



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE
FRETILIN

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FRETILIN demands UNMIT remove biased police officer

FRETILIN today demanded the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) send home a UN Police officer from the Philippines who demonstrated bias against FRETILIN. The party also demanded a formal written apology in relation to statements reportedly made by the officer.

FRETILIN Vice President and Parliamentarian Arsenio Bano said UN police officer Joel Doria made unfounded accusations against FRETILIN alleging it had organised violence following the unconstitutional announcement of Jose Alexandre Gusmao as Prime Minister.

The accusations were carried in a Time magazine article "East Timor: Dark Days in Dili" by Rory Callinan on 6 August 2007 (see <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1650038,00.html>) which stated that:

"Head of the Comoro police post Joel Doria says his men have received numerous allegations of a connection between Fretilin and the simmering violence. During the election campaign, he says, police were arresting pro-Fretilin troublemakers and finding \$30 to \$100 cash in their pockets – improbably large sums for jobless refugees. "We request them to stay in the camp, but every time there is a political event they go out into the street and create problems," he says. "We have the information but we can't make the connection with evidence."

Doria, a veteran police officer who is more used to hunting extremists in his native Philippines than political agitators in East Timor, brings up on his computer screen photos of regular offenders and rock-throwers from the camps. "See, here they are causing problems on the streets of Dili. Then here are the same ones gathering at the Fretilin headquarters in Comoro," he says, switching to photos taken on the same day in front of the Fretilin building. "Why are they there? What is there for them?" Doria notes that over the past week, loud music has been blaring out of the Fretilin HQ at all hours. "That gives them an excuse to have a lot of people there. They are pretending to have a party. But really they are waiting to cause problems." Many locals agree with his assessment. Street vendors say they've learned to expect trouble when they see local youths using their cell phones. "They have up to \$50 credit on their phone cards. How can they afford it?" asks one.

Bano said: "Mr Doria's comments and behaviour are irresponsible. We expect members of the UN Police to exercise a duty of care when discharging their functions and act as an example to the National Police of Timor-Leste, which the UN is helping to rebuild.

"If Mr Doria has any evidence of criminal activities he should be presenting that evidence to the prosecuting authorities which will deal with them appropriately through the legal processes and not engage in trial by media. This is a process that FRETILIN has always supported.

"We demand that UNMIT act immediately to send Mr Doria home and for both UNMIT and Mr Doria to issue a formal apology to FRETILIN in relation to Mr Doria's comments.

"The Philippines police force is notoriously corrupt and politically partisan with a reputation for brutality and breach of human rights. Timorese do not want Philippines police practices imported into this country.

"Our position on violence has always been clear. FRETILIN does not support any form of violence and anyone who commits criminal acts should be brought to justice."

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