



Rede Defensor Direitos Umanus (RDDU)
Rua Karketu Mota-ain Nù. 08, Farol, Dili Timor-Leste

PRESS RELEASE
May 2017

Uncertainty in justice will have a negative impact on the rule of law and democracy

Rede Defensor Direitos Umanus (RDDU) – the Human Rights Defenders Network, which consists of several civil society organisations working in the area of human rights, asks all institutions to carry out their duties professionally and uphold and promote highly the principles and values of human rights.

The RDDU demands that the State – especially the security forces and the Public Prosecutor immediately open investigations into alleged human rights violations committed by security forces, conclude investigations in a short time and take action according to the law. Cases of human rights violations, especially cases in which people are killed or injured, are a concern to RDDU and, we believe, to the public well. Therefore, RDDU also asks the relevant State institutions to inform the public about the results of investigations and action taken when it is concluded that a violation has indeed occurred.

Criminal act and disciplinary action that is taken immediately to unlawful acts can bring justice for victims and families, and also prevent new violations. RDDU has observed that many times, State entities, including those commanding the security forces, have made public statements that investigations will be conducted and crimes committed by their members are not tolerated. But eventually, the judicial process is slow, or there is no information about action taken against the members responsible for a violation. Uncertainty in terms of justice can result in new cases taking place, such as the alleged torture in Maliana by some Timor-Leste's National Police and Armed Forces (*PNTL*) officers at Malibaka soccer field Maliana, on 22 April.

The RDDU is also concerned about other new cases, in Bebonuk on 6 May - although we recognize that disturbances often take place in Bebonuk with a negative impact on the population there who wish to live in peace and who need the support of the *PNTL* to maintain security in that area. The RDDU demands an immediate investigation of the case specifically as one person lost his most fundamental right, as he was shot to death.

For alleged human rights violations that took place from 2014-2016, RDDU requested information from the Prosecutor-General regarding the justice process; there are cases that occurred during the joint operations (2014-2015), the case of in which youth were shot by police in Liquiça, shooting of a member of the Timor-Leste Defence Force (*F-FDTL*) in Ainaro, and the shooting to death of a

person with a mental disability in Covalima (2016). On 2 December 2016, RDDU sent a letter to the Prosecutor-General regarding the cases, but we have not yet received an answer. RDDU recognizes that the Public Prosecutor has many priorities, but the victims, families and the public have the right to obtain information on the investigation process based on article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic and Decree Law No 32/2008 on administrative procedure, article 20, the right of interested parties to information (*Direito dos interessados à informação*).

Now, Timor-Leste is entering the parliamentary election phase, with everyone hoping it will be peaceful. Justice is important to guarantee peace.

Therefore, RDDU asks:

- 1) To all institutions, especially the PNTL, to carry out their duties professionally and uphold and promote the principles and values of human rights. If using force, it must be based on law and must be proportional.
- 2) To the Public Prosecutor and leaders of the security forces to immediately conduct criminal and disciplinary investigations into alleged human rights violations by its members, conclude investigations in a short time, and immediately take action in accordance with the law, and inform the public.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Dili, 19 May 2017

Coordinator RDDU

Signed

(Jose Maria Moniz)

Members of the Human Rights Defenders Network:

1. Asosiasaun HAK
2. Asosiasaun Chega! Ba Ita (ACBit)
3. Asisténsia Legal Feto no Labarik (ALFeLA)
4. Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)
5. Asosiasaun Halibur Defisiénsia Matan Timor-Leste (AHDMTL)
6. Belun
7. Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Network
8. Coalition for Diversity and Action (CODIVA)
9. Fundasaun Mahein (FM)
10. The Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP)
11. La'o Hamutuk