

## **JSMP and IPJET legal observers to be present at Indonesian Ad Hoc Court trials**

Dili, East Timor, 5 March

The two organisations, the Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP) and the International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET), today announced that they will be cooperating in sending legal observers to the upcoming East Timor trials before the Indonesian Ad Hoc Human Rights Court. Both organisations have considerable experience in legal monitoring of East Timor justice and human rights issues, and will ensure that highly qualified observers are present in Jakarta when the trials commences.

“We will assess the process leading up to the trials and ensure that experienced lawyers monitor the proceedings in Jakarta and evaluate them against international standards of due process” said Christian Ranheim, the director of the Dili based NGO the Judicial System Monitoring Programme in a comment today. The organisation has already gained valuable experience from sending legal observers to all serious crimes proceedings in East Timor since early 2001. IPJET has among its members a large number of prominent lawyers and judges and have previously commented on issues relating to East Timor’s position in international law.

The process leading to the creation of the Ad Hoc Human Rights Court, in particular its limited jurisdiction, has already been publicly criticised. Leading East Timorese human rights groups have stated that the process is flawed, as the Ad Hoc court is only allowed to try crimes that occurred in April and September 1999, and only from the Districts of Suai, Dili and Liquica.

In addition, international organisations have pointed out a number of shortcomings related to the legal framework of the trials. Amnesty International warned in a recent press release that justice for East Timorese victims is at risk because basic measures to ensure that the trials in Indonesia meet international standards of fairness are missing. Human Rights Watch Director of the Asia division, Sidney Jones, stated that “the judges were poorly chosen, the prosecutors have shown no interest in accountability, the defense is likely to take advantage of an array of legal loopholes – and the suspects haven’t even been detained.”

International diplomats and East Timorese leaders have previously stated that unless the proceedings in Jakarta provide justice to the victims of the Indonesian occupation in accordance with international fair trial standards, the call for an international tribunal for East Timor may be strengthened.

The trials in Jakarta are expected to commence in mid March 2002.

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