

## East Timorese stone Australian embassy

Dili, East Timor

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About 100 protesters in East Timor have thrown rocks at the Australian embassy, with police responding with tear gas as a spying row intensifies.

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East Timor has expressed outrage over reports that Australia secretly bugged ministerial deliberations in Dili in 2004 to gain leverage in negotiations on an oil and gas revenue-sharing deal.

The protest followed a raid on Tuesday by Australian intelligence agents on the Canberra office of a lawyer representing East Timor in an arbitration case at The Hague over the deal, expected to be heard on Thursday.

The protesters, mostly students and young Timorese rights activists, carried banners reading "Australia is a thief" and "Australia has no morals".

The demonstrators, calling themselves the Movement Against Timor Sea Occupation, shouted "Australia, imperialist, capitalist!", and "Australia is a thief of world oil".

"The Australian leaders do not respect the people of Timor-Leste because it's very small, very poor," the group's spokesman Juvinal Dias said.

The embassy was guarded with just four police until a dozen more arrived and fired tear gas at demonstrators, saying they had no permit to protest.

Deputy Prime Minister Fernando La Sama de Araujo says he is "not happy" with Australia's actions, adding: "We demand the Australian government stops spying on the lawyer representing Timor-Leste."

East Timor Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao on Wednesday described the raid on the lawyer's office as "aggressive" and "unconscionable".

The lawyer, Bernard Collaery, called the raid "intimidatory" tactics ahead of a hearing in the case Thursday.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott has defended the move, saying it was to "protect national security".

East Timor argues that the 50-50 profit-sharing deal of \$A40 billion in proceeds from the Timor Sea's resources should be torn up because of the alleged spying.

Australia is also trying to mend ties with Indonesia over allegations that it spied on the country's president, his wife and inner circle of senior officials in 2009.

The claims that Australia spied on East Timor and Indonesia are based on documents leaked by US intelligence fugitive Edward Snowden.

**AFP**

*This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/east-timorese-stone-australian-embassy-20131206-hv4ll.html>*