



Rede Defensor Direitos Umanus (RDDU)

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PRESS RELEASE

Statements of the Chief of Timor-Leste's Defence Force concern RDDU as they can endanger the future of the Timor-Leste's democratic rule of law

Timor-Leste's Human Rights Defenders Network-*Rede Defensor Direitos Umanus* (RDDU) asks everyone, and especially the leadership of the State being an example to the people, to uphold highly and promote the principles and values of human rights, justice and democracy.

In the process to liberate the nation, human rights were the fundamental basis for the struggle and defense of the people of Timor-Leste. Finally, we achieved the right to self-determination and terminated the suffering of the people from the illegal Indonesian military occupation.

Everyone including the leaders is proud as our Constitution of Republic is among the best in the world, as it guarantees firmly human rights equally for all. In addition, the State has ratified 7 human rights treaties. Thus, we ask the leaders of the State to show commitment to human rights according to the promises set out in the law.

The Human Rights Defenders Network-*Rede Defensor Direitos Umanus* is concerned with the following public statements:

1. By the Chief of Timor-Leste Defence Force who, according to public information on 21 December 2016, released a statement to encourage the security force during the Christmas and New Year to use excessive force and shoot and break the legs of those who commit crime while on the run. Based on information reported, the Chief of Defence Force noted "don't be afraid with human rights".¹

The Human Rights Defenders Network-*Rede Defensor Direitos Umanus* asks the security forces to intervene in accordance with the law and respect for human rights, and only use force if necessary and proportionally. RDDU also uses this opportunity to express that we condemn criminal acts which some youth have been involved in and that do not contribute to stability, and impact negatively on people's liberty and security. Everyone, including young people, has rights but also a duty to respect the rights of others.

2. By the Chief of Timor-Leste Defence Force reportedly made on 1 December 2016 and reported in the media, that he will not give opportunity and promote children of militia in the F-FDTL.²

We as human rights defenders continue to demand accountability for human rights violations that occurred during the struggle for independence, including by the militia. But children are not responsible for the acts of their parents who they were militia at in that time. RDDU

¹ *Jornál Timor-Post*, 24 Dezembro 2016 no Radio Televizaun Timor-Leste, 21 Dezembro 2016

² *Jornál Timor-Post*, 2 Dezembro 2016

consider that the statement of the Chief of Defence Force could result in discrimination and this is against our Constitution and international conventions ratified by the State.

Therefore, RDDU asks:

1. To the leaders not to generate words that do not match the principles and values of human rights.
2. To the security forces to perform their duties according to the law, including when using force so that this is always based on law and is proportional
3. To the F-FDTL commander to provide equal opportunities to F-FDTL members regardless of their parents' background.

RDDU, composed of 9 NGOs working in the area of human rights, thank you for your attention.

Members of the Human Rights Defenders Network:

1. Asosiasaun HAK
2. ALFeLa
3. AJAR
4. ACbit
5. Codiva
6. Fundasaun Mahein
7. AHMDTL (Asosiasaun Halibur Matan Defisiénsia Timor-Leste)
8. Belun
9. JSMP
10. Lao Hamutuk
11. NGO Community Based Rehabilitation