

Indonesian Attorney General "dismissed with honor"

Dili, 4/6 01 Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP)

In a desperate move to avoid impeachment, Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid on Friday made major changes in his Cabinet, as well as firing Attorney General Marzuki Darusman.

UNTAET and international observers had expressed their confidence in Darusman's work of investigating those who planned and implemented the orchestrated TNI/Militia campaign of violence in East Timor in 1999. The disappointing fact that no indictments had been filed has been analysed more as due to political and military interference in the legal processes than the personal failure of Darusman.

Darusman also signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding cooperation in legal, judicial and human rights related matters with UNTAET. It will be interesting to see whether a change of Attorney Generals will influence this, so far, unsuccessful process.

Darusman's replacement, Baharudin Lopa, the previous justice minister, has the reputation of being honest and tough, and has earned himself a name as an anti-corruption crusader. It remains to be seen whether he will be more successful than Darusman, a former human rights activist, in prosecuting the crimes committed in East Timor in 1999.

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