

Militia member convicted of UNAMET staff murder

JSMP, Dili 16/7 01 - A former member of Team Pancasila militia was today found guilty of murdering a UNAMET local staff member and FALINTIL supporter in Atabe village, Ermera district on the day after the popular consultation in which nearly eighty percent of East Timorese voted for independence from Indonesia. The Special Panel for Serious Crimes of the Dili District Court, comprised of Judge Sylver Ntukamazina (Burundi) presiding, Judge Maria Natercia Gusmao Pereira (East Timor), Benetio Mosso Ramos (Cape Verde), sentenced Augustino da Costa to 15 years' imprisonment with credit given for the nine months he has already spent in detention awaiting trial.

This is the first case involving the killing of an East Timorese who was in part targeted for his role in working with the UN mission that supervised the ballot on 30 August 1999. Many other local staff were similarly attacked in the violent aftermath.

The written judgment, including the findings of fact, applicable law and the Court's reasons will be delivered on 31 July 2001 at 0900.