



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE
FRETILIN

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Media release

ADF doorknocking campaign Timor-Leste style

Australian troops in the eastern districts of Timor Leste are engaged in a doorknocking campaign apparently aimed at intimidating Fretilin supporters to switch their allegiance to the new illegitimate government of Jose Alexandre Gusmao.

Fretilin today called for an independent investigation into written statements by many Timorese villagers testifying to political interference by Australian troops in recent weeks.

FRETILIN Deputy Secretary General Jose Reis said, "A joint investigation involving UNMIT and FRETILIN into the conduct of the Australian Defence Force is the only way to get to the truth and for the ADF to hope to re-establish the credibility it once had in Timor-Leste.

"FRETILIN is in the process of collecting written statements from people complaining about the behaviour of Australian troops.

"Also, a reputable local news paper Tempo Semanal today reported an incident involving Mr Fernando Soares, a 35 year old farmer and a well known Fretilin member in the village of Bucoli, Baucau district."

Soares said that about 8pm on Thursday 16 August a group of Australian soldiers accompanied by a Timorese interpreter arrived at his home and kicked on his door in order to get his attention.

A soldier who did not identify himself asked through an interpreter: "Are you with FRETILIN or with AMP?" (AMP is the informal coalition in Parliament supporting the unconstitutional government of Jose Alexandre Gusmao)

Soares replied that he had been a long time FRETILIN member and continued to be so. The soldier then told him through the interpreter: "You should support the government and CNRT and influence these youths in your area to support the government and CNRT".

Reis said, "Somewhat surprised and scared because of the lateness of the night and having heard some reports of action by the soldiers against FRETILIN supporters, Mr Soares Fernando decided to say nothing further.

"The soldier and his companions left shortly after."

Reis said that for over a year now FRETILIN has been complaining about this type of questioning by ADF in patrols in Timor-Leste.

"During the first weeks of the crisis in 2006 after their arrival, soldiers were heard to be making statements like 'Alkatiri no good.

Gusmao Good', 'L-7 no good. Gusmao good' and 'Taur Matan Ruak Fucking militia!."

L-7 is the alias for Cornelio Gama, a veteran resistance fighter from the district of Baucau in the east of Timor-Leste. Taur Matan Ruak is the army commander of F-FDTL, the East Timorese national defence force, who is also from the district of Baucau.

Reis said "The behaviour of Australian troops is unacceptable conduct for guests in our country who have been requested to help to re-establish law and order."

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