

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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16 March 2017

### **Amnesty International urges renewed action on past human rights violations**

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

Attempts in previous years to bring to justice those suspected of criminal responsibility for past crimes in Timor-Leste during the Indonesian occupation and the independence referendum between 1975 and 1999 have been insufficient. In particular, Amnesty International regrets the lack of justice, truth and reparation for women and girls who suffered sexual and gender-based violence by members of the Indonesian security forces and their auxiliaries, as well as by Timorese men. These concerns were echoed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its concluding observations on Timor-Leste in November 2015.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, Amnesty International welcomes Timor-Leste's acceptance of recommendations to address past human rights violations and ensure the delivery of reparations to the victims.<sup>2</sup> The government must ensure public discussion of the findings and recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation and the Commission of Truth and Friendship and expedite the establishment of a Commission for Disappeared Persons, in collaboration with the government of Indonesia.

Further, despite guarantees of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in the Constitution<sup>3</sup> and domestic law, the National Police has banned peaceful gatherings linked to demands for accountability for past crimes or corruption by government officials.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the 2014 Media Law could stifle freedom of expression by requiring journalists to undergo a six-month internship in a media organization and be accredited by the Press Council.<sup>4</sup> This means that freelance media workers, student journalists and bloggers could be barred from journalistic work. The law also bars individuals working for political parties, NGOs and government departments from being registered and accredited as journalists.

Amnesty International welcomes Timor-Leste's acceptance of recommendations to implement the Media Law in line with its international human rights obligations, to uphold the rights to

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<sup>1</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Timor-Leste, 24 November 2015, CEDAW/C/TLS/CO/2-3, recommendation 19(a). See also: Amnesty International, *Timor-Leste: UN CEDAW Committee urges authorities to ensure comprehensive reparations for victims of conflict related sexual violence* (Index: ASA 21/2973/2015).

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/34/11, recommendations 89.33 (UK), 89.109 (Argentina), 89.114 (Spain), 89.115 (Afghanistan), 89.116 (New Zealand), 89.117 (Norway).

<sup>3</sup> Articles 40 and 42 of the Constitution of Timor-Leste: [http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Constitution\\_RDTL\\_ENG.pdf](http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Constitution_RDTL_ENG.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> (National Parliament and RDTL Office of the President Decree No. 10/III)

freedom of expression and to ensure freedom of the press.<sup>5</sup> It is essential that the Media Law does not restrict the legitimate work of journalists or the right of the people of Timor-Leste to receive information.

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Timor-Leste on 16 March 2017 during its 34<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered an oral statement. Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on country: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa57/4513/2016/en/>

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<sup>5</sup> A/HRC/34/xx, recommendations 89.37 (Norway), 89.123 (United States of America), 89.124 (Costa Rica), 89.125 (France), 89.126 (Japan), 89.127 (Namibia).