



Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of
Armed Forces (DCAF)

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**Poster Boys No More:
Gender and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste**

Henri Myrttinen

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Acronyms

AC75	Association of Ex-Combatants 1975
CivPol	Civilian Police (later: UN Police or UNPOL)
CNRT	Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorese (National Council of the Timorese Resistance)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
FALINTIL	Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste
F-FDTL	FALINTIL-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste
FRETILIN	Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ISF	International Stabilisation Force
JSMP	Judicial System Monitoring Programme
MAG	Martial Arts Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PNTL	Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste
POLRI	Kepolisian Republik Indonesia
RAG	Ritual Arts Group
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UIR	Unidade Intervenção Rápida
UN	United Nations
UNMISSET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNPOL	United Nations Police (previously called CivPol, Civilian Police)
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
UPF	Unidade de Patrulhamento de Fronteira
VPU	Vulnerable Persons Unit

Poster Boys No More: Gender and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste

Henri Myrntinen

1. Introduction

As the shots rang out across the capital Dili in April and May 2006, what had been hailed as a 'success story' of externally supported nation-building processes lay in ruins. Timor-Leste had, for the previous six years, been held up as the United Nations' most successful mission. A key element of this had been the donor-driven disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) processes through which ex-combatants had been integrated into the new national security forces.¹ It was now precisely the members of these security forces who were fighting each other in the streets. Weapons were handed out to civilians and to criminal gangs, thirty-seven people died in the immediate fighting and 150 000 persons became internally displaced. Though the arrival of international peacekeepers calmed the situation down initially, continued political unrest and gang² violence plagued the country for another two years, culminating in the shooting and killing of the renegade Major Alfredo Reinado and one of his followers, as well as the shooting and wounding of President José Ramos-Horta on February 11, 2008.

Paradoxically, the violent incidents of February 11, 2008 in the end also served to calm the situation down, at least in the short- and medium term. The last mutinying 'petitioners' who had rallied around Major Reinado surrendered within several weeks, levels of gang violence came down and the last of the internally displaced persons' camps were closed. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) was made responsible both for internal security and for 'reforming, restructuring and rebuilding' the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste.³ With the improved security situation, UNMIT and the government of Timor-Leste agreed in May 2009 to hand responsibility for internal security back to the East Timorese police force a district at a time.⁴

¹ This paper will concentrate on the police and armed forces of Timor-Leste and the international security forces only, though the security sector is of course far larger, including for example the judiciary, intelligence agencies, private security companies, the penal system, as well as parliamentary and extra-parliamentary oversight mechanisms.

² For the sake of simplicity, the term 'gang' is used here to refer to the various groups which have been involved in politically and otherwise motivated violence in Timor-Leste. These groups include street gangs, but also veterans' organisations, martial arts groups and ritual arts groups. For a more detailed typology, see for example: Timor-Leste Armed Violence Assessment, Groups, gangs, and armed violence in Timor-Leste, TLAVA Issue Brief 2 (Dili: TLAVA, 2009).

³ Yoshino Funaki, *The UN and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste: A Widening Credibility Gap* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2009), 7-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the ultimate goal of international support to SSR processes is to ‘increase the ability of partner countries to meet the range of security needs within their societies in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of governance and the rule of law.’⁵ Security is explicitly presented within the broader framework of human security, with specific reference to the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, children and minority groups. This comprehensive SSR has evidently not been achieved in Timor-Leste, in spite of conditions which, as Jarat Chopra noted, were exceptional:

... there were conditions for success that are rarely available to peace missions. The belligerent power had completely withdrawn [...] an effective multinational force could credibly guarantee internal and external security [...] the local population openly welcomed the UN [and] there was a single interlocutor with which to negotiate – the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) – rather than a myriad of unstable factions.⁶

This paper will assess, from a gender perspective, the DDR/SSR processes which were carried out in Timor-Leste, focusing mainly on events from the end of the Indonesian military occupation in September 1999 to the implosion of the security sector in April 2006. Following a brief introduction to the historical background of the situation and the DDR process in particular, sections 3 and 4 discuss the formation of gender roles in East Timorese society and their relevance to security issues. Sections 5 and 6 analyse the development of the East Timorese armed forces and police force before the 2006 crisis, particularly looking at how gender issues were addressed and impacted upon the institutions. Section 7 gives a brief overview of the 2006 crisis and subsequent events. Section 8 presents an outlook for the future of SSR in Timor-Leste as of the time of writing – in November 2009. The paper concludes with a brief analysis and policy recommendations.

2. Background to the DDR/SSR Process

Timor-Leste, a nation of approximately 1 000 000 inhabitants occupying the eastern half of the island of Timor, (re-)gained its independence on May 20, 2002.⁷ The midnight ceremony was the symbolic end to an often violent history of around 450 years of Portuguese colonial rule; three years of Japanese occupation and an extremely bloody twenty-four year struggle against Indonesian military occupation (see Appendix 1 for a timeline of key events). The military part of the struggle was carried out by the *Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste*

⁵ OECD/DAC, *Security System Reform and Governance* (Paris: OECD, 2005), 21.

⁶ Jarat Chopra, ‘The UN’s Kingdom in East Timor’ *Survival* 42, No.3 (Autumn 2000): 28.

⁷ Timor-Leste had unilaterally declared its independence from Portugal on November 28, 1975, nine days before the Indonesian invasion. This unilateral independence declaration was however not broadly recognised internationally and de jure the territory remained a Portuguese colony though de facto it was integrated into Indonesia as the 27th province of the country since 1976.

(FALINTIL) guerrilla movement, originally the armed wing of the FRETILIN party, and was supported by a civilian resistance movement, both inside Timor-Leste and outside the territory.

For the two-and-a-half years prior to the independence declaration, from October 1999 to May 2002, the territory had been under the transitional administration of the United Nations (UNTAET).⁸ The UN transitional administration was established in reaction to the international outcry over the brutal campaign of destruction waged by the Indonesian occupation forces and their militia proxies once the territory had voted for independence from Indonesia in an UN-organised referendum in August 1999.

During the UNTAET period, the military wing of the East Timorese independence movement, the FALINTIL, were demobilised and partially integrated into the new armed forces, *FALINTIL-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste* (F-FDTL) and, to a much lesser extent, the new police force, *Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste* (PNTL). The relationship between the two security forces was tense from the outset: the F-FDTL saw itself as the heir of FALINTIL's independence struggle, viewing the PNTL, which was formed around a core of former East Timorese members of the Indonesian police force, with suspicion.⁹ The two institutions quickly became entangled in turf wars, due to a continuing lack of clear legal delineation of the respective functions of the two forces and the establishment of rival units which competed for the same roles (e.g. in border security or crowd control).¹⁰ Relations have been further strained by the politicisation of the two forces.¹¹

The demobilisation of the FALINTIL guerrilla force and the establishment of the new security forces, a kind of combined DDR/SSR process, was not part of UNTAET's original mandate and was conducted in a somewhat improvised manner.¹² Initially, the pro-independence movement had announced that the newly independent country would not have any armed forces, but this decision was revised due to internal and external pressures. In the end, the blueprint for the new security forces was drawn up by King's College London with minimal input from East Timorese society.¹³

⁸ See Appendix 2 for summary of UN missions in Timor-Leste 1999-2009.

⁹ Eirin Mobekk, *Law-Enforcement: Creating and Maintaining a Police Service in a Post-Conflict Society - Problems and Pitfalls*, DCAF Working Paper, No. 127 (Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2003), 9-11.

¹⁰ Edward Rees, *Under Pressure - Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004* (Geneva: DCAF, 2004), 22-26.

¹¹ International Crisis Group, *Timor-Leste: Security Sector Reform*, International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 143 (Brussels: ICG, 2008), 16-17.

¹² Saleh Abdullah and Henri Myrntinen, "Now they have guns, now they feel powerful" - Gender, small arms and violence in Timor-Leste', in *Sexed Pistols - The Gendered Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, eds. Vanessa Farr, Henri Myrntinen and Albrecht Schnabel, 193-197 (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2009); Rees, *Under Pressure - Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004*, 47.

¹³ King's College London, *Independent Study on Security Force Options and Security Sector Reform for East Timor* (London: Centre for Defence Studies, King's College London, 2000).

One of the main problems with the DDR process was that the terms ‘veteran’ or ‘ex-combatant’ were never properly defined. It is important to see the term ‘veteran’ in a broad perspective, as it is also seen in the context of East Timorese society. It is not only the former, weapons-bearing combatants who see themselves as veterans of the struggle but also women and children associated with fighting forces as well as the urban support network of *clandestinas* and *clandestinos* who supported the FALINTIL guerrilla force by procuring arms, ammunition, medication, food and other supplies as well as organising civilian protests both in occupied Timor-Leste and in Indonesia proper. The fact that many of them feel that their role in the struggle has not been properly acknowledged and that they have not been able to gain socially or economically from the fruits of the struggle, has led to many of them (especially the male members of the former civilian resistance) joining violence-prone pressure groups.¹⁴

A presidential commission was established to look into the veterans’ issue but did not come up with a final list in time for the DDR process. From the outset, there were allegations that the commission favoured those politically close to the president, Xanana Gusmão. Female ex-combatants were sidelined more or less completely:

Male FALINTIL fighters were offered the option of joining the new Timor-Leste Defence Force; those who chose not to, received the equivalent of \$US100 along with language and computer training. Nothing comparable was offered to the women who had occupied support functions throughout the struggle.¹⁵

Some men who had participated in the struggle also felt sidelined. A number of them joined anti-government ‘veterans’ associations, perhaps the most famous of which is the semi-messianic *Sagrada Familia* led by the charismatic former field commander Ely Foho Rai Bo’ot (Cornelio Gama, also known as Elle Sete or L-7). Additional associations include the Committee for the Popular Defence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Colimau 2000 and the Association of Ex-Combatants 1975 (AC75). These associations formed links to both the violent gangs which plagued Dili as well as to political parties. For example, Commander L-7 was elected to the National Assembly as an MP for the UNDERTIM party in 2007, while Rogerio Lobato, former Interior Minister and former head of AC75, was jailed for illegally distributing weapons during the 2006 crisis, and controversially pardoned in 2008 and allowed to leave the country.¹⁶

¹⁴ Jose Sousa-Santos, ‘The Last Resistance Generation: The Reintegration and Transformation of Freedom Fighters to Civilians in Timor-Leste’ (paper presented at the ‘Harri Nasaun Iha Timor-Leste Urbanu No Rural’ Conference, Dili, 8-10 July 2009).

¹⁵ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen J. Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-building* (New York: UNIFEM, 2002), 116.

¹⁶ See also Rees, *Under Pressure - Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004*, 50; UN Commission of Inquiry, *Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste* (Geneva: UN, 2006).

The difficulties faced by both the DDR and SSR processes in Timor-Leste stem from a number of different reasons, including lack of political will, lack of trust between involved parties, conflicting agendas and lack of necessary human and material resources. A key underlying factor which has, however, seldom been analysed is the role played by the gender roles and expectations of the various actors involved in these processes, and how they impact upon the end results. These gender roles and expectations affect both the ways in which security is understood by men, women, girls and boys in different social positions, what expectations they have of the security sector institutions and how the various actors in the security sector go about their task of providing security.

3. Gender Roles in Timor-Leste

The term ‘gender’ refers to the socially and culturally constructed identities, attributes, expectations, opportunities, roles and relationships associated with being female and male in a particular cultural, economic, social and temporal situation. Gender roles are thus learned, changeable and context- and time-specific. Often, the learning processes take place seemingly sub-consciously and start at an early age, making gender roles often seem like ‘natural’ attributes of being female or male.

Policy-wise, an important milestone in terms of recognising the importance of integrating gender perspectives into security-sector related decision-making was United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000). This has been followed up by several other key policy documents, but the integration of gender perspectives into DDR and SSR programming has been slow – as has been the case in Timor-Leste.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the transitional UN administration and the subsequent UN missions have made sustained efforts at gender mainstreaming at various levels, supported by the presence of local and international NGOs. In the SSR context, gender mainstreaming is understood according to Valasek as follows:

Gender mainstreaming means that the impact of all SSR policies and programmes on women, men, boys and girls should be considered at every stage of the programme cycle, including assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. For example, mainstreaming gender into an SSR assessment involves including questions to identify the different insecurities faced by men, women, girls and boys.¹⁷

¹⁷ Kristin Valasek, ‘Security Sector Reform and Gender’, in *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit*, eds. Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek, 4 (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008).

The United Nations *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards*¹⁸ section 5.10 gives a detailed outline on how to incorporate gender perspectives into all phases of DDR processes. As the *Gender and SSR Toolkit* published by DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR and UN-INSTRAW argues, incorporating gender perspectives into SSR processes enhances:

- Local ownership,
- Effective service delivery by the security sector, and
- Oversight and accountability of the security sector.¹⁹

In Timor-Leste, the way in which the DDR and SSR processes were carried out 1999-2006 support these arguments. Some of the main security challenges faced by East Timorese society are closely linked to perceptions of gender roles. Gender roles also play a central role in processes which have the potential to increase or undermine the efficiency and professionalism of the security sector institutions.

Gender identities in Timor-Leste, as in other societies, are a ‘work in progress,’ i.e. constant, iterative processes of becoming which are different for each individual yet embedded in a larger socio-cultural context. They are thus constructs which change over time and adapt themselves to different situations and social power constellations. With these caveats in mind, I will nevertheless attempt some broad generalisations about the respective gender roles of women and men, girls and boys in East Timorese society today.

Gender roles in Timor-Leste tend to be described as ‘traditional’ and marked by patriarchy, i.e. a social system which is based on the dominance of men over women. A closer examination of East Timorese society reveals a more complex picture, though. While many of Timor-Leste’s ethno-linguistic groups have traditionally been organised along patrilineal lines, some, such as the Bunak and Tetum-Terik-speaking communities have traditionally been matrilineal. Traditional divisions of labour and of social power have differed between various communities, between rural and urban dwellers and between different social classes.

Traditional Timorese society and its views on gender roles have of course not been left untouched by the events of the past thirty years. Portuguese and Catholic influences, the ideals of equality inspired by socialism and espoused by FRETILIN, Indonesia’s modernisation programme, increasing urbanisation, the influences of globalised western and Indonesian popular cultures brought in by the media, returning exiles, the UN and international NGO community and students studying in Indonesia, and above all the cataclysmic violence of the war have all combined to challenge, modify, erode, or reinforce through backlash,

¹⁸ UN Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre, *Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS)* (New York: UN, 2006).

¹⁹ Valasek, ‘Security Sector Reform and Gender’, 6-10.

traditional notions of gender-appropriate behaviour.²⁰ Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that around three-quarters of the East Timorese population were born during or after the Indonesian military occupation which lasted from 1975 to 1999 – and thus have no experience of traditional, pre-invasion East Timorese society.²¹

Together with the UN Mission in Kosovo, the UNTAET mission was the first one to have a Gender Affairs Unit and a gender mainstreaming policy. The stated aim of the UNTAET Gender Affairs Unit was to 'rais[e] awareness on promoting gender equality in policies, programmes and legislation of the East Timor Transitional Administration'.²² It conducted orientation sessions on cultural awareness of gender roles and the different impact of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction on the women and men of Timor-Leste for the peacekeeping forces, civilian police and the PNTL.

In spite of these efforts and the general perception of having been exceptional in terms of gender mainstreaming, the actual impacts of the UNTAET/UNMISSET missions from 1999 until 2006 in promoting gender equality were relatively modest. Together with the new Timorese administration and civil society organisations, the international presence created new economic, social and political spaces for East Timorese women, e.g. in parliament, but these spaces remain limited and women remain, for the greater part, marginalised in decision-making processes.

In spite of the limited nature of women's new spaces, there is a general feeling in Timor-Leste that the immediate post-conflict situation benefited women more than men, as women began taking on more public roles in society than previously. Unfortunately, in a climate of un- or under-employment (see Table 1), this has led to increased tensions between women workers and their husbands, who are jealous of the non-traditional role of a female breadwinner, or feel threatened in their masculinity as they are not able to fulfil their perceived duties as men.²³

The more liberal post-occupation atmosphere and the support of foreign funding agencies also allowed new women's and men's movements to emerge. These have taken up themes previously not discussed in society, such as rights of sexual minorities, gender-based violence including human trafficking, and marginalised groups such as sex workers. The international presence has also had an

²⁰ Irena Cristalis and Catherine Scott, *Independent Women - The Story of Women's Activism in East Timor* (London: CIIR, 2005), 82; Shukuko Koyama and Henri Myrntinen, 'Unintended Effects of peace operations on Timor-Leste from a gender perspective' in *Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations*, eds. Chiyuki Aoi, Cedric de Coning and Ramesh Thakur, 23-43 (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2007).

²¹ Lene Ostergaard, *Timor-Leste youth social analysis and youth institutional assessment* (Dili: World Bank, 2005); UNDP, *National Human Development Report 2006* (Dili: UNDP, 2006). Available at <http://www.undp.east-timor.org/documentsreports/nhdr/index.html> (accessed 26 November 2009).

²² UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, *Gender Equality Programme*, UNTAET Fact Sheet 11 (Dili: United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, 2002), 1. Available at <http://www.un.org/peace/etimor/fact/fs11.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2009).

²³ Koyama and Myrntinen, 'Unintended Effects of peace operations on Timor-Leste from a gender perspective', 40-41.

Table 1: Key demographic and socio-economic data²⁴

Indicator	Female	Male	Total
Population	456 885	467 757	924 642
Life expectancy (years)	60.5	58.9	
Population under 15 (%)			43.2
Estimated earned income (nominal USD)	126	621	
Literacy rate (%)	43.9	56.3	50.1
Mean years of schooling	3.4	4.9	
Unemployment rate (% of total labour force)	5.4	8.3	
Youth unemployment rate (% of total labour force)	19.4	26.4	

unintended ‘collateral’ effect in gender relations, and particularly in freedom of sexual expression. A nascent gay, lesbian, bi- and transsexual scene has developed, although still keeping a low profile.²⁵ Much of the policy debate on gender issues in Timor-Leste, be it on the rights of sexual minorities, reproductive health issues or gender-based violence, has seen a conservative Catholic Church taking up strong position against more progressive civil society organisations.

3.1 Women and girls

In general, whether in rural or urban Timor-Leste, women and girls tend to be relegated to the domestic rather than the public sphere. From a young age onwards, girls are expected to take part in domestic work and childcare. As girls are not generally expected to take up careers outside of the home, girls on average receive one and a half years less schooling than their male counterparts.²⁶ School attendance is especially low for low-income families and in rural areas. Women, for the most part, do not participate in the formal economy, with women’s incomes a fraction of male incomes (see Table 1).

Especially in the early years of the struggle when much of the territory and population was under their control, the FALINTIL guerrilla movement initially sought to promote gender equality based on socialist ideals. This involved campaigning, amongst others, against polygamy and the *barlaki* (also spelled *barlaque*) or dowry system.²⁷ As the armed resistance came under increased military pressure from the Indonesian armed forces, these educational campaigns ended.

²⁴ Sources: UNDP, *National Human Development Report 2006*; UNDP, *Human Development Report 2007/2008* (New York: UNDP, 2007).

²⁵ Koyama and Myrtilinen, ‘Unintended Effects of peace operations on Timor-Leste from a gender perspective’, 43.

²⁶ UNDP, *National Human Development Report 2006*.

²⁷ Helen Hill, *Stirrings of Nationalism, FRETILIN 1974-1978 - The origins, ideologies and strategies of a nationalist movement* (Sydney: Oxford Press, 2002), 160-162; Constancio Pinto and Matthew Jardine, *East Timor’s Unfinished Struggle - Inside the Timorese Resistance* (Boston: South End Press, 1997), 47-48.

Women active in the FALINTIL, as well as the civilian resistance, have also often felt that while there was rhetorical support for gender equity within these movements, this did not necessarily translate into actual concrete steps being taken to improve the position of women.²⁸

In spite of the partially emancipating impacts of the years of the independence struggle, increased education opportunities under the Indonesian occupation and increased political and socio-economic opportunities during the UNTAET administration and after independence, women's roles in society still tend to be rather circumscribed.²⁹ As Wigglesworth points out, it is still often frowned upon for young women to engage in social activities, such as in clubs or NGOs, as they are expected to stay at home and help with domestic activities. Young women's lives tend to be controlled by other family members, including the women's brothers. There are also far fewer young women than men migrating into the capital city or into district capitals, let alone going abroad to study.³⁰

A striking feature of East Timorese society is the fact that the country has one of the world's highest birth rates, with the population expected to double to over two million by the year 2025.³¹ Women tend to marry and have children at a young age, with the average age dropping, according to a 2003 survey by the Ministry of Health.³² The total fertility rate for East Timorese women is 7.7. The median age for a Timorese woman to have her first child is 20 years but this tends to be lower in rural areas. About one third of all Timorese women have a child every year between the ages of 16 and 20 years. Men tend to marry later, and by the age of 25 more than twice as many men as women are married.³³

What is visible in Timor-Leste, in addition to the general tendency of subsistence agricultural societies to have a high birth rate, is a pervasive sense of maternalism, i.e. the perception that women's main role in society and source of personal honour tends to be seen as that of child-bearers. The celebration of maternalism is also supported to a great part by the highly influential Catholic Church, which is opposed to all forms of contraception and family planning. In addition to religious and ideological pressures, family planning also suffers from a negative image due to experiences during the Indonesian occupation, when family planning and contraception methods were enforced with the aid of the military.

²⁸ Cristalis and Scott, *Independent Women - The Story of Women's Activism in East Timor*, 73-89.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 39-42.

³⁰ Ann Wigglesworth, 'Young people in rural development', in *East Timor: Beyond Independence*, Damien Kingsbury and Michael Leach, 57 (Victoria: Monash University, 2007).

³¹ UN, *United Nations World Population Prospects, The 2006 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects* (Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, New York: UN, 2006).

³² Ministerio da Saude, *Timor-Leste 2003 Demographic and Health Survey* (Dili: Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, 2003).

³³ Ostergaard, *Timor-Leste youth social analysis and youth institutional assessment*.

3.2 Men and boys

While women thus tend to be relegated to the domestic sphere, the public sphere, from politics to street corners, tends to be a male domain, increasingly so after the outbreak of the 2006 crisis. Based on the author's observations, the social space for women has decreased severely since this period, due to security concerns. Also, the 'securitisation' of the government's and international community's approach to the political and social instability, i.e. the increased reliance on riot police and military forces to deal with gang violence and the mutinying soldiers, meant that male members of the security forces have been at the forefront of these efforts.

As in other societies which are caught in the transition from a rural, tradition-based society to an uncertain, mostly urban modernity, men in Timor-Leste are caught between two types of role expectations. On the one hand, they are bound by tradition to fulfil certain traditional obligations while not being able to reap the benefits of the old system (e.g. respect, sense of belonging, identity), as the traditional social structures either no longer exist or are no longer accessible due to migration to the cities. On the other hand, they feel bound by and strive to fulfil the expectations of an imported modernity, in which they, the men, are the breadwinners and gain prestige through wage labour in the formal economy.

4. Violence, Insecurity and Gender

Three of the main security challenges to post-independence East Timorese society and to the security forces in Timor-Leste since 1999 are intricately linked to notions of gender. The first is the obvious and very public challenge to security posed by the readiness of men to use violence to address legitimate socio-economic or political concerns, and the growth of gangs of mainly young men. The second is the ubiquity of networks of patronage, be it the gangs and/or organisations of disgruntled former members of the resistance, which in addition to contributing to public insecurity are also undermining the professionalism of the security forces. The third is the more hidden problem of gender-based violence.

4.1 Masculinities and the legitimacy of violence

One of the key problems in Timorese society, as in many other societies, is that men, especially young men, are given social licence to address legitimate social, political and economic concerns by violent means. The socio-cultural space for enactments of violence is created by both men and women, by acquiescence and active support, and by participation and symbolic support. Slightly oversimplifying the case, the UN Commission of Inquiry into the 2006 crisis stated that: "Political

competition within Timor-Leste has been historically settled through violence.”³⁴ Though this assessment does not take into account many of the non-violent means by which political differences have been and are settled in Timor-Leste, there is a kernel of truth to the statement.

In many of the interviews with both Timorese and international observers, the issue of violence, especially domestic violence, perpetrated by Timorese men was characterised as being part of a ‘Timorese culture of violence.’ Although cultural factors undoubtedly shape both a society’s and an individual’s views on the legitimacy of the use of violence, placing the blame for violence solely on culture is an unsatisfactory, yet easy way out, as it absolves one of personal agency and responsibility. On the one hand, it leaves out other factors, such as power and class relations. On the other hand, it also presupposes a monolithic culture, one which “prescribes that [people] would behave in a certain way because of their culture, rather than seeing culture as offering a vast repertoire of actions.”³⁵

Traditionally, expressions of masculinity in Timorese society have been tied to men’s potential to use violence, if only at a symbolic level. At puberty, attaining a fighting cock has been seen as a rite of passage to manhood. It is, however, worth remembering that, as in other cultures in the region, conflict resolution or avoidance rather than violent and public settling of conflicts has been an important part of Timorese culture.³⁶

While women fought in the ranks of the FALINTIL and supported them logistically, the heroes and icons of Timorese resistance are male. These were both local, such as Nicolau Lobato, Sahe or Xanana Gusmão, and imported, such as ‘Che’ Guevara, Bob Marley or Nelson Mandela. These are idolised in street graffiti and on banners, with the idolisation of imported icons acting as a way of showing clandestine support to the resistance. Bob Marley, for example, was likened to the FALINTIL guerrillas who also often had long, ‘natty’ hair.³⁷ Imports from globalised media culture are also visible, with one Dili gang leader going by the ‘nom de guerre’ of Rambo, another by Van Damme, and the late Major Alfredo Reinado sporting the ‘xXx’ tattoo of Vin Diesel’s ‘Triple X’ Hollywood action movie on his neck.

Post-independence, martial arts groups (MAGs), ‘ritual’ arts groups (RAGs) and gangs, which drew mainly on marginalised young men as well as former *clandestinos*, gained increasing prominence. They, like the veterans’ organisations discussed in section 2, have tight links to the nation’s political and economic elites.

³⁴ UN Commission of Inquiry, *Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste*, 16.

³⁵ Robert Cribb, ‘From total people’s defence to massacre - Explaining Indonesian military violence in East Timor’, in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*, eds. Freek Colombijn and Thomas Lindblad (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), p. 234.

³⁶ David Hicks, *Tetum Ghosts and Kin - Fertility and Gender in East Timor* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2004), 102-108.

³⁷ Henri Myrtilinen, *Occupation, Resistance, Dominance and Patriarchy - Notes on Masculinities, Violence and Power in Timor-Leste*, Lusotopie Special Dossier on Gender (Bordeaux: University of Bordeaux Press, 2005), 240-241.

Some of these are purported also to have connections to the former pro-Indonesian militias and to criminal individuals/groups in neighbouring Indonesia and further abroad.³⁸

4.2 Patrons and clients

One of the features of East Timorese society, which is similar to the Indonesian *bapakism* or the Melanesian 'big-man' phenomenon, is the patron-client system which Gunn and Huang call *liurai*-ism (adding the significant qualifier that the '*liurai*' may or may not be a genuine *liurai*, i.e. traditional ruler or 'king' in the traditional sense).³⁹ *Liurai*-ism can be linked to what is mainly a male problem in the security forces, namely the ties of numerous security force members to either political parties and/or MAGs, RAGs and other potentially violence-prone groups to which they owe loyalty, an allegiance which overrides loyalty to the security forces. Even high-ranking members of the security forces, such as a previous PNTL district commissioner for Baucau district, are reported to have ties to these groups. This has severely undermined public confidence in the security forces and in their neutrality and furthered impunity, as key patrons of these networks can rely on their support networks to evade justice.

A key reason for this is that, as in many other countries with relatively new or weak state institutions, male identities are socially constructed through complex loyalty networks. Rather than merely having a lack of loyalty to the state institution in question, this loyalty competes with other, often stronger ties and obligations which form the basis of society. As Dinnen argued for a number of Melanesian societies, rather than 'anarchy,' i.e. the lack of authority being the driving force behind conflicts, there are 'many competing sources of authority and allegiance at local levels, with the claims of the state being merely one among many.'⁴⁰ Thus, in a sense male identities in particular (and the range of responses available to an individual in any given situation) become 'over-determined' by obligations of the individual male to various competing clientelistic networks of patronage controlled by 'the big people' (*ema bo'ot* in Tetum) to whom he owes his loyalty.

The various networks of patronage and obligation include the extended family/clan, party membership, regional or 'ethnic' origin, belonging to a certain neighbourhood, membership in the Catholic Church or other religious organisation, previous or continuing membership in a gang or MAG or RAG, membership in a veterans' organisation or employment in state structures/private

³⁸ See also James Scambary et al., *A Survey of Gangs and Youth Groups in Dili, Timor-Leste* (Dili: AusAID Timor-Leste, 2006); TLAVA, *Groups, gangs, and armed violence in Timor-Leste*, 4.

³⁹ Hildred Geertz, *The Javanese Family: A Study of Kinship and Socialization* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); Geoffrey Gunn and Reyko Huang, *New Nation: United Nations Peacebuilding in East Timor* (Macao: Tipografia Hung Heng, 2006), 123; Marshall Sahlins, 'Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5, No. 3 (April 1963): 285.

⁴⁰ Sinclair Dinnen, 'Violence and governance in Melanesia - an introduction', in *Reflections on Violence in Melanesia*, eds. Sinclair Dinnen and Allison Ley, 12 (Canberra: Hawkins Press, 2000).

enterprises. As these networks of allegiance and loyalty are often overlapping and contradictory, they pose dilemmas both for the individuals as well as for the networks, including for the security sector institutions.

As an example, one need only to imagine a PNTL officer, one of the few members of the extended family to be working in the formal sector, who is called into his own neighbourhood to quell a fight between two gangs, one of which he or a member of his extended family might be or have been a member. The situation leads to an immediate conflict of loyalties – and even if the officer in question would be able to overcome his/her connections and obligations to the various networks, the officer's family living in the area would remain vulnerable to intimidation or direct attack. Thus, the cleavages caused by these mainly male networks of patronage are reflected at all levels of society, including the security sector. Loyalty to the state institutions, which tend to be seen as booty for the competing networks rather than impartial service providers, often occupy a low priority.

These clientelistic networks of loyalty and patronage are problematic from a 'western' perspective in which they can be seen to undermine the functioning of the state as an even-handed service provider. On the other hand, they can also be seen as the traditional basis of society and as a coping mechanism for individuals and groups trying to bridge the gap from being a rural society based on subsistence agriculture to the necessities and demands of a new, 'modern' society.⁴¹

4.3 Gender-based violence

While the public violence perpetrated by various violence-prone groups has been seen as the main security challenge in Timor-Leste since the 2006 crisis, a more hidden form of violence, gender-based violence (GBV), has been and continues to be one of the most prevalent security challenges. GBV includes domestic violence, sexual exploitation and assault, child abuse, sex-selective assault and homicide, and rape. Men, boys, girls and women can all be victims of GBV. Two key challenges in dealing with GBV are firstly, that often it is not seen as being a security issue, and secondly, that as much of it happens outside of the public sphere, GBV is often dismissed as being a 'private' or 'domestic' matter.

Based on UNPOL/PNTL statistics previous to the 2006 crisis, GBV was the most commonly recorded crime in Timor-Leste. As stated by UNTAET,

... in December 2001 alone, a record 40 percent of all reported crimes were offences against women. They included crimes such as domestic abuse, rape, attempted rape and sexual assault, making violence against women being the number one reported crime in that month. CivPol further says

⁴¹ Michael Goddard, *The Unseen City - Anthropological Perspectives on Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2005).

that while 382 cases of domestic violence were reported last year, it was just the tip of the iceberg as the figure is believed to represent only 15 percent of total cases.⁴²

As several UNPOL officers and East Timorese civil society activists pointed out in interviews carried out by the author, the trend of these statistics showing only ‘the tip of the iceberg’ has continued. GBV is notoriously under-reported the world over, and in the PNTL statistics many crimes which should be classified as GBV are classified in other categories, such as assault and battery or murder. There is no central database for GBV, few if any sex disaggregated statistics and a range of different methodologies used to track cases of GBV. In spite of on-going training given to both PNTL and UNPOL by UN agencies together with international and local NGOs, both institutions still lack trained staff to deal with the issue (discussed further in section 6.3).⁴³

A “sense of ownership of women” by men was and in part still is also reinforced by the bride price/dowry (*barlaki/barlaque*) system and is seen as a major factor in domestic violence, be it either through the sense of the husband ‘having bought’ the wife or due to frustrations caused by the high *barlaki* demands of the wife’s father and brothers. If the husband is unable to pay the full price himself, the debt is passed on to his offspring. The price system is differentiated geographically and along class lines, with women from certain regions (e.g. Los Palos) and from certain families (e.g. *liurai* families) seen as necessitating a higher bride price. The dowry is usually paid in livestock (especially water buffalo, horses or goats), even in urban settings. Increasingly, young men are unable to pay the traditional dowries, adding to their sense of frustration.⁴⁴

Rape, according to anthropologist David Hicks, was traditionally not seen primarily as a crime against the female victim but rather against her husband or, in the case of an unmarried woman, against her father or brother, with ‘compensation’ being paid to male relatives of the victim and, at times, the perpetrator marrying the victim.⁴⁵ Rape of males is not mentioned. Indeed, the issue of male-to-male sexual violence is still very much a taboo topic in East Timorese society.⁴⁶

This section has outlined some of the ways in which men and women in Timor-Leste experienced insecurity during the UN transitional authority and in the post-independence period, and how gender roles serve to contribute to certain security challenges. Sections 5 and 6 will examine the ways in which the new East Timorese security forces, the F-FDTL and the PNTL, have themselves

⁴² UNTAET, *Gender Equality Programme*, 3.

⁴³ UN Security Council, *Report of the expert mission to Timor-Leste on policing, 17 to 27 March 2008*, Document No. S/2008/329, 16 May 2008.

⁴⁴ Cristalis and Scott, *Independent Women - The Story of Women’s Activism in East Timor*, 28-29.

⁴⁵ Hicks, *Tetum Ghosts and Kin*, 101-102.

⁴⁶ Abdullah and Myrntinen, “Now they have guns, now they feel powerful” - Gender, small arms and violence in Timor-Leste’, 199-201.

internalised some of these security challenges, and attempted to address others, looking at events up to the 2006 crisis.

5. FALINTIL-Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste (F-FDTL)

As name implies, the F-FDTL armed force draw upon the history of the former pro-independence guerrilla force FALINTIL, which fought the occupying Indonesian forces for twenty-four years. The F-FDTL was established as the new national armed force on February 1, 2001, based on UNTAET regulations UNTAET/REG/2001/1 and UNTAET/REG/2001/9. These documents make no mention of gender issues.⁴⁷ As Rees pointed out already two years before the crisis of 2006, they were ‘seriously out of date with contemporary realities’.⁴⁸

5.1 Structure

Previous to the 2006 crisis, the force consisted of approximately 1 500 members, at least on paper - the F-FDTL was plagued by absenteeism. The F-FDTL consisted of two battalions of 600 members each, a small naval component and headquarters staff. The first battalion, named the ‘Heroes Battalion’ (*Battalion Assuain*) consisted of former FALINTIL guerrilla recruited from the cantonment site in Aileu and was based in Baucau. The second battalion consisted of new recruits and was based in Metinaro, some thirty kilometres to the east of Dili. The battalions have since been mixed, with former FALINTIL and new recruits serving in the same units. The F-FDTL headquarters staff is based in Tasi Tolu, approximately ten kilometres to the west of Dili, and the naval component of sixty-five members was based in Hera and initially commanded by the late Major Alfredo Reinado.

Before the 2006 crisis, the F-FDTL had approximately seventy female members, equalling about six percent of the total force. While women had played an important part in the independence struggle, with some female members also participating in combat activities, the visible and public presence of uniformed, armed women was something of a novelty in East Timorese society.⁴⁹ The women were new recruits rather than former FALINTIL guerrillas, though some had possibly been members of the former civilian resistance.

⁴⁷ Nor do the later RDTL Decree-Law No. 15/2006 on the Organic Statute of FALINTIL-FDTL, Decree 17/2006 on Military Discipline, and Decree 18/2006 on Military Promotion.

⁴⁸ Rees, *Under Pressure - Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004*, 6.

⁴⁹ Abdullah and Myrntinen, “‘Now they have guns, now they feel powerful’ - Gender, small arms and violence in Timor-Leste”, 197-198; Cristalis and Scott, *Independent Women - The Story of Women’s Activism in East Timor*, 39-42.

5.2 Recruitment and training

One of the main challenges for the creation of the F-FDTL was the need to transform a force consisting of roughly fifty percent former guerrillas and fifty percent new recruits. The former guerrillas felt they needed to get the respect they deserved for the sacrifices they had endured during the struggle. Younger members, especially those from the western part of the country, felt rightly or wrongly, that they were being unfairly discriminated against. A lack of discipline, lack of proper facilities, lack of a clear-cut mandate, poor pay, a sense of entitlement and an ambiguous relationship both with the international peacekeepers and the local police force added to tensions within the force.

The training of the F-FDTL was mainly carried out on a bilateral basis, first with various peacekeeping force contingents (such as the Japanese, South Korean or Thai Battalions) giving one-off training courses. A more sustained and co-ordinated effort to train and build up the F-FDTL began in the post-independence period. The main defence co-operation programme of the F-FDTL has been with the Australian Defence Force, in addition to which Brazil, People's Republic of China, Portugal and, to a lesser extent, the USA have given technical support and training. Malaysia suspended its co-operation programme following the 2006 crisis. Most of this training has been of a technical nature, with some emphasis on human rights and very little on gender issues.⁵⁰

5.3 Internal tensions and external problems

As Rees argued previous to the crisis of 2006,

... the F-FDTL is not an especially happy constituency [...] due to a range of interlinked factors ranging from, but not limited to:

1. uncertainty over their roles and responsibilities;
2. attempts by dissident groups and politicians to undermine their legitimacy;
3. poor conditions of service due to limited resources; and
4. a guerrilla tradition not easily transferred to a professional organization.⁵¹

Previous to the 2006 crisis, the F-FDTL felt its legitimacy as 'heir' to the FALINTIL resistance force as being questioned by dissident veterans' organisations, while the role of the F-FDTL in providing external security was being challenged by the formation of the new PNTL Border Police Unit. While those who felt unfairly left out of the DDR process and the F-FDTL claimed discrimination, some inside the F-FDTL claimed the same, leading in early 2006

⁵⁰ Cynthia Burton, 'Security Sector Reform: Current Issues and Future Challenges', in *East Timor: Beyond Independence*, eds. Damien Kingsbury and Michael Leach, 99-101 (Victoria: Monash University, 2007); International Crisis Group, *Timor-Leste: Security Sector Reform*, 10-13.

⁵¹ Rees, *Under Pressure - Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004*, 32.

to the petition by the ‘westerners’ in the F-FDTL and the triggering of the crisis discussed in section 7.

Though the F-FDTL *was* seen in many respects as the heir to the FALINTIL guerrilla force, this has not meant universal popular support for the force. The public’s relationship to the force tends to be more one of respect rather than admiration.

From a gender perspective, one can make several observations about the F-FDTL prior to the 2006 crisis. One was the obvious discrimination against female members of the resistance in the DDR process that contributed to its formation, whose contribution to the struggle was not adequately honoured. Secondly, the importance of male clientelistic networks of patronage, discussed in section 4.2, became visible both in terms of those who joined the F-FDTL and subsequently formed their cliques inside the force and those who felt left out of the process and joined the various veterans’ organisations.

6. Policing Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL)

The new national police force *Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste* (PNTL) was established on 10 August, 2001, based on UNTAET Regulation 2001/22. Compared to the F-FDTL, the PNTL has had greater exposure to gender issues, in part due to the fact that GBV cases form the bulk of crimes that the force has to deal with, but also due to training and a higher percentage of female officers. Nonetheless, the new Organic Law of Timor-Leste’s National Police, Decree-Law No. 9/2009 of 18 February, 2009 makes no mention of gender issues, not even mentioning Vulnerable Persons’ Units.

6.1 Structure

Previous to the 2006 crisis, the PNTL had an approximate strength of 2800 police officers. In addition to the regular police force, the special riot control unit, the *Unidade Intervenção Rápida* (UIR), had a strength of around 200 members, and the border patrol unit, the *Unidade de Patrulhamento de Fronteira* (UPF), had approximately 300 members.

The UIR and UPF were established following inadequate responses by the security forces to heavy rioting in Dili in December 2002 and a border incident involving militias and criminal groups in Atsabe in January 2003. Both units came under the command of the controversial Minister of the Interior at the time, Rogerio Lobato.⁵² Rather than providing solutions, the establishment of these units further muddied the waters as far as the separation of duties between the police forces and the military was concerned. New, increasingly high-powered

⁵² Rees, *Under Pressure - Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004*, 19.

weapons for these units were donated by outside donors and purchased by the East Timorese government, only to find their way into the wrong hands during the 2006 crisis.⁵³

6.2 Recruitment and training

In the initial recruitment phase, approximately 400 of the recruited PNTL members were ex-Timorese members of the Indonesian police force POLRI (*Kepolisian Republik Indonesia*), as there was a lack of qualified personnel.⁵⁴ Given the fact that POLRI had played a key role in maintaining the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste, this decision was not met with unanimous popular support. Many veterans, in the broader sense of the term, felt slighted, seeing rare job opportunities going to those whom they regarded as being quislings, instead of to those who had actively participated in the independence struggle. Under public pressure, an additional 150 former FALINTIL fighters were recruited into the PNTL in March 2003.

Based on the UNTAET regulations outlining the formation of the PNTL, the requirements set for applicants were as follows:

- Of good character and a resident of Timor-Leste;
- Not less than 18 and not over 35 years of age;
- Able to speak, write and understand one or more of the languages of Timor-Leste;
- Pass the required physical and medical tests; and
- Pass a selection interview.⁵⁵

According to Mobekk, the questionnaires and interviews conducted by UNTAET tended to have a heavy western bias, with preference given for example to those candidates with English-language skills, which is not one of Timor-Leste's national languages. PNTL members were expected also to pass community approval in case of objections due to criminal activities. The vetting process was seen as problematic as it was heavily reliant on the politically dominant resistance movement *Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorese* (CNRT) and was open to attempts by community and political leaders to influence the process.⁵⁶

Previous to the 2006 crisis, the PNTL had approximately twenty percent female staff, but only one female inspector. The PNTL thus had a higher percentage of female staff than most police forces (and higher than that of the UNPOL at the

⁵³ Abdullah and Myrntinen, "Now they have guns, now they feel powerful" - Gender, small arms and violence in Timor-Leste', 181-182; UN Commission of Inquiry, *Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste*, 41.

⁵⁴ Mobekk, *Law-Enforcement: Creating and Maintaining a Police Service in a Post-Conflict Society - Problems and Pitfalls*, 9-11.

⁵⁵ UNTAET, Regulation 2001/22, section 16.3.

⁵⁶ Mobekk, *Law-Enforcement: Creating and Maintaining a Police Service in a Post-Conflict Society - Problems and Pitfalls*, p. 8.

time, which had eight percent female staff). However, they tended to be positioned mostly in office work or the Vulnerable Persons Units (see section 6.3. below).⁵⁷ In spite of efforts to recruit female officers, the institution remains heavily male-dominated (especially in the leadership positions).

As argued by several observers,⁵⁸ the UNTAET/UNMISSET CivPol and UNPOL were overwhelmed with the task of training the PNTL. The challenges faced by the UN police force at the time were:

- UNPOL had a mixed mandate of having to provide for security while simultaneously attempting to train their East Timorese colleagues.
- There were no unified standard operating procedures for the UNPOL to be used in their work or in training the PNTL.
- The PNTL and UNPOL's human resources were not always well-trained or qualified.
- The UNPOL were rotated frequently and had often little prior knowledge of the country, its history and culture.
- Few, if any, lessons learned were transferred from other missions – including from previous UN missions in Timor-Leste to successor missions.

As discussed in Mobekk's paper, the initial plan for the PNTL was to get officers on the street rather than work on institution building, with little in terms of accountability, no standard operating procedures, and very brief training (three months at the academy, often taught via interpreters, followed by three to six months 'on the job' training with UNPOL).⁵⁹

Controversially, former East Timorese members of the Indonesian police force POLRI were fast-tracked at the police academy. According to some observers, this training course was not adequate for them to 'de-learn' old abusive methods. Former FALINTIL were also fast-tracked, even though the ex-guerrillas had little to no previous experience of policing. This fast-tracking of former FALINTIL and POLRI recruits caused tensions within the new PNTL as was seen as favouritism.⁶⁰

The training of the PNTL included human rights and gender training by UN agencies (including the Gender Affairs Units of the UN missions and other agencies such as United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Development Programme) and external trainers, but this was considered

⁵⁷ Amnesty International, *Timor-Leste: Briefing to Security Council Members on Policing and Security in Timor-Leste* (London: Amnesty International, 2003).

⁵⁸ Ludovic Hood, 'Security Sector Reform in East Timor, 1999-2004' *International Peacekeeping* 13, No.1 (March 2006): 60-77; Mobekk, *Law-Enforcement: Creating and Maintaining a Police Service in a Post-Conflict Society - Problems and Pitfalls*, 11-14.

⁵⁹ Mobekk, *Law-Enforcement: Creating and Maintaining a Police Service in a Post-Conflict Society - Problems and Pitfalls*, 12-14.

⁶⁰ Hood, 'Security Sector Reform in East Timor, 1999-2004', 64; Mobekk, *Law-Enforcement: Creating and Maintaining a Police Service in a Post-Conflict Society - Problems and Pitfalls*, 27-29.

insufficient.⁶¹ An assessment of the PNLT's gender training and treatment of women, both with respect to the general population and within the force, by the East Timorese civil society organisation Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP) came to the conclusion that:

... there is some gender discrimination against women by the PNLT: it appears that many police officers do not consider cases of domestic violence seriously. All the PNLT officers interviewed said they know domestic violence is a crime, but they only take the cases where the violence has caused "serious" injury through the formal justice process. They refer the small cases back to the traditional justice process [...]⁶²

6.3 GBV and the Vulnerable Persons Units

As noted in section 4.3, GBV is one of the main challenges to security in Timor-Leste. In response to the high level of reported cases of GBV, UNTAET set up the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) in March 2001, which eventually became a network of VPUs in each of the 13 districts, consisting of PNLT and CivPol/UNPOL staff. The VPUs are mandated to deal with issues of rape, attempted rape, domestic violence (emotional, verbal and physical), child abuse, child neglect, missing persons, paternity, and sexual harassment. The VPUs are an effort to bring these crimes into the realm of the formal justice system rather than the traditional justice system.⁶³ A major problem in this respect has been the overburdened and under-resourced judicial system. As of April 2008, there was a backlog of approximately 4700 cases, of which a third were GBV crimes.⁶⁴ Sustained efforts have been made to have female police officers in all VPUs to interview female victims as well as to have female UNPOL officers to support the VPUs. The VPUs have also received support from the respective Gender Affairs Units of the UN missions and other UN agencies, and have co-operated with East Timorese women's organisations such as *Fokupers*, *Pradet*, the Alola Foundation and the Association of Men Against Violence.

The work of the VPUs is hampered by inadequate staffing levels and lack of technical and financial resources. Within the PNLT, funds are often easily diverted to tasks deemed 'more important' than the work of the VPUs, and a posting within the VPUs is often not viewed as being prestigious. Female officers tend to be over-represented within the VPUs, perpetuating the notion that working with

⁶¹ Angela Mackay, 'Mainstreaming Gender in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations - Examples from East Timor, Ethiopia and Eritrea', in *Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping*, eds. Dyan Mazurana, Angela Raven-Roberts and Jane Parpart, 271-274 (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

⁶² Judicial System Monitoring Programme, *Police Treatment Of Women In Timor-Leste* (Dili: JSMP, 2005), 5.

⁶³ JSMP, *Police Treatment Of Women In Timor-Leste*, 7.

⁶⁴ UNMIT, *UNMIT Gender Quarterly Report to DPKO HQ January - March 2008* (UNMIT: Dili 2008), 8. Available at <http://unmit.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=B%2FJXTFGrFBM%3D&tabid=434&mid=779> (accessed 7 September 2009).

gender issues is ‘women’s work’, and therefore inherently seen as ‘low status’ work by male officers.⁶⁵

6.4 Internal and external problems of the PNTL

Like the F-FDTL, the PNTL has been plagued by internal divisions. The police force has seen several factions being formed, including the ‘Polícia Nacionalista’ group, consisting mostly of ‘easterner’ police officers opposed to previous Interior Minister Rogerio Lobato.⁶⁶

Even previous to the 2006 crisis, concerns were raised of the PNTL specifically targeting young men suspected of being politically active.⁶⁷ The paramilitary UIR police force in particular gained a ‘macho image’, which tended to undermine rather than bolster public confidence.⁶⁸ UIR officers also have a tendency to wear riot gear and conspicuously display riot control equipment and weapons in public, even during events which are meant to act as confidence-building exercises for the public.⁶⁹

There have been serious allegations of sexual misconduct, harassment and sexual violence levelled against members of the PNTL. A report by JSMP listed several cases of sexual assault and rape by PNTL members and allegations of sexual harassment in the force. A report by the women’s organisation Alola Foundation states further cases of sexual assault, harassment and alleged involvement of PNTL officers in trafficking female sex workers.⁷⁰ The PNTL has tended to brush off these allegations.

Prophetically, in the light of the events of April/May 2006, a leading Timorese women’s rights activist, Ubalda Alves, noted in 2004 that the men in the new Timorese security forces now ‘felt powerful’ strutting around displaying their UN-supplied weapons.⁷¹ In addition to the clear challenges regarding the integration of gender issues and addressing GBV by PNTL members, proper weapons control and storage remained a problem, democratic control of the new security forces was not established and the forces were divided into various regional and political

⁶⁵ Chris Styles-Power, Carolyn Hamilton and Erica Hall, *The Vulnerable Persons Unit in Timor-Leste: An Independent Assessment of its Role and Function* (Dili: UNICEF Timor-Leste, 2008), 5-9.

⁶⁶ ICG, *Timor-Leste: Security Sector Reform*.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Tortured Beginnings - Police Violence and The Beginnings of Impunity in East Timor* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2006).

⁶⁸ Abdullah and Myrntinen, “Now they have guns, now they feel powerful” - Gender, small arms and violence in Timor-Leste’, 197-198; Alola Foundation, *Trafficking in East Timor - A look into the newest nation’s sex industry* (Dili: Alola Foundation, 2004), 43-44; Mobekk, *Law-Enforcement: Creating and Maintaining a Police Service in a Post-Conflict Society - Problems and Pitfalls*, 19.

⁶⁹ Author’s observations in Timor-Leste, 2006-2007.

⁷⁰ Alola Foundation, *Trafficking in East Timor*, 43-44; JSMP, *Police Treatment Of Women In Timor-Leste*, 11.

⁷¹ Quote in Abdullah and Myrntinen, “Now they have guns, now they feel powerful” - Gender, small arms and violence in Timor-Leste’, 197.

factions.⁷² The following section will give an overview of the crisis in 2006, which resulted from some of these factors.

7. The 2006 Crisis

7.1 Overview of events

Tensions between the F-FDTL and the PNTL grew in the years following independence, with turf battles at times turning into actual battles. Events came to a head in January 2006 when almost 600 soldiers, mainly from the western part of the country, signed a petition claiming discrimination based on their regional origin, and presented it to President Xanana Gusmão and F-FDTL Commander Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak. Feeling that they were not given a proper response, the ‘petitioners,’ as they came to be known, left their barracks in February 2006. They were dismissed from the army a few weeks later. Events turned violent at the end of April 2006, with a protest by the petitioners ending in several deaths. The tension mounted over the following weeks, leading to full-scale street battles in Dili and environs at the end of May 2006, resulting in 37 deaths and 150 000 internally displaced persons.

This crisis brought many of the political, personal, regional and social fissure lines in the country to the fore, especially amongst its elite and within the security forces. Members of the F-FDTL and PNTL were to be found in both the pro- and anti-government factions, as well as on both sides of the regional ‘east/west’ divide. There were also cases in which nominally loyalist members of the army fought nominally loyalist police officers, testimony to the complex fault lines within and between these two organisations. Weapons were distributed to civilians by members of the security forces (including by key government ministers)⁷³, and found their way into the hands of the MAGs, RAGs and gangs.

What was in essence the complete breakdown of both security forces was followed by weeks-long deadlock within the political elite between the President Gusmão, Prime Minister Alkatiri and the designated Minister of Defence José Ramos Horta. This was resolved only after Prime Minister Alkatiri reluctantly resigned.

7.2 Aftermath of the crisis

In the aftermath of the 2006 crisis, responsibility for internal security (and, in part, for external security) was transferred from the East Timorese security forces to

⁷² Amnesty International, *Timor-Leste: Briefing to Security Council Members on Policing and Security in Timor-Leste*; Rees, *Under Pressure - Three Decades of Defence Force Development in Timor-Leste 1975-2004*, 33.

⁷³ UN Commission of Inquiry, *Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste*, 38-40.

the Australian-led International Stabilisation Force (ISF) and beefed-up UN mission, now with paramilitary Bangladeshi, Malaysian, Pakistani and Portuguese Formed Police Units.

A key role in the events of April-May 2006 was played by Major Alfredo Reinado, former commander of the military police. After being arrested by the international peacekeeping forces in July 2006, Major Reinado was able to escape from Becora prison less than a month later, retreating into the mountains with his supporters. An unsuccessful attempt by Australian ISF to apprehend him in March 2007 led to several deaths and widespread violence in Dili. Following this incident, Major Reinado remained untouched by ISF, UNPOL or the Timorese security forces.

On the morning of February 11, 2008, Major Reinado and his followers arrived armed at the house of President José Ramos-Horta. By the end of the stand-off, Major Reinado and one of his followers had been shot dead and President Ramos-Horta was critically wounded. The rest of the attackers managed to escape, prompting a nationwide manhunt by a joint F-FDTL/PNTL taskforce (*Operasaun Konjunta*), which effectively sidelined the ISF and UNPOL. The last of the mutinying soldiers surrendered to the F-FDTL/PNTL taskforce on April 27, 2008.

The following section will examine how the F-FDTL and PNTL have developed since the 2006 crisis, and the current status of SSR efforts in Timor-Leste.

8. Overview of Post-2006 SSR Developments

The security situation improved markedly after the surrender of the petitioners, allowing the government to close the last large internally displaced persons camp in Metinaro in July 2009. F-FDTL/PNTL rivalry seemed diminished and both the self-confidence and assertiveness of the Timorese security forces increased, also *vis-à-vis* the foreign security force presence.⁷⁴ However, many of the key problems remain. There continues to be a lack of a clear definition of the respective roles of the F-FDTL and PNTL, especially as far as military aid to a civil power is concerned, with the F-FDTL playing an increasingly active role in internal policing.⁷⁵ Democratic oversight of the security forces continues to be lacking.

Abuses committed by the security forces during the state of emergency declared after the attack on President Ramos-Horta (and lifted following the surrender of the petitioners) have raised concerns amongst national and international observers. In the words of the 2008 U.S. State Department Country Report,

⁷⁴ Thomas Parks, *Timor-Leste: The Politics of Internal Security* (Dili: The Asia Foundation, 2008), 1-2.

⁷⁵ Confusion regarding the respective roles of the police and military forces is, however, not confined to the East Timorese security forces, for the ISF forces have undertaken crowd control operations and carried out raids which would tend to fall under police mandates while the paramilitary Formed Police Units have been carrying out anti-gang raids which could also be classified as military counter-insurgency operations.

"Serious problems included: police use of excessive force and abuse of authority; perception of impunity; arbitrary arrest and detention..."⁷⁶ Amnesty International's 2008 Annual Report stated that "Reports continued of human rights violations committed by police and military personnel, including cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, arbitrary arrests, excessive use of force and fatal shootings".⁷⁷ The heavy-handed conduct of the F-FDTL, especially in the western regions of the country during their hunt for the remaining mutineers following the February 11, 2008 events, led to a high degree of resentment amongst the local population.⁷⁸

8.1 The F-FDTL

In the wake of the 2006 crisis, the F-FDTL had to deal with the fact that half of its troops were for all intents and purposes absent without leave, having joined the petitioners. Only in early 2008 did the petitioners and the government begin a proper consultation process. The F-FDTL was exempted from the SSR process that UNMIT undertook with the PNTL.

In August 2006, the government of Timor-Leste announced that it would be introducing conscription in an effort to curb gang violence in the country. The plan was met with strong scepticism from within and from outside Timor-Leste, with many observers questioning the wisdom of taking violence-prone young men off the streets for six months to give them weapons training before sending them back into a life of under- and unemployment. In addition to increasing the 'know-how' of the young men on how to use more sophisticated forms of violence, the plan would also increase the number of MAG/RAG and gang members passing through the armed forces, thus increasing its susceptibility to being undermined by these groups.

A new, controversial national strategy paper for the F-FDTL, called *Força 2020* was published in mid-2007, calling for an expansion of the armed forces to 3 000 members and a significant upgrade and expansion in terms of its military hardware.⁷⁹ While the *Força 2020* paper does make some references to human security issues in the introductory section, it tends to be a very 'traditional' security strategy paper. Gender is not mentioned in the paper.

As of November 2009, women made up approximately ten percent of the total F-FDTL force of 717 men and women. Although women make up a relatively high

⁷⁶ U.S. State Department, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Timor-Leste 2008*, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119059.htm> (accessed 12 August 2009).

⁷⁷ Amnesty International, *Annual Report 2008, Timor-Leste* (London: Amnesty International, 2008). Available at <http://archive.amnesty.org/report2008/eng/regions/asia-pacific/timor-leste.html> (accessed 12 August, 2009).

⁷⁸ Lucy Williamson, 'E Timor army denies abuse claims', *BBC News*, 27 May 2008; International Crisis Group, *Timor-Leste: No Time For Complacency*, Asia Briefing, No. 87 (Dili/Brussels: ICG, 2009), 4-5.

⁷⁹ Governo da Republica Democratica de Timor-Leste, *Força 2020* (Dili: Ministry of Defence and Security, 2006). English version available at <http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/2007/Forca%202020%20-%202007.pdf> (accessed 26 November 2009).

proportion of the East Timorese armed forces compared to other armed forces in the region, there are only two female officers. In addition to the lack of advancement opportunities, female members of the armed forces have complained about widespread gender-based discrimination in the force.⁸⁰

8.2 The PNTL

After the 2006 crisis, the PNTL came under special scrutiny, with all members being screened and vetted by UNPOL/ISF (even though police structures outside of Dili did not collapse during the crisis). Wilson states that this, along with the fact that their role in policing has been diminished vis-à-vis the F-FDTL, has left many in the PNTL demoralised.⁸¹ UNMIT was tasked with the dual role of maintaining internal security and of ‘reforming, restructuring and rebuilding’ the PNTL. This was to happen through a three-tier process of vetting, training and mentoring the PNTL, before handing over executive authority back to the East Timorese police force.

The continued politicisation of the security sector and close links between individual members of the police force to MAGs, RAGs and gangs remain problematic.⁸² Based on interviews by the author, there have been cases where senior police officers have been associated with certain gangs and active police officers have acted as ‘hired guns’ for criminal gangs. Civil society interviewees have also noted cases of explicit support for political parties by active police officers and involvement of police officers, mainly from the UPF, in smuggling (and possibly trafficking) activities on the East Timorese-Indonesian border.⁸³ In 2007, thirty-three female officers who were supposed to take up their duties with the UPF were dismissed by the UPF commander and reposted to the Maliana district VPU. In interviews conducted by Siapno, allegations emerged that the real reason for their dismissal was to avoid the current smuggling activities of the male-dominated UPF-unit from being exposed.⁸⁴

It is also important to note that even if allegations of favouritism by PNTL officers towards certain political parties or allegiance to certain gangs were not generally true, perceptions matter. If the general public believes that, say, the regional police commander supports party A or gang B, they will act and react to the presence of the force under this assumption. For example, in Uato Lari, following the burning of houses by FRETILIN supporters in August 2007, the

⁸⁰ Jacqueline Siapno, ‘Human safety, security and resilience: Making narrative spaces for dissent in Timor-Leste’, in *East-Timor How To Build A New Nation In Southeast Asia In The 21st Century?*, eds. Christine Cabasset-Semedo and Frédéric Durand, 193 (Bangkok: IRASEC, 2009).

⁸¹ Bu Wilson, ‘Smoke and mirrors: institutionalising fragility in the Polícia Nacional Timor-Leste’ (Paper presented at the ‘Conference on Democratic Governance in Timor-Leste: Reconciling the National and the Local’, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, 7-8 February 2008). Available at: http://cigj.anu.edu.au/cigj/link_documents/Publications/Wilson_Smoke_Mirrors_2008.pdf (accessed 26 November 2009).

⁸² Henri Myrtilinen, *Timor-Leste - A Kaleidoscope of Conflicts* (Berlin: Watch Indonesia, 2008); Parks, *Timor-Leste: The Politics of Internal Security*; Bu Wilson, ‘Joint Command for PNTL and F-FDTL Undermines Rule of Law and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste’ *East Timor Law Journal* 2 (February 2008).

⁸³ Interviews by the author in Baucau, Dili and Viqueque, October-November 2007.

⁸⁴ Siapno, ‘Human safety, security and resilience’, 200-201.

local police was, rightly or wrongly, seen as being pro-FRETILIN. The victims of the violence thus sought the protection of the F-FDTL in the area and remain mistrustful of the PNTL, thereby exacerbating the divisions between the two security forces.⁸⁵

Barriers to women's full participation in the PNTL continue to exist. Following the reorganisation of the PNTL in the aftermath of the crisis, as of November 2009, the force has 608 female officers, amounting to eighteen percent. However, a recent UN assessment mission identified the lack of career prospects for female officers as a major impediment to increasing the recruitment and retention of female police officers. Female officers have complained about the short maternity leave period of three months (as compared to six months in the F-FDTL), which makes it difficult for female officers to combine child-raising with their police career.⁸⁶ Furthermore, cases of discrimination and sexual harassment in the force have not been adequately addressed.⁸⁷ According to UNMIT, sexual harassment is a serious concern and a deterrent for women assigned to the field in the districts, especially if they are assigned alone with other male counterparts.⁸⁸

Out of 14 district VPUs, only three are headed by a woman. An independent evaluation of the VPUs highlighted the need to deploy additional officers to UNMIT with training and experience in dealing with gender based crimes. UNMIT is undertaking various activities to try to build capacity within PNTL to address gender-based violence, including ongoing training in gender sensitivity, and training on human rights, including women and children's rights, at the Police Training Academy. In 2008, PNTL and UNMIT collaborated to deliver a specialised "Train the Trainer" course on GBV investigations.⁸⁹

From mid-2009, districts are being handed over one-by-one from UNMIT to PNTL control. However, as numerous observers have noted, UNMIT's 'reforming, restructuring and rebuilding' process has been less than spectacular.⁹⁰ UNMIT's plans to incorporate gender issues into the process have been more or less dropped, and its aims of stressing a community policing approach (a goal also laid down in the preamble of the 2009 Organic Law on the PNTL) are making way for a more paramilitary approach to policing.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Interviews by the author in Uato Lari, November 2007.

⁸⁶ Siapno, 'Human safety, security and resilience', 206-207.

⁸⁷ UN Security Council, *Report of the expert mission to Timor-Leste on policing, 17 to 27 March 2008*.

⁸⁸ UNMIT, *Gender Quarterly Report*, 8.

⁸⁹ UNMIT, *Gender Quarterly Report*, 5-8.

⁹⁰ Jim Della-Giacoma, 'The UN's lame security review for Timor-Leste' *The Interpreter: Weblog of the Lowy Institute for International Policy*, available at <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2009/02/17/The-UNs-tame-security-review-for-Timor-Leste.aspx> (accessed 26 November 2009); International Crisis Group, *Handing Back Responsibility to Timor-Leste's Police*, International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 180 (Dili/Brussels: ICG, 2009); Funaki, *The UN and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste*; Bu Wilson, 'Timor-Leste: The Curious Case of the Fake Policemen' *East Timor Law Journal* (Dili: East Timor Law Journal, 2009). Available at http://www.eastimorlawjournal.org/ARTICLES/2009/Timor_Leste_the_curious_case_of_the_fake_policemen_bu_wilson_2009.html (accessed 26 November 2009).

⁹¹ Author's interviews in Dili, August 2009.

8.3 The SSR process

In a rather scathing review of UNTAET's and UNMISSET's involvement in building up Timor-Leste's security forces, Hood saw three major factors for the poor state of the country's security sector previous to the 2006 crisis:

- Inadequate planning and deficient mission design [within the UN];
- Unimaginative and weak leadership [in the UN missions]; and
- Negligible East Timorese 'ownership'.⁹²

In a similar vein, Burton saw little input from either East Timorese civil society or even from the security sector itself in the post-independence SSR process, the blueprints for which were largely written by foreign consultants, often with little knowledge of Timor-Leste. According to Burton, the East Timorese government on the other hand considered SSR to be 'a game it must play to get donor resources but their hearts and souls were not in it'.⁹³

Unfortunately, post-2006 crisis reports such as the 2008 International Crisis Group report on SSR in Timor-Leste, the report of the UN expert mission to Timor-Leste in 2008, and academic research on the topic found similar weaknesses in UNMIT's approach to addressing the current SSR processes.⁹⁴ The UN missions, UNPOL and other international actors have lacked a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to security sector issues, coupled with a lack of understanding of local social and political dynamics. UNMIT's engagement with the East Timorese security forces has been described by the International Crisis Group as involving 'unwilling, unable partners'.⁹⁵ The East Timorese political and security sector elites have become increasingly impatient with the role of UNMIT, with the Secretary of State for Defence Júlio Tomás Pinto airing his frustration publicly in an op-ed piece in the weekly *Tempo Semanal* news magazine.⁹⁶

Wilson argues that in terms of the reform, restructuring and rebuilding of the PNTL, UNPOL and UNMIT are 'struggling on a number of fronts to carry out this task, but that some not inconsiderable effort is going into managing the impression that the work is being undertaken.' The lessons of the initial build-up of the East Timorese security forces seem not to have been learned, with UNPOL still stretched by its multiple mandates, necessitating a sub-contracting of screening and post-screening training to the Australian Federal Police and Australian Agency for International Development. Training manuals prepared by

⁹² Hood, 'Security Sector Reform in East Timor, 1999-2004', 68.

⁹³ Burton, 'Security Sector Reform: Current Issues and Future Challenges', 100.

⁹⁴ See for example Della-Giacoma, 'The UN's lame security review for Timor-Leste'; Funaki, *The UN and Security Sector Reform in Timor-Leste*; Wilson, 'Smoke and mirrors' and 'Joint Command'; and Michael Gillespie, *The United Nations and Security Sector Reform: Lessons from the Field*, MA Thesis (York: University of York, 2009). Available at <http://fundasauhmaein.wordpress.com/2009/10/07/the-un-and-ssr-in-timor-leste-september-2009-university-of-york-ma/> (accessed 26 November 2009).

⁹⁵ International Crisis Group, *Handing Back Responsibility to Timor-Leste's Police*, International Crisis Group Asia Report No. 180 (Dili/Brussels: ICG, 2009).

⁹⁶ Júlio T. Pinto, 'Reforming the Security Sector: Facing Challenges, Achieving Progress in Timor Leste', *Tempo Semanal*, 18 August 2009.

UNPOL were developed with minimal input from the PNTL or East Timorese civil society and have at times verged on the cryptic and bizarre in terms of their content.⁹⁷

The continued failure to integrate gender perspectives into the SSR processes perpetrates insecurity posed by young men prone to resolve conflicts with violent means; an ongoing influence of various networks of patronage in the security sector institutions; continued high rates of GBV and poor response from security sector institutions; and security sector institutions with a culture of discrimination and impunity, and insufficient numbers of female personnel. In terms of addressing GBV, major deficiencies have been outlined by a number of JSMP reports. There would appear to be a lack of commitment at the highest levels. As related by Wilson:

When I relayed that sexual assault cases were being resolved by traditional leaders to a senior police adviser in Dili with the Presidential Security Sector Working Group he put his hands over his ears and said “please don’t tell me that”.⁹⁸

A UN fact-finding mission found the capacity of UNPOL lacking especially in terms of addressing GBV issues.⁹⁹

The international police and military presence is unfortunately not showing a good example to the Timorese security forces with respect to integrating more women into the security sector. In April 2008, UNMIT/UNPOL had an approximate female percentage of just seven percent. Of about forty contingent commanders, only three were women, and none were in any significant position to influence decision making.¹⁰⁰ No figures were available for the ISF.

9. Analysis and Policy Recommendations

The implosion of the security sector institutions in April/May 2006 brought the ‘success story’ of UN-assisted nation building to an abrupt end. For those who chose to see it, the writing had been, quite literally, on the wall.¹⁰¹ The internal security problems caused by the social legitimacy given to violent forms of conflict resolution, by competing networks of patronage and by high levels of GBV were known to both East Timorese and international actors. The outbreak of the crisis brought these issues to the fore in a very stark way and though the situation has calmed down following the events of February 11, 2008 and the surrender of the remaining ‘petitioners,’ the underlying issues have yet to be resolved.

⁹⁷ Wilson, ‘Smoke and mirrors’, 5

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16

⁹⁹ UN Security Council, *Report of the expert mission to Timor-Leste on policing, 17 to 27 March 2008*, 4-5, 9.

¹⁰⁰ UNMIT, *UNMIT Gender Quarterly Report to DPKO HQ January - March 2008* (Dili, UNMIT, April 2008), 8.

¹⁰¹ For example in the form of political graffiti.

In spite of advances and years of outside support, the East Timorese security sector remains to a degree in a state of flux. The surrender of the last of the petitioners opened up the possibility of drawing a line under the crisis of 2006 and creating security forces which adequately reflect the actual security needs of East Timorese society, of women and men, of boys and girls, of the rural and the urban population. These needs and the best approaches to addressing them will naturally have to be formulated by the citizens of Timor-Leste themselves. The international community is, however, in a position to support these processes.

From the point of view of women who did not become members of the new East Timorese security sector institutions, the new national East Timorese security forces failed in providing equal opportunities of employment for female veterans of the struggle. For East Timorese women in general, the security forces failed in terms of providing basic security from GBV, and more seriously have themselves been implicated in cases of GBV.

From the point of view of men who were excluded from the security forces, the perceived failures were a lack of inclusion of male veterans, including members of the former clandestine civilian resistance, who felt they had a right to employment in these new security forces. The security forces, especially the PNLT were also perceived as having failed in providing community security, and have failed in particular to address violence by young men.

From the point of view of men and women in the security forces, the institutions were perceived as preferring certain patronage networks over others, be they based on regional, political or personal allegiance. In addition, women, though recruited at relatively high rates (especially in the PNLT), have not been given equal treatment in terms of career opportunities nor protection from sexual harassment.

Taking the three criteria outlined by the Gender and SSR Toolkit by DCAF, ODIHR/OSCE and UN-INSTRAW as a basis, we can see that the lack of gender perspectives in the DDR/SSR processes in Timor-Leste has:

- Undermined the degree of local ownership, as men and especially women not belonging to the requisite networks of patronage have been sidelined and the process is seen as being run by UN agencies and other international actors.
- Reduced service delivery, as key security issues such as GBV and gang violence have not been effectively tackled by the security forces because of disinterest (in the case of GBV) and/or vested interests (in the case of both). Furthermore, competing loyalties that play a major role in male social role construction have undermined security sector personnel's loyalty to the security forces and to the state as service provider, which has resulted in poor provision of security and justice. It has also resulted in both F-FDTL and PNLT being seen as partisan actors rather than being trusted by the population – which is a major obstacle to service delivery. Finally, displays of

‘machismo’ have led to reduced trust in some of the forces and antagonised parts of the civilian population.

- Contributed to woefully lacking civilian, transparent and accountable oversight of the security sector, as actors within the security sector and from the outside have tried to manipulate factions within the forces for the benefit of their own clientelistic networks. Minimal oversight permits impunity for sexual harassment, sexual assault and other forms of GBV.

It would be naïve to claim that merely by adopting a gendered approach the East Timorese actors and the international community would have been able to avert the problems inside the East Timorese security sector previous to the outbreak of the crisis in 2006. Many of the underlying causes were structural, be it the socio-economic situation of the country or the lack of training capacity in UNPOL. However, a gender perspective could – and still can – add to the understanding of many of the social processes at work in Timor-Leste, as well as help to find solutions to some of the main security issues in the country, such as the challenges posed by violence-prone young men or widespread GBV. This will, however, require a rethink by both the international community and by the East Timorese security elite of how they choose to structure the debate on security policy.

This paper's main recommendations thus are neither new nor surprising. The SSR processes in Timor-Leste should:

1. Involve East Timorese civil society, including women's organisations, village councils, traditional representatives and organisations dealing with security sector issues, such as Fundasaun Mahein and JSMP, in an inclusive debate on human security and the respective roles of the security sector institutions.
2. Recognise the different security and justice needs and roles of men and women, girls and boys of different social backgrounds in East Timorese society.
3. Analyse how gender roles and role expectations affect the work of members of the security forces.
4. Use these inputs to further develop security sector policies and institutions that adequately address the security needs of the whole of the population.
5. Engage civil society organisations and the general public in civic education programmes clarifying the respective roles of different security sector as well as other state institutions and citizens' rights vis-à-vis these institutions.

Basing the outlook of the security sector on the human security needs of and as defined by the population are a first step towards accomplishing the goal of more gender-sensitive security forces. This will however also need to be backed up by reforms within the security sector itself, such as:

- Increasing the recruitment of women.
- Ensuring that both female and male staff have equal employment and advancement opportunities.
- Drafting and fully implementing policies that prohibit sexual harassment, discrimination and GBV by security sector personnel.
- Concrete measures to ensure that security forces do not become private fiefdoms of patronage-based networks.
- Adequate training and capacity-building on gender issues, in order to shift the understanding of GBV from a ‘merely private’ problem to a grave societal threat to security.
- On the political level, the reforms would need to be backed up by clear guidelines delineating the various tasks of the security forces as well as transparent, accountable and gender-sensitive oversight mechanisms.

Carrying out gender-sensitive SSR processes will by necessity be a lengthy process and will need to be based on local human security perceptions and needs. They are, however, necessary for ensure that the East Timorese security sector institutions are responsive to the security needs of the whole population, men and women, girls and boys. To date, gender issues have, if at all mentioned in policy documents, mostly been paid lip-service to. In terms of actual practical work on gender issues, some advances have been achieved, such as a relatively high number of female police officers and the setting up of VPUs, but gender issues have not been incorporated in any systematic way. Importantly, gender is equated with women’s (and occasionally children’s) issues, neglecting the needs and expectations of men, which also play a central role in both defining security sector institutions and the environment in which they operate. As the UN mission prepares for its drawdown, it will be the task of East Timorese society to create accountable security sector institutions for the benefit of all citizens.

Appendix 1. Timeline of key events from 1974-2009

25.04.1974	Carnation Revolution in Portugal signals end of Portugal's approximately 450 year colonial presence in Timor-Leste
28.11.1975	Timor-Leste unilaterally proclaims its independence
07.12.1975	Indonesian invasion of Timor-Leste. The subsequent twenty-four year guerrilla war between the Indonesian occupation forces and FALINTIL leads to an estimated 103 000 deaths
30.08.1999	UN-sponsored referendum on the future of the territory leads to overwhelming vote in favour of independence. The vote triggers a massive wave of destruction, killings and forced deportations by the Indonesian security forces and their militia proxies.
20.09.1999	Deployment of international peacekeeping force (INTERFET)
25.10.1999	Transitional UN administration (UNTAET) established
01.02.2001	F-FDTL established
10.08.2001	PNTL established
20.05.2002	Timor-Leste (re-)gains its independence, UNTAET replaced by UNMISSET
04.12.2002	Violent anti-government and anti-UN protests in Dili
06.01.2003	Alleged militia attack in Atsabe and the security forces' reaction to it leads to tensions between F-FDTL and PNTL
20.05.2005	UNMISSET replaced by scaled-down UNOTIL mission
09.01.2006	The 'petitioners' submit a written petition to Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and President Gusmão
17.02.2006	The petitioners abandon their barracks
16.03.2006	The 591 petitioners are dismissed from the armed forces
24-28.04.2006	The petitioners hold a demonstration in front of the Government Palace in Dili. Violence erupts outside the Government Palace on the last morning of the demonstration, with two civilians killed. More violence in other parts of Dili, with at least three more civilians killed.
03.05.2006	Major Alfredo Reinado abandons the F-FDTL Military Police, taking with him other military police officers, PNTL officers and weapons
23-28.05.2006	Widespread violence in Dili, first between members of various factions of the security forces, followed by inter-communal and gang violence
25.05.2008	Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal begin deploying troops and paramilitary police forces
01.06.2006	Minister of the Interior Lobato and Minister of Defence Rodrigues resign
25.06.2006	Minister for Foreign Affairs Ramos-Horta resigns
26.06.2006	Prime Minister Alkatiri resigns
10.07.2006	Ramos-Horta is sworn in as Prime Minister
26.07.2006	Major Reinado is arrested by ISF forces
25.08.2006	UNOTIL replaced by UNMIT
30.08.2007	Major Reinado escapes from Becora prison with fifty other inmates
04.03.2007	Failed attempt by Australian special forces to capture Reinado in Same leads to widespread violence in Dili

- 09.04.2007** First round of presidential elections, FRETILIN candidate Francisco ‘Lu Olo’ Guterres and independent candidate José Ramos-Horta reach the second round
- 09.05.2007** Second round of presidential elections, Ramos-Horta wins resoundingly
- 30.06.2007** Parliamentary elections, FRETILIN wins the largest number of seats but falls well short of majority
- 07.08.2007** After weeks of negotiations, Gusmão’s AMP alliance is able to agree on forming a government which excludes FRETILIN, leading to politically-motivated violence in Dili, Baucau, and Viqueque.
- 11.02.2008** Failed coup d’état attempt by Major Alfredo Reinado leaves him and one follower dead and President José Ramos-Horta critically wounded
- 17.02.2008** Joint taskforce of F-FDTL and PNTL formed to track down remaining participants of the coup d’état attempt
- 29.04.2008** Last of the petitioners around Salsinha surrender to East Timorese security forces
- 04.06.2008** Dissolution of joint F-FDTL/PNTL taskforce
- 14.05.2009** Handover of policing responsibility from UNPOL to PNTL in Lautem District
- 30.06.2009** Handover of policing responsibility from UNPOL to PNTL in Oecusse District
- 25.07.2009** Handover of policing responsibility from UNPOL to PNTL in Manatuto District
- 13.08.2009** Reconfiguration of UIR as Public Order Battalions (BOP - Batalhao da orden publica)
- 11.09.2009** Handover of Police Training Centre from UNPOL to PNTL

Appendix 2. Overview of UN Missions in Timor-Leste 1999-2009

Mission	Dates	Robust mandate (Y/N)	Peace-keeping force	Military Liaison Officers/ Military Observers	UNPOL	International civilian staff (incl. UN Volunteers)	Local civilian staff	Main Troop Contributing Countries
UNAMET	11.06.1999 - 30.09.1999	N	-	50	271	667	668 (plus 3 600 for voting day)	n.a.
UNTAET	25.10.1999 - 20.05.2002	Y	6 281	118	1 288	737	1 745	Australia, Fiji, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, United Kingdom
UNMISSET	20.05.2002 - 20.05.2005	Y	4 656	120	771	465	856	Australia, Brazil, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Portugal
UNOTIL	20.05.2005 - 25.08.2006	N	-	15	56	171	241	n.a.
UNMIT	25.08.2006 - present	Y	1592	33	1 559	512	879	Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, Portugal
ISF *	25.05.2006 - present	Y	790	-	-	-	-	Australia, New Zealand

* The ISF operates independently from, but in support of, UNMIT.

Deployment strengths are given as at the following dates:

United Nations Assistance Mission to East Timor (UNAMET): 09.08.1999

United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET): 31.03.2002

United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET): 31.08.2002

United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL): 31.03.2006

United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT): 30.06.2009

International Stabilisation Force (ISF): 12.08.2009

(Sources: UN DPKO, 2009, <http://www.un.org/peace>, and Australian Department of Defence, 2009, <http://www.defence.gov.au/opEx/global/opastute/index.htm>)



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