



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA DE MONITORIZAÇÃO DO SISTEMA JUDICIAL

PRESS RELEASE

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**FORMER VICE-MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR ASKED TO TESTIFY AT THE
COURT HEARING IN CONNECTION WITH THE CRIMINAL CASE OF
ALLEGED ARMING OF CIVILIANS**

On 31 January 2007, former Vice-minister of the Interior, who is currently the Minister of the Interior, was asked to appear at the court to give his testimony at the trial hearing in connection with the criminal case of alleged arming of civilians. The hearing held jointly by the panel of judges of the Dili District Court and the Timor-Leste's Court of Appeal began at 09.40 and finished at 10.50. The hearing that lasted for about one hour was especially to hear the testimony from the witness ALCINO BARRIS.

When asked about the case of creation of the Secret Security Force and alleged arming of civilians by the defendant Rogério Tiago Lobato, the witness Alcino Barris said that he did not know anything about the allegation. He just had the information regarding the case after the crisis in Timor-Leste.

Asked if he knows who should be held responsible for the nine members of PNTL shot dead in front of Ministry of Justice on 25 May 2006, the witness Alcino Barris said that the United Nations is the one to hold responsible for the incident. The defendant Rogério Tiago Lobato is not to be responsible for it, because at that time it was the UNPOL (United Nations Police) who was controlling them at the PNTL Headquarters and led the PNTL officers on foot from their headquarters towards Obrigado Barracks and afterwards the eight members of PNTL were shot dead. Inspector Afonso de Jesus, who appeared at the court on 15 January 2007, said that there was one more PNTL officer shot dead while he was in the car.

The witness Alcino Barris was also asked if the Ministry of the Interior had the authority to create a group of armed civilians in order to support PNTL. He said that according to his own interpretation of article 8 of the Laws No. 8/2003 on *Internal Security* the Ministry of the Interior is competent to do so. After examining the verification of the legal interpretation referred, JSMP found that this article mentioned that only the Government has the competence perform such an act not the Ministry of the Interior. JSMP knew that after being confirmed

by the Presiding Judge as to “whether it was his own interpretation”, Alcino Barris recognized it.

Besides that, the witness Alcino Barris informed the Court that he received many reports from both local authorities and community that the Railos’ group always terrorized and intimidated local residents in Liquiça.

JSMP highly appreciates the willingness of all the witnesses to appear at the court for the hearing. JSMP and we all hope that the testimonies given by the witnesses at the court may be used as a deliberation in order to disclose the truth before a sentence is handed down. We hope that the court can make a fair and true decision which is accepted by all parties.

In relation to the statements made by the witnesses at the court hearing including those by the witness Alcino Barris, JSMP recommends that all those who have been treated unjustly report any forms of wrongdoing to the authorities. In this case, everyone can approach the nearest police station or the Office of the Prosecutor to complain so that the crime perpetrator can be brought to justice in compliance with the existing laws in Timor-Leste. If we just make an issue of criminal acts committed against us and do not report them to the authorities, problems remain unresolved because no efforts are made to follow up criminal circumstances.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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