

First Serious Crimes appeal cases start on Monday

Judicial System Monitoring Programme, Dili 21/6/01

The first two appeals of Serious Crimes judgments start on Monday 25 June at the East Timorese Court of Appeal in Dili. The Court of Appeal has not been functioning for over a month, as it did not have enough judges to form a panel subsequent to the departure of East Timorese Judge Jacinta C.da Costa from the court to become an Electoral Commissioner. However, two new judges have recently been appointed to the Court of Appeal; Judge Cirilio Jose J.V. Cristovao and Judge Carmelita Caetano Moniz, enabling the Court of Appeal to hear cases again.

The first of the two appellants is Joao Fernandes, the first former militia member to be convicted before the Special Panel for Serious Crimes at the Dili District Court. He received 12 years imprisonment, but later escaped from Becora prison where he was being held. He has been apprehended and returned to custody.

The second appellant, Julio Fernandes (no relation to Joao), was a former Falintil soldier, found guilty of murdering a militia member and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment.

Monday's panel of judges will consist of the President of the Court of Appeal, Claudio Ximenes (Portugal), together with Judge Fredrick Egonda-Ntende (Uganda) and Judge Cirilio Jose J.V. Cristovao (East Timor).

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