



## SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA  
RELEASE**

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### **Joint Operation seeks no confrontation**

The Joint Operation, begun in March to “prevent and suppress criminal actions from illegal groups”, continues to work within its prescribed rules of engagement.

The operation involving the National Police Force of Timor-Leste [PNTL] and the Timor-Leste Defence Force [F-FDTL] was established after attacks on Police personnel in February and March. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of March an overnight attack on the Police compound in Baguia was conducted by an illegal group equipped with firearms and explosives. Four security personnel were injured, one seriously.

The Constitution of Timor-Leste [Section 43] prohibits the “establishment of armed, military or paramilitary associations.” Such groups clearly pose a threat to the stability of the state and safety of the population.

In light of the incidents occurring earlier this year the Joint Operation has had to conduct its work assertively and with due diligence to ensure the safety of its personnel and minimize the risk of confrontation.

Currently the Operation is following through on an arrest warrant for Mauk Moruk. Authorities are seeking a calm and constructive engagement with Moruk and members of his illegal group known as the ‘Revolutionary Council’. A significant number of members of the group have already surrendered themselves to the relevant authorities and are being treated according to the law and under the rules of engagement of the Joint Operation. The security forces have prioritized building social engagement with the population to nurture harmony, trust and stability.

The PNTL and F-FDTL have accumulated experience in the recent past on the management of joint operations with respect to human rights and with emphasis on reaching peaceful outcomes. Since 2003 five joint operations have been successfully carried out. The current one, under the name Operation Hanita, is the sixth.

Spokesperson for the Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira, said the Operation continues to have the support and confidence of the Government. Efforts to minimize confrontation continue to be the preferred path. Mr. Pereira reiterates that “the VI Constitutional Government would be failing the people of Timor-Leste to let criminal attacks go unchecked” and that after a long history of conflict “the vast majority of Timorese people are resolved to live in peace and walk with dignity, building a successful future for all.” **ENDS**



**Ágio Pereira**  
+670 77045002  
[agio\\_pereira@cdm.gov.tl](mailto:agio_pereira@cdm.gov.tl)  
[govtlmedia@gmail.com](mailto:govtlmedia@gmail.com)