

JSMP Press Release
Dili, 10 September 2002

Court sentences Liquica militia member to 20 years jail

A court in Dili on Monday sentenced an East Timorese farmer to 20 years jail for three murders in 1999 but decided there was not enough evidence to convict him of crimes against humanity.

A Special Panel for Serious Crimes found Armando Dos Santos guilty of murdering a pro-independence supporter in the Liquica area in March 1999 and guilty of two murders in April 1999, at the Liquica church compound and at Manuel Carrascalao's house in Dili.

However it found there was not enough evidence to convict Dos Santos, 32, of crimes against humanity. The panel found that Indonesian and Timorese individuals were involved in widespread and systematic attacks against the civilian population, but Dos Santos was not aware that he was a participant in those attacks.

The judges emphasized that Dos Santos was illiterate and did not speak Indonesian or Tetum, East Timor's national language, only speaking his local dialect.

As Dos Santos had already spent over two years in prison, the judges ordered him to spend a further 17 years, four months and one day in detention. Dos Santos, a former member of the pro-Indonesia Besih Merah Putih militia, stood trial from 29 January 2002 to 15 July 2002.