

Timor-Leste

In 2012, Timor-Leste celebrated ten years of independence amid largely peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections. The elections and inauguration of the new government demonstrated the considerable progress that Timor-Leste has made since the 2006 deployment of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). Recognizing this progress and at the request of the government, the Security Council decided to close UNMIT at the end of the year.

In September, following the formation of a new government, the prime minister requested the development of a new type of cooperation between Timor-Leste and the UN, suggesting the creation of a Special Adviser focused on development and institution strengthening. However, while the UN has underscored its commitment to a continuing partnership, with a particular focus on social and economic development, this proposal has not yet been taken forward.

Background

Following the 1999 UN-supported referendum on independence, in which the Timorese voted overwhelmingly for independence from Indonesia, Indonesian proxies launched a campaign of violence that reportedly killed 1,400 people and left hundreds of thousands displaced. A UN-authorized multinational force led by Australia deployed quickly to restore order and the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established shortly afterward. After assisting the fledgling country's transition to independence, UNTAET was replaced with the UN Mission of Support in East Timor, which was succeeded in 2005 by

the UN Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), a considerably smaller political mission.

Shortly before the end of UNOTIL's mandate, violence erupted prompted by deep-seated tensions within the Timorese armed forces. Responding to a request for international assistance by the Timorese government, the Australian-led International Security Forces (ISF) were deployed. The Security Council followed with the authorization of UNMIT, with a multi-dimensional mandate covering interim law enforcement and support to the Timorese police, support to government institutions, assistance with elections, and support for human rights. A 2009 medium-term strategy focused on four priority areas for the mission's engagement: security and stability; rule of law, justice, and human rights; democratic governance; and socioeconomic development.

Starting in 2010, and accelerating in the lead-up to the 2012 elections, the government and the UN engaged in discussions to guide UNMIT's transition and withdrawal. The resulting September 2011 joint transition plan identified four assumptions underlying mission transition: continued stability, national elections meeting international standards, the formation of a new government based on the outcome of the elections, and political space for opposition. The plan also identified activities to be completed by UNMIT and those that would be handed off to other actors. A High-Level Committee on Transition, comprising leaders of the government and UNMIT, oversaw implementation of the plan.

After the previous Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Ameerah Haq, assumed the position of Under-Secretary-General for the UN Department of Field

UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)

• Authorization and Start Date	25 August 2006 (UNSC Res. 1704)
• Acting SRSG	Finn Reske-Nielsen (Denmark)
• Police Commissioner	Luis Miguel Carrilho (Portugal)
• Budget	\$155.4 million (1 July 2012–30 June 2013)
• Strength as of 31 October 2012	Military Observers: 19 Police: 1,058 International Civilian Staff: 302 National Civilian Staff: 827 UN Volunteers: 145

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Support in June, UNMIT's Deputy SRSG, Finn Reske-Nielsen, was named the acting SRSG to oversee the end of UNMIT's activities.

Key Developments

Elections

In March and April 2012, Timor-Leste held two rounds of presidential elections. The runoff was contested between two former resistance fighters, Francisco Guterres of the main opposition party, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN), and José Maria de Vasconcelos, former commander of the armed forces and also known as Taur Matan Ruak. Incumbent president and Nobel Prize laureate José Ramos-Horta was eliminated in the first round of voting after the ruling party, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), decided to back Vasconcelos, who also won the runoff vote. While the presidency is largely a ceremonial role, the position does carry with it some oversight functions and formally decides who will form the government.

Following the presidential vote, parliamentary elections were held in July and contested by twenty-one political parties and coalitions. In addition to national observers,

multiple international actors observed the elections, including the European Union, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which deployed its first election observation mission. The CNRT garnered 37 percent of the vote, leaving it only three seats shy of being able to form a government on its own. FRETILIN came in second with nearly 30 percent of the vote and the Democratic Party received 10 percent. The CNRT, led by Xanana Gusmão, formed a coalition government with the Democratic Party and a smaller party, Fretili-Mundanca.

When the ruling party announced that its coalition government would exclude FRETILIN, allegedly using derogatory language toward the opposition party, demonstrations by protesters resulted in the death of one person, allegedly shot by a police officer who was subsequently suspended and faces criminal charges. However, these protests were not as large or damaging as many observers had initially feared. Importantly, while UNMIT's formed police units were dispatched as backup support, Timorese police were able to handle the events independently, a key test of the institution's capacity.

UNMIT provided support to the preparation and conduct of the elections. It provided training to candidates on developing positive campaigns and planning election activities. The mission also created "resources centers" for presidential candidates in an effort to promote equality and tolerance in the campaign. UNMIT's police contingent provided support to Timor-Leste's police through training and in the creation of a joint national security operation plan. The mission also provided technical and logistical support, including using its helicopters to transport electoral materials.

Following the formation of the new government, Timor-Leste was visited by the UN Secretary-General, who commended the elections, noting that "the peaceful and orderly process reflects Timor-Leste's strong commitment to stability, democracy and national unity."¹ Shortly afterward, US secretary of

state Hillary Clinton visited Timor-Leste, the first US secretary of state to do so since the country's independence.

UNMIT Transition and Post-UNMIT UN Presence

UNMIT's transition preparations gained momentum in the lead-up to national elections. In January 2012 an assessment team from the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Development Group, and UNMIT conducted an in-depth assessment on options for a post-UNMIT UN presence in Timor-Leste. The team noted a high degree of coherence of views among stakeholders on a number of issues, including that all international uniformed personnel should depart by the end of 2012, and that a small political presence should succeed UNMIT with a direct link to the UN Secretariat and thus the Security Council. Following the visit, UN headquarters initiated a planning process that saw DPA taking over the lead responsibility for post-UNMIT planning.

Throughout 2012, both the Timorese government and UNMIT continued to work on completing the joint transition plan for the mission's withdrawal, with quarterly monitoring reports assessing the completion of activities. By September 2012, 77 percent of activities had been completed, while 63 percent of activities to be handed over to other actors had been completed. The mission also signed memorandums of understanding with four UN agencies on cooperation in the second half of 2012 to facilitate the UN Country Team's early involvement in activities prior to the mission's withdrawal.

UNMIT's transition preparations were also notable for their emphasis on skills development of national staff members. The mission offered English-language training, including a two-week immersion program, and vocational-skills training to prepare national staff members for employment after UNMIT's departure.

Notwithstanding the advanced stages of the transition planning and preparation, in



On 15 March 2012, PNTL General Commander Longuinhos Monteiro and UNMIT Police Commissioner Luis Carrilho, at PNTL headquarters, addressed PNTL and UNPOL officers deploying to the districts ahead of the presidential elections. The officers are being deployed to provide support and security to the districts. The objective is to reassure the public of Timor-Leste of their safety and ensure they can freely cast their vote on election day. PNTL and UNPOL officers were deployed to Aileu, Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro, Covalima, Ermera, Lautem, Liquica, Manatuto, Manufahi, Oecussi, and Viqueque Districts.

September Prime Minister Gusmão sent a letter to the Secretary-General advising that the new government believed that Timor-Leste did not require a peacekeeping or political mission after 2012, and expressed his desire for the country's removal from the agenda of the Security Council. Instead, the letter suggested "an innovative working relationship" between the UN and Timor-Leste that could include the creation of a Special Adviser focused on institution strengthening and development with a direct link to the Secretary-General's good offices. The prime minister noted that the decision was taken after wide consultations with parliament, the opposition, and civil society.

In a presidential statement on 19 December, the Security Council commended the achievements in Timor-Leste and the important role of UNMIT. At the time of writing, the Special Adviser position had not been created and it was expected that Timor-Leste would

Women, Peace, and Security: Equal Access to Justice

As peacekeeping and political missions work to incorporate gender sensitivity into the many facets of conflict and postconflict societies, 2012 drew particular focus on women's access to justice. In September the Secretary-General unveiled a three-point plan for developing a gender-sensitive justice framework, which entails repealing all discriminatory laws, involving more women leaders in the justice system, and investing to help women overcome obstacles. The latest report in the UN's Progress of Women series, *In Pursuit of Justice*, also served to highlight the many barriers women face in access to justice.

Early and effective support for gender-sensitive rule of law and transitional justice will pave the way for a more equitable approach for women to pursue claims in a postconflict society. Increasing women's participation in peace agreement negotiations can help ensure gender sensitivity, thereby preventing a future environment of impunity for sexual and gender-based violence. Through concerted efforts, the UN Department of Political Affairs increased the number of women negotiators on its rosters in 2012 to 36 percent, while also providing

guidance on making mediation efforts more inclusive and addressing sexual violence in peace talks.

The need to strengthen postconflict justice processes, ranging from reporting through prosecution, was underscored in 2012. The presence of an entirely female UN police brigade in Liberia has lowered social barriers for reporting on sexual and gender-based violence, with notable increases in report filing in operating areas. UN missions are also working to improve the capacity of the judicial sector to investigate and prosecute crimes. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) are reforming police procedures and strengthening protection capabilities by training police officers on the prevention and investigation of sexual and gender-based violence.

Despite the progress made in increasing reporting by women and training police to better handle cases, state courts often have low capacity to try suspects. In Liberia, a significant gap between reported cases of sexual and gender-based violence and trials still

persists. Limited resources, public lack of knowledge of judicial procedures, and the shortage of prisons and courthouses all contribute to institutional barriers. However, with the assistance of UN missions, the inclusion of women in the justice sector of postconflict countries has increased, though proportional representation remains low. In Timor-Leste, a quarter of national judges are now women, and the number of women national prosecutors has increased as well. In Sierra Leone, women compose over a quarter of all judges, and the four principals of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, including the president of the court, are women.

Ensuring the reestablishment of the rule of law for women by addressing social and institutional barriers and strengthening the justice chain is crucial in conflict and postconflict environments. Mission mandates that address these concerns with a gender-sensitive approach will allow UN operations to assist host governments in building stronger civil societies. Justice does not stop after conviction, however, and will require a long-term commitment by all stakeholders to end impunity and achieve gender equality.

remain on the Security Council's agenda, following customary practice, for three years following the closure of the mission.

Security

Because the 2006 crisis was sparked by underlying tensions within the armed forces and police, stability in Timor-Leste will be largely dependent on competent and credible security services going forward.

The police's performance during the election-related protests was a meaningful indication of the progress the institution has made. UNMIT has continued to support the development of the police force through the

joint national-UN police development plan. By September 2012, UNMIT police had completed over 80 percent of the activities in the plan. The government has also actively developed partnerships with bilateral donors on support for the police going forward, including with Australia, New Zealand, and Portugal. To support these efforts, the mission held a number of meetings to bring together the UN Country Team and bilateral donors to ensure a coordinated approach to long-term police assistance.

The elaboration of a new plan for the Timorese armed forces in late 2011 called for an increase in force size from 3,000 to 3,600

personnel by 2020. The government and military continue to review the organic law regarding the armed forces to align it with the new force plan. Throughout 2012, UNMIT and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) continued a joint project on security sector development. The ISF also continued to provide support to the security sector throughout the year. As with UNMIT, the ISF closed its mission at the end of 2012.

UNMIT has noted that the relationship between the Timorese police and the Timorese armed forces has improved markedly and that tensions between the two institutions have reduced. However, despite these developments, the mission warned that accountability and discipline within both the police and the armed forces remain inadequate.

Conclusion

The closure of UNMIT ends twelve years of international peacekeeping in Timor-Leste and marks a new phase in the partnership

International Security Forces (ISF)	
• Authorization Date	20 June 2006 (UNSC Res. 1690)
• Start Date	May 2006
• Force Commander	Colonel Luke Foster (Australia)
• Budget	\$96.05 million (1 October 2011–30 September 2012)
• Strength as of 30 September 2012	Troops: 451

between the UN and Timor-Leste. The authorization of a Special Adviser dedicated to institutional strengthening and development, after a decade of the continuous presence of a peace operation, would represent a new form of UN engagement in Timor-Leste, and for the UN more broadly in a postmission country. These changes in international support occur as Timor-Leste closes its first decade of independence.

Note

1. “Ban Praises Timor-Leste’s Progress and Consolidation of Its Security Sector,” *UN News Service*, 15 August 2012, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42685&Cr=Timor-Leste&Cr1#.UE4s46TyZtI>.