

Los Palos trial resumes

JSMP, Dili 20/9/01

The trial against the 10 accused in the Los Palos case resumed on Tuesday this week after a three week break. The Special Panel of the Dili District Court has already heard more than seven weeks of testimony from more than 20 witnesses and the ten accused men, in what is the first trial of crimes against humanity charges to be heard in East Timor. The accused are all alleged to have been associated with the notorious Team Alpha militia, who were active in the eastern Los Palos region of East Timor during 1999.

Since the trial resumed, the Special Panel has heard several prosecution witnesses testify about the circumstances in which people from around the village of Leuro left their houses and went to Kupang in West Timor in September 1999. The evidence that was presented in the past week relates to two counts of crimes against humanity in the form of persecution and forcible transfer of civilian population, and one count of murder as a crime against humanity. The witnesses this week have included the wife and mother of one of the victims

The case is likely to continue for at least another three weeks. All other cases before the Special Panel for Serious Crimes have been postponed indefinitely until this case is finished.