

PRESS RELEASE
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Lolotoe case finalized as former militia commander sentenced to 12 years for Crimes Against Humanity in East Timor

On Saturday 5 April, 2003 at 10 am the Special Panel for Serious Crimes of the Dili District Court sentenced Jose Cardoso Ferreira alias Mouzinho to 12 years imprisonment for Crimes Against Humanity.

Jose Cardoso, the former Commander of Kaer Metin Merah Putih militia (KMMP) in Lolotoe Subdistrict of Bobonaro was found guilty of murder as a crime against humanity of Mariana Da Costa and Carlito Freitas, three counts of imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty as a crime against humanity in relation to twelve victims, one count of torture as a crime against humanity in relation to four victims, one count of other inhumane acts intentionally causing great suffering or serious injury to body or mental or physical health and rape as a crime against humanity in relation to three victims.

Jose Cardoso was also found not guilty of a less specific charge of other inhumane acts as a crime against humanity and not guilty of the murder of Augusto Noronha and Antonio Franca.

The judgement was handed down by Presiding Judge Sylver Ntukamazina (Burundi), Judge Maria Natercia Gusmao Perreira (East Timor) and Judge Benfeito Mosso Ramos (Cape Verde). Although the sentences for the above convictions totaled 21 years, under Article 65.2 of the Indonesian Criminal Code the total must not exceed one third beyond the most severe maximum punishment which was nine years, resulting in a sentence of 12 years. As Jose Cardoso has already served two years, ten months and seventeen days, under UNTAET regulations and the Indonesian Penal Code this will be subtracted from his sentence.

The events took place between May and July 1999, in the lead up to the UN sponsored referendum in August 1999, with the majority of events taking place in Lolotoe subdistrict of Bobonaro District, whereas the three rape crimes occurred in Atambua in West Timor.

Jose Cardoso was originally indicted together with Joao Franca da Silva alias Jhoni Franca, another KMMP commander and Sabino Gouveia Leite, the former village chief of Guda Village in Lolotoe Subdistrict. They were sentenced to five years and three years respectively late in 2002, in cases that had been severed from the original indictment.

The Lolotoe case, East Timor's longest running Crimes Against Humanity case ran for almost two years, having commenced on 27 April 2001. ENDS