

## **Media Release**

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**Attention: International Affairs Writer  
Chief of Staff**

# **Anti-government gang knocks out Timor-Leste TV and radio**

## **No security provided**

**On Thursday morning, 40 anti-government thugs attacked staff and smashed furniture at the building of Timor-Leste's main media – TVTL – and forced all news broadcasts on the radio and TV station off the air. According to station management this afternoon, there is still no security provided by the Australian-led international security forces, and so the station is only broadcasting Portuguese visual feed and no local news.**

There was one exception – President Xanana Gusmao's speech to the nation was taped at the President's office yesterday and then broadcast safely last night.

The gang attack on Thursday morning was in retaliation for the TVTL news broadcast on Wednesday night of FRETILIN leader Mari Alkatiri speaking to over 5,000 supporters to the east of Dili. TVTL reporters had been threatened over the previous weeks by anti-government protesters that this would happen.

By terrorising the TVTL staff, these gangs have shut down reporting of yesterday's FRETILIN procession into Dili and today's important pro-government rally in the main city square, addressed by Lu-Olo, the FRETILIN President, and the National President Xanana Gusmao.

TVTL management have been requesting security for five weeks.

Australian forces did arrive this morning.

TVTL now hope to recommence news broadcasts on Monday.

TVTL was slated for major upgrading in the 2006-07 budget, which needed to be passed by the parliament today. The TV and radio network was to be expanded in all 13 Districts of the country. Portugal was to fund the expansion in six of the Districts, and the government budget was to ensure the other six outside Dili were upgraded.

Lack of adequate information, and the use of rumours, were major factors in the destabilisation of the country in April and May this year.

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