

13 February 2004

Charges of Crimes Against Humanity Withdrawn

On 12 February 2004, the Special Panel for Serious Crimes, Dili East Timor, accepted the Prosecution's motion to withdraw the charges of Crimes Against Humanity against four defendants. The prosecution indicated to the court that it was withdrawing the charges against Domingos Amati, Antonio Maukasa, Jorge Manuel Lopes and Jose Lopes on the basis of a lack of evidence.

The Prosecution who issued the indictment against the four alleged Aitarak militia members on 25 September 2003, only indicated its intention to withdraw the indictment to the court on Wednesday, the first day of the preliminary hearing. The court accepted the prosecution's motion and, noting that no substituting charges would be brought, closed the case.

The defendants were all charged with one count of Crimes Against Humanity: Persecution (Abduction) relating to the alleged kidnapping and disappearance of Longuinos da Silva de Jesus. De Jesus was a pro-independence supporter who was killed on or about 1 May 1999 in Hera, Dili District.

JSMP believes that it is important that the standards used by the Serious Crimes Unit in deciding whether to indict a suspect are consistent and transparent.