

Jose Valente sentenced to 12 years and 6 months imprisonment

Dili 30 May 2001

The Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP)

Former militia member Jose Valente was this morning found guilty of murder by the Special Panel for Serious Crimes at the Dili District Court, consisting of Presiding Judge Sylvester Ntukamazina (Burundi), Judge Maria Natercia Gusmao Pereira (East Timor) and Judge Luca Ferrero (Italy).

Valente pleaded guilty at the preliminary hearing, but the judges did not accept his plea, and the trial started on the 16th of May 2001. He was charged with committing a murder on the 25 September 1999 in Lautem District. As a member of Team RATI, a sub group of Team Alpha, he was part of a group tracking people who was stealing rice from a warehouse. The victim, an independence supporter fleeing from the warehouse, was shot twice. Valente admitted firing the second shot, but claimed it was not part of a planned campaign.

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 18 June 2001 at 09:00.