

Timor-Leste

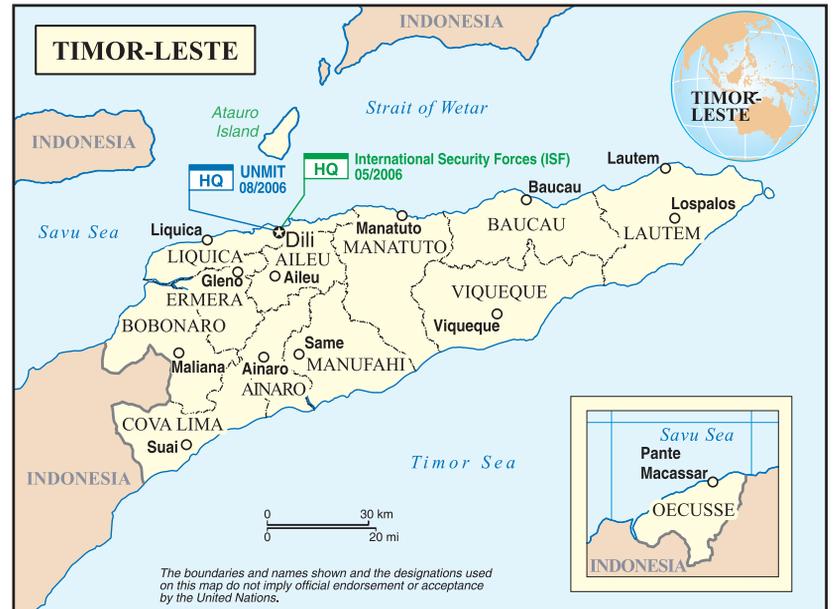
As 2011 came to a close, Timor-Leste began preparations for elections in 2012 in a largely calm and stable environment.

There is widespread expectation that 2012 will be the last year of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). Now entering its sixth year of operations, the mission dedicated much of its focus in 2011 to the modalities for this transition.

A key milestone in this process was the resumption of policing responsibilities by the Timorese national police. While concerns about the capacity of the police remain, there has been no increase in crime rates since this handover took place in March. The handover was followed by the development of a joint transition plan between the mission and the government to guide UNMIT's transition. However, while Timor-Leste remained largely calm and stable in 2011, the timing and pace of the mission's withdrawal will depend heavily on the peaceful conduct of elections in 2012 and the security environment facing the new government.

Background

After the UN-organized 1999 referendum, in which the overwhelming majority of Timorese voted for independence from Indonesia, Indonesian troops and their Timorese proxies launched an aggressive campaign of violence that left approximately 1,400 Timorese dead and hundreds of thousands displaced. The emergency deployment of a UN-authorized Australian stabilization force paved the way for the establishment of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), which was mandated to support East Timor during its



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transition to independence in 2002. A successor mission was established in 2002 and then replaced by the UN Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) in 2005, a considerably smaller political mission mandated to support the development of state institutions.

Violence erupted shortly thereafter, prompted by long-standing grievances within the armed forces. In response to a call from the Timorese government for international assistance, the Australian-led International Security Forces (ISF) were deployed. The Security Council subsequently authorized UNMIT, a multidimensional peacekeeping mission with a broad mandate including support to government institutions, interim law enforcement and support to the Timorese police, assistance in conducting the 2007 elections, and

UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)

- Authorization and Start Date 25 August 2006 (UNSC Res. 1704)
- SRSG Ameerah Haq (Bangladesh)
- Police Commissioner Luis Miguel Carrilho (Portugal)
- Budget \$196.1 million
(1 July 2011–30 June 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2011
 - Military Observers: 33
 - Police: 1,203
 - International Civilian Staff: 394
 - National Civilian Staff: 883
 - UN Volunteers: 206

For detailed mission information see p. 297

International Security Forces (ISF)

- Authorization Date 20 June 2006 (UNSC Res. 1690)
- Start Date May 2006
- Force Commander Colonel Luke Foster (Australia)
- Budget \$184.6 million
(1 July 2010–30 June 2011)
- Strength as of 30 September 2011
 - Troops: 460

support for human rights. In 2009, UNMIT developed a medium-term strategy that identified objectives, targets, and benchmarks across four priority areas of the mission's mandate: security and stability; rule of law, justice, and human rights; democratic governance; and socioeconomic development.

Timor-Leste has been largely calm since UNMIT's establishment, even in the face of a 2008 assassination attempt on the lives of the president and prime minister. National institutions have become increasingly capable of carrying out their respective functions, and stakeholders have largely managed to channel political disputes through democratic processes. It was in this environment that in 2010 UNMIT and the government of Timor-Leste turned to considerations of drawdown and eventual withdrawal of the mission.

To guide the transition process, a joint high-level committee on transition was established, comprising the president, the prime minister, relevant senior government officials, the army and police commanders, UNMIT's Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), as well as the senior UNMIT management team. Its first meeting was held in November 2010, at which the committee agreed to establish seven working groups on key focus areas to guide the transition: democratic governance; police and security sector; rule of law, justice, and human rights; socioeconomic development; mission support; training for national UN staff; and the impact of UNMIT's withdrawal on the Timorese economy. Thus, as UNMIT entered 2011, led by SRSG Ameerah Haq, its focus was on identifying, jointly with the government, the processes and modalities for its transition.

Key Developments

Elections and Political Developments

Elections in 2012 will follow those of 2007, which elected José Ramos-Horta as president and brought a coalition government to power led by Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. As political parties and candidates began preparations for the 2012 elections, the political atmosphere was calm, with less friction seen between parties and opposing candidates compared to the heightened tension during the 2007 elections. A July 2011 meeting between political parties, national electoral management bodies, and civil society organizations stressed the importance of maintaining peace and stability during the electoral period. The government also unveiled its long-term development plan, further articulating its map for socioeconomic development in order to spur employment and investment.

UNMIT's logistical and technical support for the elections will be coordinated by the UN electoral support team and reinforced by additional UN volunteers throughout the period. The mission will also provide support to

Timor-Leste's technical electoral secretariat and its national electoral commission. UNMIT police will provide further security assistance throughout the electoral period. As the country moves closer to elections, the SRSG continues her good office role, meeting weekly with the Timorese leadership and monthly with a broader group of political actors, including civil society organizations and all political parties. While the political environment has thus far remained calm, some stakeholders, including business owners, remain concerned about the risk of renewed violence or conflict.¹

The relationship between the government and UNMIT suffered a setback in May with the leak of an internal UN presentation that identified Prime Minister Gusmão as an obstacle to democratic governance. The prime minister quickly rejected the report and UNMIT rapidly issued two statements underscoring that the report did not reflect the official position of the mission and stressing the democratic nature of the prime minister's tenure.

Transition Planning

In September 2011 UNMIT and the government of Timor-Leste released a joint transition plan to provide a framework for the mission's assistance through the end of 2012. The plan, which is intended to be a living document, is guided by four assumptions: continued stability, the holding of national elections in line with international standards, the formation of a new government, and the protection of political space for the opposition. It identifies priority areas for assistance through 2012, objectives, and resource implications across each of the seven thematic focus areas, as well as an assessment of continued support beyond 2012. The plan also provides a matrix of mission activities, their expected completion dates, and handover arrangements if applicable. In addition, the plan identifies possible models for a UN presence after UNMIT withdraws. Throughout the planning process, the government and UNMIT have provided briefings to relevant stakeholders, including donors and civil society.



UN Police Commissioner for Timor-Leste Luis Carrilho (left) gives a flag to Longinhos Monteiro (right) of the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL) during a ceremony in Dili, 7 March 2011, marking the UN Police's return of full control of Timor-Leste to the national force, more than four years after bloody clashes threatened to push the country into civil war.

AFP Photo/Mario Jonny Dos Santos

As part of the transition process, UNMIT is providing a comprehensive, three-phase training program for the mission's national staff members, focused on expanding their skills and preparing them for employment when the mission withdraws. Trainings are also extended to government ministries; requests so far have focused on language, computer, and administrative skills.

Police Handover

On 27 March 2011, UNMIT police formally handed over responsibilities to the Timor-Leste national police (Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste [PNTL]), completing a process that began in May 2009. The handover occurred at the district level based on joint assessments of mutually agreed criteria between the government of Timor-Leste and UNMIT. As national authorities assumed control of each district, UNMIT police stayed on in monitoring and advising roles and stood ready to provide operational support if needed and requested. As districts were turned over, UNMIT police

Box 3.8 Mindanao, Philippines

Since 2004, the International Monitoring Team (IMT) has provided support to an intermittent and frequently stalled peace process between the government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao. Talks between the two groups have repeatedly fallen apart, most recently in 2008, with resulting violence killing 200 and displacing hundreds of thousands. When President Benigno Aquino III took office in June 2010, he announced that resolving the conflict in Mindanao would become a priority for his administration, giving new life to negotiations.

The 1996 peace agreement signed by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the government of the Philippines established the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). This agreement did not satisfy the demands of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which splintered from the MNLF in 1978 and continues to push for an autonomous substate with devolved control over major aspects of governance. After several failed attempts at negotiation between the government and the MILF, talks brokered by Malaysia resulted in both parties agreeing to establish the International Monitoring Team in 2004. Negotiations have since broken down, in 2006 and again in 2008, after which the IMT's mandate expired without renewal.

International Monitoring Team (IMT)

• Authorization Date	22 June 2001 (Tripoli Peace Agreement)
• Start Date	October 2004
• Head of Mission	Major-General Mahdi Yusof (Malaysia)
• Strength as of 30 September 2011	Military Observers: 38

Hostilities continued until both parties agreed to a new round of peace negotiations in 2009, which led to the renewal of the IMT's mandate in 2010. The mandate was again renewed in February 2011 for twelve months.

The IMT comprises representatives from Malaysia, Brunei, Japan, and Libya and, as of 2011, the European Union and Norway. Indonesia is in the process of joining and Saudi Arabia is also expected to join, which would bring the team to a full strength of sixty personnel.¹

Despite its small size, the IMT has played a critical role in monitoring the cease-fire between the government of the Philippines and the MILF and in investigating violations. In 2010 a civilian protection component was created within the IMT. Composed of nongovernmental organizations, this component is designed to ensure that both parties comply with their international obligations to protect civilians.

Peace negotiations, which were restarted in early 2011, have been delayed by the government's concern over the Malaysian facilitator, who was replaced in April. In mid-August the process halted again when the MILF announced that it would not accept the draft proposal prepared by the government because it excluded the creation of a substate with governance authority. The fragile peace process deteriorated further in October when renewed fighting between the MILF and government forces left nearly thirty dead and forced thousands to flee their homes. It also prompted the first government air strikes against the group since 2008.² Negotiations resumed in November and the IMT is investigating the clashes; however, the hostilities, the worst seen in recent years, have dashed popular support for a negotiated settlement with the MILF.

Notes: 1. International Crisis Group, "The Philippines: Back to the Table, Warily, in Mindanao," 24 March 2011, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/B119-the-philippines-back-to-the-table-warily-in-mindanao.aspx>.

2. Jason Gutierrez, "First Air Strikes on Philippine Rebels Since 2008," *Agence France-Presse*, 24 October 2011.

dedicated an increasing focus to capacity building and institutional development.

Prior to the full handover, observers raised concern over the significant number of uncertified officers in the last remaining districts. This was a particularly critical issue for Dili, where many officers had been transferred to

allow police resumption to proceed in other districts. In late 2010 the Secretary for State and Security decided to certify 199 PNTL officers facing criminal or disciplinary issues, of which 52 faced serious charges, though the certification would not exempt officers from criminal or disciplinary proceedings. A special

investigation team, supported by two UNMIT police officers, reviewed the cases and determined that 121 of the 199 officers would face criminal or disciplinary action and that no further action would be taken against the remaining 78 officers.

At the first meeting of the high-level transition committee, the general commander of the PNTL noted key areas that would require further strengthening: legislation, training, administration, discipline, and operations. In February, the UN Police (UNPOL) and the PNTL signed a joint development plan covering the period through December 2012 and focusing on these five areas.

UNMIT police have responded to their shifting role by drawing down from 1,608 officers to 1,203 officers in October 2011, with this level expected to be maintained through the elections. In addition, recruitment has emphasized the advising and mentoring role of the police, and nineteen civilian expert posts have been added to provide key capacity building support. Eighteen of the nineteen have been deployed; however, there have been delays in identifying and deploying police officers with the required skills, highlighting a gap in the UN's police recruitment and deployment model.

The government of Timor-Leste has also requested police advisers with critical skill sets to be identified within the UNPOL contingent. As of September, UNMIT, working with government partners, had identified 257 adviser posts and filled 225 of these. Recognizing that advising is a long-term task and not well-suited to the typical six-month deployment of police officers to peacekeeping missions, the UN is requesting that police-contributing countries allow for extended deployments for these advisers. However, the receptivity of member states to this request remains to be seen.

A critical issue for the police transition will be the transfer of ongoing support from UNPOL to other international actors. The government of Timor-Leste has established several bilateral agreements for future assistance

with partners including Australia, Indonesia, and Portugal.² With multiple actors providing multiple aspects of police assistance, the government will need to take a strong coordination role.

Security and Justice

While the security environment in Timor-Leste remained largely peaceful in 2011, a number of violent incidents involving martial arts groups were a cause for concern. The most serious incident occurred in August and resulted in the death of an off-duty police officer and the burning of fifty-eight homes.

UNMIT has continued to provide support for the Timorese defense forces (the Falintil-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste [F-FDTL]), including providing development advice and mentoring support. A joint security sector review project undertaken by UNMIT and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) continued to provide technical and operational trainings, and also supported the opening of Timor-Leste's National Defence Institute in late 2010. In addition, in September 2011 UNMIT and UNDP initiated a security sector development project intended to strengthen civilian oversight and management capacity of the security sector.

In 2011 the F-FDTL developed a new force structure that included recruitment of 600 additional officers. In addition, twelve F-FDTL officers began a six-month joint training program in July in preparation for deployment with a Portuguese contingent to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Timor-Leste's first contribution to a UN peacekeeping operation. However, the overarching national security policy has still not been finalized, and was recently returned to the Secretariat of State for Security by the Council of Ministers for revision. In addition, the comprehensive review of the security sector remains in draft form and is unlikely to be finalized in the near term.

The International Security Forces continue to provide assistance and support capacity building in the Timorese security sector. The

government of Timor-Leste has requested that the ISF continue to assist until after the 2012 elections, with future reconfigurations to be made in consultation with the government and the UN.

In addition to its support to the security sector, UNMIT has also continued to provide support to the justice sector, focused on strengthening the capacity of judicial institutions. In May 2011, fourteen judicial officials graduated from Timor-Leste's UNDP-supported Legal Training Center, expanding the country's nascent justice system to sixty-four officials. As more national actors are able to take on official functions within the justice sector, international actors continue to move to advisory roles, with only twenty-two international officials remaining in line functions. Under the supervision of the Office of the Prosecutor-General, UNMIT's Serious Crimes Investigation Team continues to investigate serious crimes committed in 1999.

In addition to providing support to the country's Legal Training Center, UNDP has assisted in developing its case management system, which continues to be a major challenge

for Timor-Leste's justice sector. From January to August 2011, the Timorese justice system processed 2,963 criminal cases, though over 2,600 new cases were registered during the same period, leaving nearly 5,000 cases pending. Though the increase in new cases may indicate increasing public confidence in the justice system, the continued backlog of cases risks undermining this growing trust.

Conclusion

Elections in 2012 will serve as a critical test for peace consolidation in Timor-Leste and the resilience of its institutions. UNMIT's technical, political, and security assistance will be important throughout the period, after which a rapid drawdown is envisioned. As the history of UN peacekeeping in Timor-Leste demonstrates, there are risks associated with mission transitions. To avoid renewed conflict, UNMIT, the government of Timor-Leste, and its international partners will need to adopt a flexible and honest approach to UNMIT's drawdown and eventual withdrawal.

Notes

1. Stephen Coates, "Testing Times for East Timor As Polls Loom," *Agence France-Presse*, 11 September 2011.

2. International Crisis Group, "Timor-Leste: Time for the UN to Step Back," *Asia Briefing* no. 116, 15 December 2010, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/timor-leste/B116%20Timor-Leste%20-%20Time%20for%20the%20UN%20to%20Step%20Back.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/timor-leste/B116%20Timor-Leste%20-%20Time%20for%20the%20UN%20to%20Step%20Back.pdf).