

# Attacks were part of conspiracy, general tells judges

**Southeast Asian Times**

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## **From News Reports:**

Dili, February 16: Armed attacks on military installations during last year's civil strife in East Timor were part of a political conspiracy intended to destabilise the newly-independent country and justify 'outside' intervention, armed force's commander, Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, has told judges at the trial of former Interior Minister Rogerio Lobato.

The commander said the attacks were well planned and organised and that he did not believe that Lobato had distributed arms to civilians to destabilise the country.

The distribution of weapons had been raised by then Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta during a meeting at the house of deposed Prime Minister MariAlkatiri on April 29.

Cabinet had met at the Alkatiri residence to analyse the situation because the police command had lost control and were facing many difficulties and, as a result, were thought to need the army's help to deal with the violence that erupted during demonstrations by so

called 'petitioners.'

The brigadier general had suggested that the police oversee security in the capital while his forces were made responsible for the outskirts of Dili because the petitioners were on the move there.

Later, he had sought written permission from President Xanana Gusmao, Alkatiri and the Appeal Court to review and control weapons stored in Dili by both the army and police.

But he had been shocked when police commander Paulo Martins said the weapons were no longer in store but had been distributed to Aileu, Liquiça and elsewhere.

The brigadier general apologised to Rogerio saying that he had become emotional when he learned that the latter was taking over as Defence Minister.

The brigadier general said that he had received information that the people attacking the army headquarters at Tibar were civilians, petitioners and police dressed in both police and military uniforms.

He had learned about the activities of army mutineer Vicente 'Railos' da Conceicao and his supporters through the report of the Independent Commission of Inquiry appointed by the United Nations.

He also acknowledged the distribution of weapons to civilians - former resistance veterans – as reinforcements against the systematic attack on the army by mutineer Major Alfredo Reinado and his civilian supporters.

The gravity of the crisis was exacerbated on May 24 when Major Alfredo Reinado – a favourite of the Australian corporate media – and his supporters from Aileu attacked the military in Fatuahi, the brigadier general’s residence in Dare and the military police headquarters and the army’s headquarters in Tasi-Tolu.

These attacks were well planned and organised and part of a political conspiracy to destabilise the country so as to justify ‘outside’ intervention, the brigadier general said.

The decision to ask for ‘outside’ intervention had been made at a meeting of the defence council and was done to avoid more violence.

## **Defence lawyer complains of threats**

Rogério Lobato's defence lawyer, Paulo Remedios, has told the judges that he was threatened at his residence by the armed occupants of a black car that did not carry registrations plates.

Remedios asked that he be provided with protection but was told by presiding judge, Ivo Valente, to take his complaint to the Public

Ministry.

East Timor's Prosecutor General Longuinhos Monteiro has been asked by senior representatives of the United Nations Mission in East Timor Eric Gim Tan and Finn Reske-Nielsen to try and establish contact with fugitive mutineer, Major Alfredo Reinado, but is reported to have said that he is undecided about doing so because of the disputes that may result.

## **Warning for expatriate proprietors**

Expatriate proprietors in Dili say they have been warned of greater demonstrations by East Timorese opposing the exoneration of former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri.

They have also been told that the safety of their enterprises cannot be guaranteed unless they pay money for protection.

The Southeast Asian Times has been told that initial offers of payment were rejected as too little.

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