that began outside the main government complex on 24 April 2006, the report notes that the demonstration "quickly turned into a protest against the Alkatiri government, with hundreds of local youths joining in, many of them known troublemakers and gang members. Some who took part were western stalwarts of the pro-Xanana Gusmao, anti-FRETILIN CNRT, heightening suspicions this was less and less about discrimination in the army and more about political control of the country." The report also indicates that the unrest that "F-FDTL troops with no experience in crowd control were deployed to quell" on 28 April 2006 had, whatever the other factors, "a strong east versus west component, much of it attacks by *loromonu* youth against *lorosae* neighbourhoods." According to the report:

Because they were under Col. Lere, a target of the petitioners' discrimination allegation, the soldiers were assumed to be pro-*lorosae* and thus parties to the conflict. Whether or not they were, their apparently indiscriminate use of force exacerbated the east-west rift, emboldened *loromonu* attackers, and fuelled conspiracy theories. Soon there were rumours – almost certainly unfounded – of an F-FDTL massacre in Dili's Comoro neighbourhood, and thousands of *lorosae* sought refuge in churches and embassy compounds.

In relation to the defection on 3 May 2006 of Major Alfredo Alves Reinado, the head of the military police, the report indicates that Reinado “left the F-FDTL, he said, “because, on the day, on the 28th, it was easterners who shot westerners. I am witness to that. I do not want to be a part of the (army) that shot westerners”... In fact, he did not witness anything.” The report provides differing explanations for the previously mentioned clash between Reinado’s group and F-FDTL soldiers on 23 May 2006. The report indicates that the result of that clash “was F-FDTL operations against Alfredo’s group”. The incident “started a new round of violence”, with armed police, civilians and rebel soldiers attacking “from the hills above the armed forces headquarters in Tacitolu, killing an F-FDTL officer” on 24 May 2006. The house of defence forces commander Brigadier-General Taur Matan Ruak “was attacked by a group of *loromonu*, pro-Rogério Lobato police under the control of the deputy police commander for Dili, Abilio Mesquita alias “Mausoko” on the same day. On 25 May 2006, F-FDTL soldiers “disarmed three policemen in Comoro” and “F-FDTL personnel exchanged shots with a police patrol car.” Youths and F-FDTL soldiers burnt down the house of a relative of Rogério Lobato. A mother and four children died in the blaze. The house of Ismail Babo, who was “the police commander involved in the Gleno incident” and “who, some suggest, was involved in the attack on armed forces headquarters,” was also burnt down. On the same day, “F-FDTL soldiers assaulted police headquarters”, following which ten policemen were killed and some thirty injured when F-FDTL soldiers opened fire on unarmed police who were being escorted from the headquarters building by UN police.

According to the report, as fighting spread, the first Australian troops “landed in Dili. Xanana announced he was assuming control of security – on unclear constitutional grounds: Alkatiri questioned the legality of Xanana’s actions but said he would cooperate. Later Xanana ordered Alkatiri to sack Rogério Lobato and Defence Minister Roque Rodrigues. Malaysia, Portugal and New Zealand also dispatched troops that combined would eventually total 2,250... The UN and diplomatic missions struggled to evacuate non-essential staff as gunfights erupted between police and military, and gangs of mostly *loromonu*, armed with machetes and “Ambonese arrows” (*panah Ambon*), a lethal form of slingshot, attacked *lorosae* neighbourhoods.”

The report also provides information regarding the political battle between Xanana Gusmao and Mari Alkatiri in June 2006 that “ended with Alkatiri’s resignation on 27 June”. The report, in its conclusion, indicates that “The crisis in Timor-Leste stems from the legacy of resistance to the Indonesian occupation; post-independence institutional failures, particularly in the security sector; and divisive policies on the part of the ruling party, FRETILIN” (International Crisis Group 2006, ‘Resolving Timor-Leste’s Crisis’, ICG website, 10 October, Executive Summary & pp. 8-13, 20 http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/120_resolving_timor_lest_es_crisis.pdf – Accessed 11 October 2006 – Attachment 2).

A report dated 8 August 2006 by the Secretary-General to the United Nations Security Council provides a further description of the violence in Timor-Leste in April and May 2006. The report also provides information on the events leading up to the resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri on 26 June 2006 and the swearing in of Jose Ramos-Horta as Prime Minister on 10 July 2006. It includes information on the requests made by Timor-Leste for police and military assistance from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal in May 2006 and the humanitarian assistance provided to people displaced by the violence. The report also looks at the underlying causes of the crisis. It is stated in the report that:

29. There is overwhelming agreement that the events of the past three months constituted more than a short-term political crisis and that the situation has not been resolved simply with a change of government. The change of government has left the grievances that triggered the crisis largely unresolved, while it is widely recognized that deep-seated problems underlay the crisis and that these problems need to be clearly identified and tackled if Timor-Leste is not to repeat the painful experiences of recent months. In speeches made at the time of the inauguration of the new Government in July, President Gusmão and the new Prime Minister, Mr. Ramos-Horta, identified underlying causes of the crisis as various as the failure of government to engage with the people, the unhealed wounds of the past and high youth unemployment. The crisis was a complex one with political, institutional, historical, social and economic dimensions. The resolution of the political stand-off merely creates an opportunity for the grievances which gave rise to it and the longer-term issues to be addressed.

The report notes that “A balanced assessment of what caused the crisis also demands that the progress made since 1999, particularly in creating institutions and building the capacity to run them, be acknowledged.” The report also refers to the past leaving “a deep imprint on the Timor-Leste of today” and the legacy of the years of resistance to foreign occupation culminating “in an overwhelming vote for independence in 1999 in the face of massive intimidation” being “a mixed one.” According to the report:

A gulf of understanding (including in terms of educational background and language) often separates those who spent those years as resistance fighters, those who lived in Indonesian-occupied towns and villages, and those who passed the occupation years in exile. Veterans and young people are as likely to be divided by a generation gap that is the product of a conflict that lasted more than a generation and went through several distinct phases, as they are to be united by a common sense of exclusion. The violent consequences of past intra-Timorese political conflicts have bequeathed a deeply ingrained fear of any form of political contention. The fact that the resistance was regionally fragmented and operated clandestinely for much of its existence often obscured the true contributions of particular individuals and regions to the cause. The single party that has dominated politics since the elections of 2001, Fretilin, rests its claim to be the party of government as much on its standing as the original advocate of independence and its past services to the pro-independence cause as its present programme. The communal dimension to the crisis, based on long-standing frictions between easterners and westerners in the armed forces and the police and in the neighbourhoods of Dili, has been seen by some as reflecting in part a failure of the political leadership to sustain the sense of national identity that brought Timor-Leste to independence.

32. The political and institutional dimensions of the crisis are closely intertwined. The imbalance in power between the institutions of State that has allowed the executive to operate with few constraints has political and institutional as well as constitutional roots. Critics accuse Fretilin of having used its dominant position in Parliament and its superior political machinery to narrow the space available for political debate or challenge, including within the party itself. The party’s use of its overwhelming parliamentary majority and the weakness of the small and fragmented opposition mean that Parliament is often not seen as an effective check on the executive. Outside Parliament, there has been antagonism between the governing party on the one hand, and the church and much of civil society on the other. The executive is also accused of politicizing or attempting to politicize the machinery of government, most notably the institutions at the core of the crisis, F-FDTL and PNTL, and the two ministries charged with their management and oversight, the Ministries of the Interior and Defence, instead of developing an integrated strategy for the security sector.

33. The development of such norms of governance as the neutrality of civil service, the accountability of government ministers and the development of internal procedures, including disciplinary codes, requires time in a new State, but has also been hampered by politicization and centralization of decision-making. The absence of comprehensive regulatory frameworks has been particularly marked and detrimental in the security sector, where an overarching national defence policy, legislation, institutional mission statements and development plans, as well as mechanisms and procedures for coordination between the security forces, have all been absent. Capacity deficits in such areas as management, administration and policymaking have gone hand in hand with unused capacity, particularly at local level, among youth, women, traditional leaders, middle managers and those with technical skills...

The report also indicates that “While the primary underlying causes of the current crisis are political and institutional, poverty and its associated deprivations, including high urban unemployment and the absence of any prospect of meaningful involvement and employment opportunities in the foreseeable future, especially for young people, have also contributed to the crisis.” The report notes that “Timor-Leste is one of the poorest countries in the world” and that since 2000-2001, “the non-oil economy has stagnated”, with non-oil GDP per capita contracting “in each year since, and is expected to continue declining through 2007.” Its social indicators remained poor, with the country having the highest population growth rate in the region, an increased number of people living in absolute poverty and a high, although improved, incidence of infant mortality. Timor-Leste “does not produce enough food to meet the minimum consumption needs of its population” and has “high levels of chronic and seasonal malnutrition.” Urban youth unemployment was “at 44 per cent.” Production of oil and gas had “started to transform the country’s economic prospects,” but “the sector will not directly generate many jobs. Translating petroleum wealth into broad-based development will depend on sustained pro-poor public expenditures and investments and well-administered public sector programmes designed to deliver quality basic social services, targeting vulnerable and marginalized groups, and to create employment” (United Nations Security Council 2006, ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006)’, S/2006/628, United Nations website, 8 August, pp. 7-9 <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep06.htm> – Accessed 28 February 2007 – Attachment 3).

A paper dated 9 June 2006 by “Antero Benedito ‘Nito’ Da Silva, Community Development Studies, Universidade Nacional Timor-Lorosae”, notes that “Around 591 Falinitil Forces de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL) members signed a petition earlier this year claiming the armed forces hierarchy discriminated in their promotion of officers, based on regionalism.” The paper argues “however, that at the heart of the current conflict is a politics rather than regionalism, and that regionalism is a tool for political rivalries among the elite politicians.” The paper provides information on the events of April and May 2006 and indicates that as well as regionalism, there were “other contributing elements” to the conflict. According to the paper:

The main argument of the petitioners, however, was that there was discrimination in rank promotion based on regionalism. The 591 or so F-FDTL members who protested against this and called for reform of the military structure were mostly from Loromonu districts, and so regionalism has presented as a convincing contributing factor to the current conflict. But there are other contributing elements that people do not mention in the public. First, according to reliable sources within F-FDTL, some senior officers from both the Lorosae and Loromonu districts had been involved in the black market and had been caught red-handed by members of the national police. Their cases were being processed by a tribunal. F-FDTL had also taken disciplinary measures, which included eliminating them from promotion. Secondly, there are still active high ranking officers from Loromonu within the F-FDTL. Third, regionalism was

previously an issue in the police force; and the conflict that has occurred within F-FDTL is not an isolated incident (Da Silva, Antero Benedito 'Nito' 2006, 'Community and the current crisis in Timor-Leste', Development Studies Network website, 9 June <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/timor-beyond%20crisis%20papers/Antero%20da%20Silva.ml.doc> – Accessed 25 July 2006 – Attachment 4).

A paper dated 9 June 2006 by Damien Kingsbury of Deakin University also provides information regarding the events of April and May 2006 in Timor-Leste (Kingsbury, Damien 2006, 'Timor-Leste's way forward: State and nation building', Development Studies Network website, 9 June <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/timor-beyond%20crisis%20papers/Kingsbury.ml.doc> – Accessed 25 July 2006 – Attachment 5).

A report dated 1 February 2007 on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste includes information regarding developments in Timor-Leste since the release of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste report dated 2 October 2006 (United Nations Security Council 2007, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 9 August 2006 to 26 January 2007)', United Nations website, 1 February <http://documents.un.org/mother.asp> – Accessed 9 February 2007 – Attachment 6).

2. Is there a history of division between the east and west? If so, what is the basis for this division?

The report dated 2 October 2006 by the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste comments on communal divisions in Timor-Leste. The report indicates that the Commission had "heard opposing views on the origin and longevity of" communal factionalism in Timor Leste, which "is most commonly articulated in the perception that persons from the east and west of Timor-Leste discriminate against each other." According to the report:

31. The current crisis has been created partially, but exacerbated significantly, by communal factionalism. This factionalism is most commonly articulated in the perception that persons from the east and west of Timor-Leste discriminate against each other. The Commission has heard opposing views on the origin and longevity of this cleavage. On the one hand it is suggested that it is a totally new phenomenon, as evinced by the total absence of the issue in the thousands of testimonies collected by the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation. On the other, the Commission of Inquiry has been told that it is a long-dormant issue dating from the Portuguese era. Most people interviewed by the Commission agree that the east-west phenomenon was manipulated during the crisis by groups with specific political interests.

32. In the view of the Commission the east-west division is a simplification of a far more complex issue. Timor-Leste has no modern history of concerted political violence between easterners and westerners as unified and opposing groups. However, there are sensitive divisions within Timorese society relating to notions of national and communal identity. The poorly defined national identity, particularly in the absence of a common enemy post-1999, is critical to an understanding of how the east versus west distinction has arisen in recent years. This division infected both F-FDTL and PNTL prior to 2006, as manifested in actual or perceived acts of discrimination and nepotism. Additionally, political interests and communities have become embroiled in the issue (United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste 2006, 'Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste', Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights website, 2 October, pp. 20-21
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/docs/CoIReport-English.pdf> – Accessed 30 October 2006 – Attachment 1).

The report dated 8 August 2006 on Timor-Leste by the United Nations Secretary-General notes that “The communal dimension to the crisis, based on long-standing frictions between easterners and westerners in the armed forces and the police and in the neighbourhoods of Dili, has been seen by some as reflecting in part a failure of the political leadership to sustain the sense of national identity that brought Timor-Leste to independence” (United Nations Security Council 2006, ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006)’, S/2006/628, United Nations website, 8 August, p. 8 <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep06.htm> – Accessed 28 February 2007 – Attachment 3).

An article in the *Straits Times* dated 26 June 2006 refers to the Lorosae from the east of Timor-Leste and the Loromonu from the west as “two communities whose tangled web of allegiances and rivalries lies at the root of the country’s descent into chaos. It is a clash that dates back to the nation’s days under the Portuguese colonialists.” The article indicates that “The Portuguese fanned the bitter rivalry to stay in control. Indonesia, which invaded this province in 1975 after the Portuguese, did the same, further poisoning mistrust between the two sides by forcing informers to spy on families and neighbours” (Lopez, Leslie 2006, ‘Bitter rivalries lie at root of Timor woes’, *Straits Times*, 26 June – Attachment 7).

However, an article in the *Financial Times* dated 10 June 2006 indicates that “Many long-term observers of East Timor say they learned only recently of the divide between the “Lorosae” (easterners) and “Loromonu” (westerners).” It is stated in the article that:

Until recently there were few signs of ethnic divides in East Timor, let alone what increasingly looks like the ethnic cleansing of entire neighbourhoods by young men wielding machetes. Many long-term observers of East Timor say they learned only recently of the divide between the “Lorosae” (easterners) and “Loromonu” (westerners). “When I was here in 1999 I never asked anyone whether they were Lorosae or Loromonu,” Ian Martin, the head of the United Nations mission that in 1999 administered the vote that led to the end of Indonesian rule, told reporters this week as he left Dili after a nine-day visit to assess the situation for Kofi Annan, the UN secretary-general.

No one quite understands the root of the divide, other than in terms of simple geography. One explanation is offered by people such as Joaquim Fonseca, a prominent Timorese human rights activist with a recent master’s degree in social policy from the London School of Economics.

He says there is a belief that as Indonesia’s 1975 invasion of the former Portuguese colony moved from west (towards the Indonesian border) to east, western districts were pacified first and the most enduring pockets of resistance were in the eastern parts of the country. There followed a perception that most of the Falintil guerrillas who led the 24-year fight against Indonesian occupation were Lorosae rather than Loromonu.

However, he says the idea makes little sense, as resistance to Indonesian rule was in fact fairly uniform across East Timor. While many of the eastern Falintil guerrillas spent years in the jungle, it was often in the west where they survived with the support of a clandestine movement dominated by westerners.

The article also notes that then Prime Minister Alkatiri dismissed “Lorosae-Loromonu tensions altogether, instead blaming opponents who he says were trying to make his ruling Fretilin party look bad ahead of elections next year” (Donnan, Shawn 2006, ‘East Timor’s ethnic violence puzzles analysts The emergence of fighting has taken many by surprise after a hard-won independence campaign, says Shawn Donnan’, *Financial Times*, 10 June – Attachment 8).

The paper dated 9 June 2006 by Antero Benedito ‘Nito’ Da Silva indicates that “Regionalism had existed in Timor-Leste since Portuguese colonialism”. According to the paper:

Regionalism had existed in Timor-Leste since Portuguese colonialism, indeed, many have argued that this regionalism was created by the politics of divide and rule instigated by the colonial powers. Mau Lear, a founding member of Fretilin, has criticised the East Timorese people for being too sensitive to their origins and their identification with their local culture (sucuisimo), and corresponding assumptions of cultural elitism associated with this. People from districts east of Dili such as Manatuto, Baucau, Lospalos and Viqueque, are called Lorosae. The term Loromonu generally identifies those who live in the border areas or mid lands such as Maliana, Suai, Ermera and Liquisa.

Today, it seems important to acknowledge the fact that East Timorese people have both national and a local culture based on geographical boundaries and dialects. People always say they come from Suai, Viqueque, Oecusse or Ermera and even mention a particular dialect, a certain geographical area, a common ancestral inheritance such as uma fukun (ancestral house), extended family relations, or ancestral land. Being East Timorese means both belonging to a nation and also to a locality. But there are also key socio-cultural commonalities shared by all Maubere [a social concept used to describe the people in Timor-Leste who were oppressed by the colonial structures and the Timorese feudal system] people: uma-fukun and fetsa-humane (extended family relations through marriage), is common practice among all the Maubere people, as is a common history of being oppressed by the colonial powers and fighting side-by-side for liberation (Da Silva 2004) (Da Silva, Antero Benedito ‘Nito’ 2006, ‘Community and the current crisis in Timor-Leste’, Development Studies Network website, 9 June <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/timor-beyond%20crisis%20papers/Antero%20da%20Silva.ml.doc> – Accessed 25 July 2006 – Attachment 4).

An e-mail dated 26 May 2006 on the East Timor Studies Mailing List from Andrew McWilliam, a Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the Australian National University, provides information on the distinction between “easterners (lorosae ‘ sunrise’) [firaku], and westerners (loromonu ‘ sunset’) [Kaladi]” in Timor-Leste. McWilliam draws on a PhD thesis by Dionisio Babo Soares, who was “the co-chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established with Indonesia.” McWilliam’s e-mail indicates that the “firaku and kaladi distinction is one that is widely recognized in Timor Leste and provides a potent source of factional or community rivalry around by all manner of grievances can be added and expressed.” The e-mail includes the following information:

- The distinction is one that purports to highlight a division between easterners (lorosae ‘ sunrise’) [firaku], and westerners (loromonu ‘ sunset’) [Kaladi] within East Timor. The origins of the terms are obscure but people make a popular distinction between ‘talkative and excitable firaku, and taciturn, closed kaladi. The distinction arises from Portuguese colonial times.

- Folk etymologies for the term firaku include the idea that the word comes from Portuguese *vira o cu* (to turn one’s backside to the speaker) implying the rebellious independent nature of

'easterners'. This has been subsequently modified to its present form. Alternatively another common idea is that the term comes from the Macassae language of Baucau *Fi* (we, us) *raku* (relatives, family) – often glossed as friend. Similarly *Kaladi* may be derived from Portuguese *calado* (quiet, reserved) or *Keladi* (Malay for Taro) grown by Mambai, Kemak and Bunak communities in the central western highlands.

- The division is conventionally associated with the following districts *firaku* Lautem, Baucau, Viqueque and Manatuto: while *Kaladi* are linked to Dili, Ailieu, Ainaro, Same, Ermera, Bobonaro, Suai, Likisa and OeCussi.

- While the origins of the rivalry between the two groups are obscure and indeed there is no history of any former pattern of indigenous political division along these lines, Dionisio Babo Soares makes the significant point that the source of conflict may have emerged after the Second World War when Macassae people from Baucau (*easterners*) and Bunak people from the western highlands settled in Dili and began trading in a local market. Over time commercial rivalries arose around this distinction which continued and evolved over the decades into a kind of default cultural division that is now being evoked in the current struggles.

- During the UNTAET period there were frequent brawls and conflicts between rival ethno-linguistic groups in Dili based around the *firaku* / *kaladi* division. Reprisals and periodic street fighting occurred between Mambai and Bunak youth gangs against similar Macassae (esp. Laga), Viqueque and Los Palos residents. As people moved into Dili following 1999 and took up residence, the *firaku* / *kaladi* distinction became associated with different areas of the city. So Delta Comoro where many groups from the east settled was known as a *firaku* area, along with Quintal Boot in Central Dili. Bairo Pte and Bebonuk in the west of Dili were linked to *Kaladi*. Other areas had mixed populations and conflicts sometimes coalesced around this distinction (e.g Becora).

- A key contemporary source of conflict between the two groupings is the perceived role of the different groups during the resistance struggle against Indonesia. *Firaku* groups have antagonised the *kaladi* with their claims to have 'won the war' through their sustained armed resistance in the east Lautem for example, retained an armed presence in the forests right up until September 1999. From this perspective the *kaladi* are seen to have folded in the face of Indonesian army control, and they are also charged with being more responsible for the rise of the army backed militia's that terrorized the population in the lead up and subsequent to the 1999 ballot. The worst militia's and the principal leadership were associated with Aitarak (Dili), Besi Merah Putih (Likisa), Laksaur (Suai) and Mahidi (Ainaro). Militia groups also operated in the east but caused much less damage. *Kaladi*, naturally reject this view but it serves as a point of antagonism and competing claims over relative sacrifice and suffering for independence

- The current crisis has been attributed to a sharpening of these differences within the defence forces, with some 500 soldiers abandoning their post in March and complaining of discrimination by higher ranking *firaku* leadership of the FDTL. However there is also a view that this distinction serves primarily as an excuse for expressing disaffection and frustration at the lack of economic benefits and opportunities flowing from Independence and the current political order. The involvement of angry unemployed youth in Dili and their rampaging is more likely to stem from their marginalisation in the economic and political process than any historical allegiance to geographical differences.

- While *firaku* and *kaladi* alliances may also have been utilized in the recent murderous confrontation between the army and the police there is also a view that the key distinction is

one between older loyalists to the government and disaffected younger factions seeking a change of the guard with the possibility that murkier political manoeuvring may be involved.

- In summary the firaku and kaladi distinction is one that is widely recognized in Timor Leste and provides a potent source of factional or community rivalry around by all manner of grievances can be added and expressed (McWilliam, Andrew 2006, 'On East and West from Andrew McWilliam', East Timor Studies Mailing List, 26 May – Attachment 9).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information & Reports

Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/>

UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

United Nations (UN)

United Nations website <http://www.un.org>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) website

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd>

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights website

<http://www.ohchr.org>

Non-Government Organisations

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org>

International News & Politics

BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Region Specific Links

Search Engines

Copernic <http://www.copernic.com/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste 2006, 'Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste', Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights website, 2 October <http://www.ohchr.org/english/docs/CoIReport-English.pdf> – Accessed 30 October 2006.

2. International Crisis Group 2006, 'Resolving Timor-Leste's Crisis', ICG website, 10 October http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_east_asia/120_resolving_timor_les_es_crisis.pdf – Accessed 11 October 2006.

3. United Nations Security Council 2006, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1690 (2006)', S/2006/628, United Nations website, 8 August <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep06.htm> – Accessed 28 February 2007.
4. Da Silva, Antero Benedito 'Nito' 2006, 'Community and the current crisis in Timor-Leste', Development Studies Network website, 9 June <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/timor-beyond%20crisis%20papers/Antero%20da%20Silva.ml.doc> – Accessed 25 July 2006. (CISNET East Timor CX157913)
5. Kingsbury, Damien 2006, 'Timor-Leste's way forward: State and nation building', Development Studies Network website, 9 June <http://devnet.anu.edu.au/timor-beyond%20crisis%20papers/Kingsbury.ml.doc> – Accessed 25 July 2006. (CISNET East Timor CX157914)
6. United Nations Security Council 2007, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (for the period from 9 August 2006 to 26 January 2007)', United Nations website, 1 February <http://documents.un.org/mother.asp> – Accessed 9 February 2007.
7. Lopez, Leslie 2006, 'Bitter rivalries lie at root of Timor woes', *Straits Times*, 26 June. (FACTIVA)
8. Donnan, Shawn 2006, 'East Timor's ethnic violence puzzles analysts The emergence of fighting has taken many by surprise after a hard-won independence campaign, says Shawn Donnan', *Financial Times*, 10 June. (FACTIVA)
9. McWilliam, Andrew 2006, 'On East and West from Andrew McWilliam', East Timor Studies Mailing List, 26 May. (CISNET East Timor CX154571)