

## **Militia member sentenced to 15 years and 6 months imprisonment for murder**

Dili 15 May 2001

The Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP)

A former member of the Darah Merah Integrasi militia, Carlos Soares, was today convicted of murder and sentenced to 15 years and 6 months imprisonment. This is the longest sentence issued so far in relation to the violence in East Timor in 1999. The Special Panel for Serious Crimes of the Dili District Court was composed of Judge Luca Fererro from Italy presiding, Judge Maria Natercia Gusmao Pereira from East Timor and Marcelo Dolzany da Costa from Brazil.

Carlos Soares was found guilty of murdering Luis de Deus in the district of Ermera on 10 September 1999. Witnesses at the trial stated that the victim was hiding when the militia group entered the village, and was shot by Soares at close range with a G-3 rifle given to him by TNI officers.

During the trial, Soares claimed that he was forced to shoot by the TNI, and that if he refused orders he would have been killed. The defence, however, did not present any evidence to support his statement.

Due to lack of court translators, presiding Judge Luca read the disposition of the judgment in English, while Judge Maria repeated it in Bahasa Indonesia and Tetum. 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 at 9am on 31 May 2001.