

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Timor-Leste: Amnesty International urges Timor-Leste to take immediate measures to provide truth, justice and reparation for past crimes

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Timor-Leste

Amnesty International notes that Timor-Leste partially accepted recommendations to implement the recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação, CAVR).¹ We are, however, concerned that little is being achieved in practice in this regard.

Although two draft laws establishing a national reparations programme and a “Public Memory Institute” were submitted to the Parliament of Timor-Leste in June 2010, debate of the two laws has faced continued delays.² In February 2012, Parliament finally started debating the two bills; however the discussion was once again postponed and no date has been set for its resumption. By delaying the establishment of a reparations programme, Timor-Leste continues to deny justice and full and effective reparation to victims of crimes against humanity and grave human rights violations committed in Timor-Leste between 1975 and 1999. Amnesty International urges the Government of Timor-Leste to amend the bills to bring them in line with international law and standards, and to pass them without further delay.³

Amnesty International further notes that Timor-Leste accepted recommendations concerning justice for past violations.⁴ To date, not a single person has been prosecuted for human rights violations committed in Timor-Leste during the Indonesian occupation between 1975 and 1999. Attempts to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations committed in the context of the 1999 referendum have also been grossly inadequate.

In October 2011, days after Timor-Leste underwent its first Universal Periodic Review, reports emerged that Valentim Lavio, a former militia member sentenced to nine years’ imprisonment for murder as a crime against humanity, had fled to Indonesia. He joins over 300 individuals accused or convicted of crimes against humanity and grave human rights violations, who have fled to Indonesia and continue to evade justice.

The ongoing failure to ensure accountability for crimes committed over the 25 year period between 1975 and 1999 exacerbates the suffering of the thousands of people whose demands for justice are being ignored by their government and by the international community.

¹ A/HRC/19/17/Add.1, paragraph 13, referring to recommendations 79.27 (Austria), 79.28 (Canada), 79.29 (New Zealand), 79.30 (UK) and 79.31 (South Africa).

² See Amnesty International, *Timor-Leste: Parliament missed opportunity to provide justice for past violations* (Index: ASA 57/001/2011), February 2011; and *Timor-Leste: Parliament must stop ignoring victims’ rights* (Index: ASA 57/002/2012), February 2012.

³ Amnesty International has identified seven key areas where the two draft laws must be strengthened to ensure the success of the efforts to address the suffering of victims. See *Remembering the Past: Recommendations to effectively establish the “National Reparations Programme” and “Public Memory Institute”* (Index: ASA 57/001/2012), February 2012.

⁴ A/HRC/19/17/Add.1, paragraph 12, referring to recommendations 79.23 (France) and 79.24 (Argentina), 79.25.

In this respect, Amnesty International is disappointed that the Universal Periodic Review of Timor-Leste failed to adequately address concerns raised in the stakeholder summary relating to impunity for past crimes. We urge the international community to do much more to end impunity and provide truth, justice and reparation for these past crimes.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Timor-Leste on 16 March during its 19th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on Timor-Leste: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA57/003/2011/en>

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