



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE

FRETILIN

Media Release

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Fretilin lodges protest over ADF assault

Fretilin today formally protested to the commander of Australian forces in Timor-Leste (East Timor), Brigadier Mal Rerden over the unprovoked assault and humiliation of a Fretilin member by Australian soldiers on Monday (March 26).

Timor Leste's governing party asked the Australian Defence Force to take disciplinary action against the soldiers and to issue an apology.

In a letter to Brigadier Rerden, Fretilin General Secretary Mari Alkatiri said the ADF needed to take action to ensure there was no repeat of the incident, photographs of which were published in the *Timor Post* on Tuesday (March 27).

The incident happened as a Fretilin convoy left the western town of Gleno in Ermera district after a mass rally in support of presidential candidate Francisco "Lu'Olo" Guterres.

Dr Alkatiri, who was among many witnesses to the incident, said an ADF vehicle attempted to push into the Fretilin convoy but was refused entry. He said an Australian soldier pointed a gun at the driver of a vehicle while another soldier pulled a passenger from the vehicle, trod on him, and put a gun to his head. When the Fretilin member attempted to resist, the Australian soldier yelled, "Fuck you. I'll kill you."

"One of my bodyguards tried to intervene but was ordered to stand back at gunpoint. The Australian soldiers only retreated when ordered to do so by their commanding officer," added Dr Alkatiri.

"Our convoy was returning from a successful rally which was entirely peaceful. Fretilin members naturally were unarmed and posed no threat whatsoever to the Australian soldiers. The behaviour of the Australian soldiers was completely unacceptable and unjustifiable."

For more information contact:

Mari Alkatiri (+670) 733 2360 (Dili) Filomeno Aleixo: (+670) 724 3460 (Dili)

Arsenio Bano: (+670) 723 0023 (Dili) Jose Manuel Fernandes: (+670) 734 2174 (Dili)

For a copy of the letter of complaint please contact Sahe Da Silva in Dili +670 733 5060