

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Timor-Leste: Amnesty International calls on the UN to act resolutely to secure justice for Timor-Leste

Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan today wrote to the members of the Security Council urging them to act upon the recommendations of a recent United Nations (UN) report on justice for Timor-Leste.

The letter is based on an unofficial copy of the report because to date no official copy has been made public.

The Commission of Experts appointed by the UN Secretary-General to review the prosecution of serious violations of human rights in Timor-Leste in 1999 presented their report to him on May 26. The report was forwarded to the Security Council in June. It is unclear why the report was not made public at that stage and why the matter was not placed on the Security Council agenda for July. Amnesty International is concerned that this lack of transparency and lack of urgency in scheduling the report for debate reflects a lack of commitment to deliver on the UN's promise of justice for Timor-Leste. Amnesty International said that the report should be made public as soon as possible and should be given the priority that it deserves by the Security Council.

The UN report makes a number of important recommendations for consideration by the Security Council. These include a recommendation that the Security Council establish an international criminal tribunal for Timor-Leste, unless a range of specific steps are taken by the Indonesian authorities within a strict time-frame. These steps should include measures to reform their judicial process, the examination of the possibility of re-trials of those acquitted by the ad hoc Human Rights Court, and the commencement of prosecutions against other high-level suspects still at large in Indonesia.

The Commission of Experts concluded that their report may provide the last opportunity for the Security Council to deliver justice for the people of Timor-Leste and to ensure that accountability is secured for those responsible for the grave human rights violations and human suffering on a massive scale that occurred in that country in 1999.

Amnesty International said that the international community's resolve to deliver justice and combat impunity is now being put to a crucial test and expressed the hope that the Security Council will use the Commission of Experts' pertinent recommendations and act resolutely to secure justice for the victims and their families in Timor-Leste.

