

Former Ablai militia sentenced to four years imprisonment

JSMP Dili, 14/6 2001

Former militia member Mateus Tilman was today convicted of attempted murder, and sentenced to four years imprisonment. He was also accused of destruction of property, but the charges were dismissed by the Special Panel for Serious Crimes at the Dili District Court.

Witnesses from Holorua, a former Ablai militia stronghold close to the town of Same, claimed that the militia had set fire to their houses, and that Tilman had attacked them with a machete when they tried to escape. The victims, some of whom were testifying in court, included a 7 year old girl, a 8 year old boy and an older man.

Tilman himself pleaded not guilty, and denied committing the crimes as set forth in the indictment.

The disposition of the judgment was read out by Presiding Judge Maria Natercia Gusmao Pereira (East Timor) Other members of the panel were Judge Marcelo Dolzany da Costa (Brazil) and Sylver Ntukamazina (Burundi). The complete written judgment, including the court's findings of fact, statement of applicable law and reasons for the sentence, will be publicly read at the Dili District Court on 16 July 2001 at 09:00