



Lessons in Moving Forward with New Challenges to National Stability

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Introduction

After the crisis in 2006, the government of Timor-Leste created the motto 'Goodbye Conflict, Welcome Development.' This motto suggests a renewed emphasis on development-led national progress. Yet, even in this calm period, tension still occurred in some cases, such as the departure of the United Nations (UN) and the 2012 general election. However, since the establishment of the Fifth Constitutional Government, people have lived in a peaceful state, and development is moving forward positively, despite the tentative nature of some security concerns.

Timor-Leste faces some viable threats to national security, and Fundasaun Mahein (FM) has stated that the country must discuss and analyze these current and future threats. The threats of today come in both conventional and unconventional forms. Some operate through complex transnational networks with specific ideological, political, economic, and social agendas. These new dynamics and the new technology available to them are, in many ways, products of this globalized era.

In this report, FM discusses national security threats in the contexts of past events. One theme of the report is the history of Timor-Leste's independence struggle, including the historical implications of Indonesian occupation and the organization of resistance movements. This report concludes that some of these issues and lessons from the past are increasingly relevant in present-day Timor-Leste.

Methodology

The information in this report was gathered from FM's monitoring efforts. Also consulted were reports from media outlets, civil society organizations, and official state documents. This report focuses on important lessons from post-independence Timor-Leste as well as the historical implications from the Indonesian occupation. Also included in this report is an analysis of resistance movements occurring during Timor-Leste's development phase, which pose threats to national stability. Lastly, this report will discuss the current situation facing Timor-Leste. To analyze its findings and then form a conclusion, FM conducted a security sector discussion (SSD).

Lessons from the Independence Period

Some important lessons can be learned from Timor-Leste's history after gaining its independence on 20th May 2002. Shortly after independence, on 4th December 2002, a grave security incident occurred, in which two people died and twenty-six were injured. This attack



involved the destroying, burning, and assaulting of public infrastructure and community housing in Dili.¹

This incident was linked to political, social, and security issues, and the conflict took place everywhere in Timor-Leste. Two years later, in February 2004, another serious security incident occurred, followed by another in July 2005. Social and political angst grew, and there was no clear response from the government and state at the time to address this tension. This ultimately drove citizens to protest for 19 days in Dili.²

In the midst of this mounting socio-political tension, a military and political crisis occurred in 2006. In effect, security institutions imploded, the tensions within contributed to the already unstable environment. The F-FDTL and the PNTL factionalized rapidly, and members of both of these institutions provoked each other with weapons. Tensions escalated rapidly, and this resulted in many deaths, a complex refugee situation, and the overall collapse of the security sector.³

People became traumatized and left their homes, as Dili became a center of conflict. Security personnel and civilians were separated by affiliations to “Lorosa’e (East)” and “Loromonu (West),” and this division led to civil war. Tensions mounted until these groups began to kill and displace members of the opposing group.

The conflict between these two factions caused an escalating erosion of political and social stability. A year later, the 2007 presidential and the parliamentary elections led to the formation of a majority parliamentary government (AMP). Disagreements regarding the structure of this fledgling AMP government led to conflict between members of opposing political parties. This conflict took place in all territories of Timor-Leste, causing widespread murder and arson by militants of multiple political parties. Among the districts affected by this conflict were Viqueque, Baucau, Dili, and Ermera, where many victims suffered the consequences of this political crisis.⁴

The fragile political landscape has contributed to social and economic angst, and these frustrations have often spilled over into conflicts across the nation. The 2007 General Election strongly unhinged socio-political cohesion and demanded strong attention by the state. The 2006 Crisis and the post-election disturbances of 2007 have greatly affected the development

¹ Preliminary Report of the Independent Investigation Commission (IIC), 2002. Investigasaun Sobre os Graves Incidentes Ocorridos no Dia 4 de Dezembro de 2002 no Parlamentu Nasional em Dili.

² Speeches of the Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão in the opening ceremony of a session between Timor-Leste and development partners. Available at; http://timor-leste.gov.tl/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Sesaun-Abertura-TLDPM_07.04.10_TT.pdf

³ Good Bye Conflict, Welcome Development. The Fifth (V) Constitutional Government Program 2007-2012.

⁴Potential Threats to security before the 2012 election. Available at <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org>



process and contributed to various failures within Timor-Leste.⁵ A year later, on 11th February 2008, rebels groups attacked the prime minister's convoy during his journey from Balibar to Dili. Also injured on this day was the President of the Republic, Jose Ramos-Horta, who was attacked in his residence in Metiaut, Dili.

Persistence of Resistance Organizations in the Present Development Phase

Two important memories from Timor-Leste's history pose present-day threats to national stability. The famous martial art groups (MAG's) PSHT and Kera-Sakti formed during the Indonesian occupation and have continued organizing after independence. Another Timorese group, KORK, formed after independence.

Conflict between MAGs during the Indonesian occupation was rather infrequent, despite some instigation by military and militia forces. However, after independence, martial arts group have engaged in widespread violence.

Some MAGs are influenced by and affiliated with political entities, and this political manipulation has contributed to MAG conflict.⁶ Some MAG groups are notorious for their violence, due to their involvement in politically-motivated and military violence,⁷ including incidents happening both domestically and internationally.⁸ The conflicts occurring between 2007 and 2012 posed grave threats to national stability. In response, the government and the National Parliament passed a resolution to disband MAGs, which include PSHT, Kera-Sakti, and KORK.⁹

Despite the resolution by the National Parliament and the government, some MAG's continue to recruit and providing training for new members. Through monitoring, FM noted that MAGs still provoke conflict, because of the lack of monitoring for the issued resolution. In Viqueque and some other districts, communities informed FM that MAGs continue recruiting and training new members at night. The communities also informed the police of these issues, but the police have not yet taken any concrete actions against these MAGs. Other sources have alleged that some MAGs are affiliated with political parties. Sometimes in training, trainers present the platform of the sponsoring political party to new members, in regards to the upcoming parliamentary election in 2017.¹⁰

⁵ Da Silva Gusmão, Martinho. Fails State Failhado: Teoria no Praxis (2- Hotu). Available at <http://forum-haksesuk.blogspot.com/2008/05/estado-failhado-teoria-no-praxis-2-hotu.html>

⁶ Ramos Naikoli, Antonio. Consequences of Martial Arts and Rituals for Stability, Security, and the Maintenance of National Sovereignty. Available at <http://forum-haksesuk.blogspot.com/2011/06/kompromisu-artes-marciais-no-rituais-ba.html>

⁷ Belun report. Dynamic Conflict and Violence link with Martial Arts in Timor-Leste.

⁸ Martial Arts are forbidden in this nation, Explodes Abroad. Available at: <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2013/08/07/violence-quelled-at-home-explodes-abroad/>

⁹ Belun report. Dynamic Conflict and Violence Linked to Martial Arts in Timor-Leste.

¹⁰ FM's monitoring noted that people presented over MAG's Activities in Viqueque District in December 2014.



Another event of historical significance was the CPD-RDTL movement. Members of this group have formed a separate army force and hold movements in military uniforms on important or historical days of the RDTL. In addition to these demonstrations, the CPD-RDTL also holds social activities in communities. In 2012, this organization mobilized all of its members to Welaluhu, Manufahi to work. Their activities there garnered attention from state officials. MPs at the National Parliament have strongly condemned the existence of this group, declaring it an illegal group.¹¹

Other concern for the Fifth Constitutional Government is the emergence of the Maubere Revolutionary Council (MRC) in late-2013. This group is strongly opposed to Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão and the government, holding that these state officials have not advanced good policy for the majority of people of Timor-Leste.

Both the MRC and the CPD-RDTL have demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, because they believe that his governance is poor.¹² They have insisted as well that the Prime Minister dissolve the National Parliament and the government, because the socio-economic conditions of the Timorese people are very poor.¹³ These groups have demanded that the government cede the power to them. The groups propose to lead as an interim government for a period of six months to one year before establishing a new government.¹⁴

National security has become fragile at the moment, as Mauk Moruk (former FALINTIL commander) has joined the CPD-RDTL in building the CPD-RDTL post in Lalulai, Baucau district. Members at this post have been wearing military uniforms alongside Mauk Moruk's fellow former FALENTIL members. The government and the National Parliament have issued a resolution to dissolve the CPD-RDTL and MRC, which have been deemed illegal and are intent on instigating crime and unrest in Timor-Leste.¹⁵ Finally, the government and the National Parliament, via the Council of Ministry, have decided to stop the activities of these groups through a conjoint operation.

¹¹ Gusmão, Timotio. The NP is concerned that the government has recognized the cooperation of Illegal Groups. Available at <http://jornal.suara-timor-lorosae.com/pn-preokupa-governu-rekoinese-kooperativa-grupu-ilegal/>

¹² Mauk Moruk: Xanana must resign soon. Available at <http://www.diariutimorpost.tl/berita-1059-mauk-moruk--xanana-tenki-rezigna-lalais.html>

¹³ Fundasaun Mahein. Friendship Operation: Reintegration or Threat? Available at <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2014/06/26/operasaun-habelun-reintegra-ka-ameasa/>

¹⁴ Mauk Moruk: Xanana must Resign soon. Available at <http://www.diariutimorpost.tl/berita-1059-mauk-moruk--xanana-tenki-rezigna-lalais.html>

¹⁵ Resolução do Parlamento Nacional (2014. Marsu. 04). De repúdio a tentativas de instabilidade e ameaças ao Estado de Direito. Available at http://www.jornal.gov.tl/public/docs/2014/serie_1/serie1_no9.pdf



FM believes that the operation was not successful in solving this historical problem, because the people of this nation are still deeply concerned. Something appears to be amiss the national leaders in this new era. It is necessary that all leaders collaborate and cooperate to respond to problems. Efforts have been made, but there is still dissatisfaction in regard to these illegal groups, which involve civilians and former FALINTIL members.

The Current Situation

Today's threat is not a conventional war with conventional weapons. Instead, these problems are non-conventional, characterized by transnational networks of organized crime.

FM has discovered that Timor-Leste's citizens, from various backgrounds, are being recruited in high numbers to organized crime groups. At this time, quality of life, in social and economic terms, is still poor. This reality has triggered the emergence of organized crime. Perhaps most troubling is that these organized crime syndicates are recruiting government leaders, business executives, and top security actors.¹⁶

Despite the imminent problem, the government has not yet given enough attention to the issue of organized crimes, which organize and operate here in Timor-Leste. Among these recent threats are drugs trafficking, falsification of official documents, money laundering, counterfeiting of money, mafia activities, and organized crime. Some believe that Timor-Leste has become a sort of transit place for organized crime networks, which traffic things like drugs across the border.

FM has recommended in its first report that security authorities and the relevant ministries make a direct inspection of any entrepreneurs involved in printing activities in Timor-Leste, such as printing of official state documents, renting of computers, or usage of printers. FM has discovered that some of these vendors have official permission to print these documents, and others do not.¹⁷

Among the falsified documents that have been found are electoral cards, passports, RDTL certificates, and vehicle documents. FM has found some documents containing written identities, and FM has identified some as originating from Indonesia and China.¹⁸

FM worries that organized crime networks will continue to use false documents and continue

¹⁶ Timor-Leste in big threats for Drugs' transaction and Weapons. Available at

<http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2014/10/16/timor-leste-iha-perigu-boot-ba-transaksaun-droga-no-kilat/>

¹⁷ Security Gaps of Timor-Leste: Attractions for Organized Crimes. Available at: http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/MNL_Nu.-87_3009201_Operasaun-Krime-pdf.pdf

¹⁸ Security Gaps of Timor-Leste: Attractions for Organized Crimes. Available at: http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/MNL_Nu.-87_3009201_Operasaun-Krime-pdf.pdf



hiding in Timor-Leste, while organizing criminal activities. In neighboring countries, criminal networks exist, and their actions against public institutions and innocent citizens could become prevalent anywhere in the region.

FM has alerted the government that it should discuss and analyze the potential implications of organized crime in Timor-Leste. Because of the fragility of the security infrastructure in Timor-Leste, these groups can operate and even shelter terrorist movements. So far, these groups have trafficked drugs and illegal items. These groups are always using the chance to get information regarding the security limitations of nations. The current vulnerability could invite terrorists and their sympathizers to develop and operate in Timor-Leste's neighboring countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Australia. This potential reality is reason for neighboring countries to implement cooperative laws to combat terrorism.¹⁹

Timor-Leste relative weakness along the maritime land border has become exploited by terrorists and organized crime bosses as a smuggling opportunity. If does Timor-Leste's security forces do not detect them, criminal enterprises will utilize Timor-Leste as a hub of operation. This has been seen recently in the national news, as reports have uncovered drugs trafficking and drug transit in Timor-Leste.

Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Defense and Security should discuss and assess national security in Timor-Leste, in order to further detect the movements of organized and transnational crime networks.
2. PNTL General Command should conduct orientations for district commanders that provide instruction on monitoring the activities of martial arts groups, which should be dissolved.

¹⁹ Security Gaps of Timor-Leste: Attractions for Organized Crimes. Available at: http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/MNL_Nu.-87_3009201_Operasaun-Krime-pdf.pdf



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