



**JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME**  
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*Press Release*

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**JSMP meets with the UN representative in Timor Leste**

On 5 November 2010 JSMP had an opportunity to meet with His Excellency Mr. Finn Riese-Nielsen, the acting Special Representative of the United Nations in Timor-Leste. This meeting took place in the office of Mr. Finn Riese-Nielsen at 10:30am. JSMP was represented by a team of four people and UNMIT was represented by Mr. Finn Riese-Nielsen and his support staff.

JSMP was interested in talking to UNMIT because of its important mission to provide assistance to every sector, including the development of the justice sector in Timor Leste.

“The United Nations has played an important role in Timor Leste by supporting the development of the justice sector through a number of development partners. UNDP in particular has made a significant investment in the justice sector, for example by supporting the Judicial Training Centre, and has also contracted international legal experts to help with court administration in Timor Leste. Therefore it was extremely important for JSMP to arrange this meeting and present proposals and discuss issues relevant to the justice sector” said Luis de Oliveira, Executive Director of JSMP.

JSMP used this opportunity to raise concerns about the issue of presidential pardons, the Maternus Bere case and the involvement of the UN, through UNMIT, in these issues. JSMP also requested UNMIT to provide ongoing support to the entire process of developing the legal system in this country.

JSMP also used this opportunity to emphasize its concern about the challenges that exist in the justice sector, include JSMP’s concerns about the issue of presidential pardons, the principles of the rule of law, separation of powers, independence of the courts and past serious human rights violations. JSMP also asked the UN to take an active role in strengthening the legal system in Timor Leste. JSMP utilized this opportunity to ask Mr. Finn Riese-Nielsen, who is also the chief of the UNDP mission in Timor-Leste, to enable JSMP and other groups of lawyers to attend legal training at the Judicial Training Centre under a different format than what is being

currently being applied. This will help JSMP to improve its technical knowledge, including legal terminology and interpreting the law, as well as improving the quality of work and the productivity of staff in preparing JSMP publications.

Before responding to the concerns raised by JSMP, Mr. Finn Riese-Nielsen expressed his appreciation for the hard work that has been done to date by JSMP to help develop the legal system in Timor Leste. He was pleased with the work of JSMP, as an NGO that has always voiced its opinions, and one that continues to contribute to this nation through its involvement in the justice sector. Therefore, he was really happy with the visit initiated by JSMP.

In response to the aforementioned concerns raised by JSMP, the UN representative emphasized that in principle the stance of the UN was the same as JSMP on several of these issues. The UN mission in Timor Leste aims to continue support for all of these processes, especially the development of the justice system, and dealing with past crimes. According to information obtained by UNMIT, there are approximately 76 pending cases which all relate to the 2006 – 2008 crisis. He also reiterated that the UN Mission clearly does not agree with perpetrators remaining free. From the outset the UN has had a commitment to providing justice for victims.

He also added that last month the SRSG in Timor Leste, Ms. Ameraah Haq, who is the head of UNMIT, presented a report to the UN Security Council about UNMIT's stance on the issue of presidential pardons and commutations of sentences.

Mr. Finn Riese-Nielsen used this opportunity to convey his praise for JSMP and he encouraged JSMP to meet with him every three months to review the aforementioned issues, including the JSMP proposal to attend training at the Judicial Training Center.

JSMP plans to talk to the President of Parliament to discuss issues relating to the justice sector and to ask everyone to engage in a collective effort to invest in and strengthen the legal sector so that it can provide a strong foundation for good governance in Timor-Leste.

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