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Timor-Leste: End culture of impunity

As more peacekeepers arrive in Timor-Leste under the state of emergency imposed following the shooting of President Jose Ramos-Horta, Amnesty International urges the Timorese government and the international community to act now to end the country's endemic culture of impunity or face a continuation of the cycle of violence that is currently weakening the country.

Amnesty International believes that yesterday's shooting is symptomatic of the country's most pressing challenge, building strong institutions to improve security and strengthening the rule of law. The attempted killings of President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmao yesterday are a direct consequence of this continuing failure of the government and the international community to rebuild the national criminal and civil justice system effectively. Alfredo Reinado, who was facing criminal charges for having taken part in the 2006 violence, shouldn't have been still at large, threatening the stability of the country.

"The Timor-Leste government and the international community must use this abhorrent incident as a wake-up call to strengthen the country's key institutions as a matter of urgency," said Catherine Baber, director of Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific programme.

"Those who commit violations know that they can do so without being punished. The local population's lack of confidence in state institutions to provide justice and accountability, in particular in the military, the police, and the judiciary, is central to the country's most pressing current challenges," she said.

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or email: press@amnesty.org

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK
www.amnesty.org