



**REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE
GABINETE DO PRIMEIRO-MINISTRO
PRESS RELEASE**

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

“We will never let the people down, we are here” - Timor-Leste government coordinates emergency assistance program

For 51 days, the staff of the Timor-Leste Ministry of Labor and Community Reinsertion has responded to the waves of community fear and surges of people into safe areas in Dili and in other districts. They have ensured that people have basic needs and know they have not been abandoned. Today over 148,000 people rely on the coordination by this Ministry, the MTRC.

“Our staff, whether they come from east or west, have continued to work together to serve the people,” said Minister Arsénio Bano. “Despite the shooting, we have always had about 90% of our staff on duty, even though many of us also have to live in the Internally Displaced Persons centres too”. As of June 17, there were 57 such IDP centres in Dili, helping over 69,000 people, and there are more than 78,000 in IDP centres or with other families in the Districts and Sub-Districts.

After the first impact of the political crisis hit the community on April 28, the international community responded as if Timor-Leste was a 'failed state', with no capacity of its own to make an organised response. However, the MTRC quickly demonstrated its capacity to coordinate with UN agencies and NGO aid agencies to provide food, water, sanitation, shelter and health services to the IDP centres. MTRC had consistent backup from other Ministries, such as Health, Water, Public Works, Transport and Communications, Agriculture, Finance and State Administration.

“It was very important on the human level that we helped everyone in need, and it was also important because otherwise the political conflict may have escalated,” said Minister Bano. “With the UN's Flash Appeal for US\$16 million, we need to ensure the programs are implemented effectively and transparently, using all the lessons we learned from the UNTAET period”.

The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Group started operating on May 1 with two basic mechanisms – a General Coordinating Meeting three times per week at 9.30 am, and a Sectoral Coordination Working Group which works in seven sectors – water and sanitation, health, food, shelter, District Teams, Protection Group. Assessment and Information Teams - based on all agencies and NGOs - ensure good information on the changing conditions of displaced people and enable good planning and use of warehousing and distribution. There is a daily radio program, and a media conference every second day at 2.30pm.

IDP centres are managed by nuns and priests. UNFPA, and the NGOs Concern, Care, CVTL (Red Cross Timor-Leste), HAI, ICRC (International Red Cross), Plan, Christian Relief Service, Caritas Australia and Austcare provide focal points in the IDP Centres. These agencies and organisations link the Coordination Group and the people in the centres.

The MRTC has distributed rice, and the World Food Program has distributed supplementary food items, to all IDP centres and to vulnerable people still in their homes, and government institutions. The Timor-Leste government has spent over US\$1 million to buy 5000 tonnes of rice, of which the New Zealand government paid for 1000 tonnes. Ships have been sent to Atauro Island and to Oecusse, and trucks to all Districts.

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