



**JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA DE MONITORIZAÇÃO DO SISTEMA JUDICIAL**

PRESS RELEASE

Dili, 06 Februari 2007

**THE ACTUAL PRIME MINISTER PRESENT TO GIVE TESTIMONY AT THE
HEARING IN CONNECTION WITH THE CASE OF
THE ALLEGED ARMING OF CIVILIANS**

The Dili District Court, through the panel of judges, conducted a trial hearing at the Court of Appeal to hear testimony from the witnesses whose presence was required by the lawyer of the defendant. The trial hearing held on 06 February 2007 began 09.34. As scheduled, there were four witnesses to be present at the hearing. The key witness present was José Ramos-Horta (actual Prime Minister of Timor-Leste), Mário dos Santos, Deonigio dos Santos and Bendito Freitas. Bendito Freitas failed to appear at the hearing of evidence and according to the presiding judge it was because the court had not managed to notify the witness.

Only the witness José Ramos-Horta, one of the three witnesses who had given their, spoke much more in his testimony in relation to the alleged arming of timorese civilians.

When the witness Ramos-Horta was asked to give his testimony in connection with the criminal case of arming of civilians with Rogério Tiago Lobato being the defendant, the witness Ramos-Horta, the actual Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, said in his testimony that the defendant Lobato was a good man and dedicated a great contribution to the country's development. Therefore, the witness Ramos-Horta said that it was impossible for the defendant Lobato to destroy his own homeland as stated in the accusation against him.

Also, when asked by the defender regarding the provision in article 5 of the laws No.8/2003 on *Internal Security* that every citizen is obligated to cooperate with the security forces, the witness Ramos-Horta said that he never knew about the existence of that provision.

In his testimony, witness Ramos-Horta said that he never heard or saw the defendant Lobato performing such an act which was incompatible with the RDTL Constitution. He also stressed that he never heard and saw that the defendant Lobato had such an initiative to eliminate all the opposition leaders and the petitioners.

The witness said that on an imprecise date they held a meeting at the residence of the former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri. The meeting was attended by the National Security Council. The main issue of the meeting was about the critical situation Timor-Leste was facing at that time and the petitioners' claims. However there was no talk as to arrest or eliminate the petitioners.

According to Ramos-Horta, on 28 May 2006, the General Commander Paulo de Fátima Martins informed him that there were several PNTL owned weapons used by the Border patrol Unit had been transferred to Dili. However, Paulo did not mention specifically who gave order, what these weapons would be used for and to whom they would be delivered etc.

Referring to the Secret Security Force allegedly formed by the defendant Lobato, the witness Ramos-Horta said that, to his knowledge, such an issue had never been discussed at the council of ministers regarding the creation of group of armed civilians with the aims of supporting PNTL (Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste). The witness Ramos-Horta said that it was more likely an initiative from Lobato because the security situation in and surrounding Dili was not under the control of the police as before and most of the police officers left their barracks in order to protect themselves from members of F-FDTL. It was because there had been rivalry among the two forces. In view of the circumstances, it can be understood that Lobato had an initiative in arming civilians (former FALINTIL fighters) who were still loyal to the Government.

He also added that the incident occurred on 28 May 2006 in front the Government Palace was triggered by the third party. However the witness Ramos-Horta did not clarify the identity of the third party who was involved in the incident. Until now, the Government is continuing to make as much efforts as possible to identify that party so that it can be held responsible for rogue actions before the court.

JSMP welcomes the presence of the Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta to give his testimony and it is hoped that the elements in the community, in particular, the leaders to continue to cooperate with the court so that judicial process in trying the case of the alleged weapons distribution to civilians involving the defendant Rogério Lobato can be handled smoothly and successfully.

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