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Timor-Leste's Justice Minister begins a program of meetings in Portugal with Ministers and Government Officials

Timor-Leste's Minister of Justice, H.E. Dionísio Babo Soares, has begun a series of meetings with Ministers and officials of the Government of Portugal in Lisbon. Yesterday Minister Soares met with his Portuguese counterpart H.E. Paula Teixeira da Cruz. The Minister is also to meet with the Prosecutor General of Portugal and provisionally, the Superior Council of Magistrates.

These meetings are focusing on the recent Resolution of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste which called on the Government to initiate a profound technical audit of the operation of the judicial system and to cease contracts with international actors working within the sector. A subsequent Resolution of the Council of Ministers regarding specific international actors required to leave Timor-Leste is also being discussed.

These two resolutions have understandably caused a great deal of concern within Portugal as nearly all of those impacted were Portuguese nationals.

In an extended interview with LUSA on the 5th of November Prime Minister H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão appealed for understanding noting that there was "no intention to cool relations with Portugal" and indicated that extraordinary and persistent problems within the judicial area had required extraordinary and urgent action.

Although expressing regret over the way events had unfolded, the Prime Minister of Portugal H.E. Pedro Passos Coelho has affirmed the friendship of Portugal and Timor-Leste and the quality of his relationship with both the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste and the President of the Republic.

Timor-Leste's Government Spokesperson Ágio Pereira noted that "Timor-Leste welcomes this opportunity for the Minister of Justice to dialogue with Ministers and officials of the Government of Portugal, to shed more light on these recent events." He recalled the "deep historical relationship and solidarity of the two nations and the shared desire of both to see a strong, fair and efficient justice system at work in Timor-Leste."**ENDS**



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