



**JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME**  
**PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN SISTEMA JUDISIAL**

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*Press Release*

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**JSMP meets with the President of Timor-Leste**

On 22 October 2010 JSMP was able to have an audience with the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste, Jose Ramos Horta. This meeting took place at the Presidential Palace, Rua Prezidente Nicolau Lobato, Aitarak Laran at 2.30pm. The meeting was attended by a team of 6 staff members of JSMP, and the Office of the President was represented by the President himself, the chief of staff and one other staff member.

Although JSMP often has views and stances that differ with those of the President, it is important to remember that the Presidency is the highest organ of sovereignty that plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth functioning of democratic institutions as set out in Article 74 of the Timor-Leste Constitution. Luis de Oliveira, Executive Director of JSMP stated that “for this reason it was extremely important for JSMP to meet and discuss relevant issues and to convey JSMP’s stance on these issues directly to the President”.

This meeting was initiated by JSMP to try and approach the President to share JSMP’s views on issues relating to the authority of the President, such as the granting of pardons, which has often confused the public, as well as other matters related to the development of the legal system in Timor-Leste.

During this opportunity JSMP presented its proposal on the issue of ‘granting pardons’ which was previously submitted to the Minister of Justice.\*

Members of JSMP gave a short description about JSMP and its role in the justice sector, then they outlined JSMP’s view on issues such as the granting of pardons and justice for past serious crimes. Thereafter the President was presented with JSMP’s request to support the work and role of the justice sector and legal institutions. The President then responded by emphasizing his

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\* Previously on 8 October JSMP presented a proposal to the Minister of Justice, Lucia Maria B. Lobato, on the issue of presidential authority to ‘grant pardons’.

policy, stance and philosophy on his decision making as the head of state in relation to the granting of pardons and the policy of the state of Timor-Leste regarding past crimes.

As per usual, the President defended his policies on all matters handled by him in his capacity as President of this nation. The President believes that his actions are in the interests of stability, with the aim of strengthening the spirit of reconciliation and handling political issues in a rational and with intellectual maturity.

After specific reference was made to his political stance and decision making on the issue of pardons, the President emphasized that he consulted all parties and the majority of political party representatives. His decision making reflects his faith and philosophy as President to close the book on crimes that occurred in 2006 and 2008.

Even though JSMP and the President continue to have opposing views and stances on certain issues, in the end the President stated that he was willing to visit JSMP at some stage in the future upon receiving an invitation from JSMP.

JSMP was delighted at the opportunity to meet with the President and present JSMP's views directly to the President.

JSMP plans to approach all of the sovereign organs of state to discuss issues relating to the justice sector and to appeal for everyone to make a collective effort to establish a credible justice sector as the foundation for good and authoritative governance in Timor-Leste.

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