



Fundasaun Mahein Nia Hanoin Lisuk, 13 August 2012

Timor-Leste Will Buy More Guns?

In March 2011 Indonesian media reported that Timor-Leste is to get export credits for the procurement of weapons from PT PINDAD.¹ On 23 March 2011 the Interior Minister of Indonesia sepakat confirmed an agreement to export weapons to Timor-Leste.²

On 25 October 2011 Secretario do Estado Seguranza Fransisco Guterres confirmed that the Government will purchase new weapons for PNTL. This story was even published on the CNRT website.³

¹Indonesia Siap Ekspor Senjata ke Timor Leste Untuk Kerjasama di Bidang Ekonomi, lebih fokus pada pembangunan infrastruktur. Selasa, 22 Maret 2011, 15:11

http://nasional.news.viva.co.id/news/read/210799-indonesia-siap-ekspor-senjata-ke-timor-leste?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

²Indonesia Ekspor Senjata ke Timor Leste, 23 March 2011

<http://www.depdagri.go.id/news/2011/03/23/indonesia-ekspor-senjata-ke-timor-leste>

³SES Sei Sosa Tan Kilat ba PNTL, 25 October Website CNRT

nian http://partidocnrt.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=662:ses-sei-sosa-tan-kilat-ba-pntl&catid=32:nasional&Itemid=47

If we buy 105 new weapons for PNTL what will happen to the old ones? They remain dangerous assets and will they be destroyed, sold, given to another institution, insecurely stored in an armory?

On 23 January 2012 Indonesian media reported that F-FDTL will purchase SS-2 semi automatic rifles and G2 pistols from TNI/PT.PINDAD. However, how many weapons is unclear, and it is not clear what will happen to old weapons.

SUKOHARJ Angkatan Darat Timor Leste tertarik melengkapi peralatan militernya yang dibuat oleh PT Pindad. Deputi Direktur Pemasaran dan Penjualan PT Pindad, Triyono Andri Susilo, mengatakan pada tahap awal ada tiga jenis senjata buatan Pindad yang akan dibeli oleh Angkatan Perang Timor Leste yakni senjata serbu jenis SS2 yang juga digunakan TNI. "Selain senjata, Angkatan Darat Timor Leste juga akan memesan amunisi buatan PT Pindad," jelas Triyono kepada wartawan di PT Sritex, Sukoharjo, Jawa Tengah, Sabtu (28/1/2012).

Selain itu, Angkatan Darat Timor Leste juga akan memesan pistol jenis G2 serta truk angkutan personel seberat 2,5 ton dengan harga antara Rp300 juta sampai Rp900 juta per unit. "Untuk harga truk angkutan personel militer tergantung medan di Timor Leste," sambungnya. Keputusan Timor Leste membeli persenjataan buatan Pindad, terang Triyono, karena Indonesia dianggap paling dekat secara geografis. Pindad sudah melayani pemesanan persenjataan untuk Kepolisian Timor Leste. "Kalau tidak ada halangan, pesanan dari Angkatan Darat Timor Leste ini baru yang pertama. Sebelumnya, Negara itu hanya pesan untuk kepolisian saja seperti dua unit kendaraan water cannon," urainya.

Sementara itu Perdana Menteri Timor Leste, Xanana Gusmao, mengatakan Timor Leste masih perlu melakukan pembenahan di sector pertahanan. "Tepat 20 Mei nanti, Timor Leste genap 10 tahun, masih banyak kekurangan Negara ini yang harus dibenahi," pungkasnya.⁴

Weapons procurement is a sensitive subject. During UNTAET a large number of Glock 9mm pistols we procured for the PNTL and a stock of M16s were procured for the F-FDTL.

The first time that independent Timor-Leste procured weapons by itself was in 2004 when its former Minister of Interior Rogerio Lobato and the FRETILIN Government imported a large stock of HK33s, Steyr rifles and F2000 machine guns for PNTL special units. The history of those weapons imports was one in which little public debate occurred, although there was considerable worry and suspicion about the potential use or abuse of those weapons. Indeed 2 years later in 2006 many of these police weapons fell into the wrong hands and many innocent people died or suffered as a result.

Other issues can occur with the government-procured weapons. Most recently, as reported by Tempo Semanal on 11 August 2012, the PNTL had purchased five faulty PM2 submachine guns from PT PINDAD. The ultr-powerful guns failed to work during a training session on Saturday, 4 August 2012.

As with other instances of gun importation into Timor-Leste, however, the exact

⁴<http://news.okezone.com/read/2012/01/28/337/565292/militer-timor-leste-tertarik-beli-senjata-buatan-pindad>

number of guns imported with the five faulty guns remains a mystery. The guns were signed for in a shipment of four containers into Dili Airport on 30 July 2012. Customs Authorities were not allowed to check the containers and the PNTL General Commander Longuinho Monteiro demanded their immediate release into PNTL custody.

Secretary of State for Security Francisco Guterres has denied responsibility in the matter, pointing the finger instead at General Commander Monteiro, but Fundasaun Mahein (FM) wonders why the police are in charge of procuring their own weapons? We are disappointed in the Secretary of State for Security for washing his hands of the matter so summarily. Is this not a major security issue that submachine guns – which really are not necessary in the protection of Timorese civilians – are being imported into the communities of Timor-Leste?

Fundasaun Mahein believes that there should be some aspect of the democratic government of Timor-Leste, elected by the citizens to represent their interests, in charge of procuring weapons for the PNTL. PNTL weapons procurement should not be the responsibility of the police themselves, who maybe interested in buying the “sexiest,” “coolest-looking” but least practical weapon available. It should not be the responsibility of a private firm interested in maximizing their own profits by selling you the most expensive equipment available. It should be the responsibility of the government, most likely under the Secretary of Security, who can carry out a study to determine the correct type and quality of weapons needed for the police of Timor-Leste

We are also disappointed that the Secretary of State It is not good that the State Secretary and the Commander General of the PNTL point fingers at one another on responsibility. With a clear process of oversight, transparent to civilians, there would be clear indications on why submachine guns had been ordered, or how the gun company was chosen. It would increase accountability and would incentivize a smoother-running, safer country.

However, weapons procurement continues in Timor-Leste and there is little public debate about it, and this poses risks in the public having confidence in the process and in the ultimate accountability of those charged with the procurement of weaponry.

Certainly the defense force and police service need weapons. However, how many, of what type, for what purpose etc are all matters of the public interest as a modern country should a matter of public discussion.

As Fundasaun Mahein and the national media have reported many times – the PNTL are still not able to manage their weapons.

In 2010 Timor-Leste took possession of two patrol boats from China. A valuable addition to the state’s capabilities in terms of maritime security these boats came with an undisclosed number of Chinese Norinco semi-automatic rifles, pictured below. The numbers, location and purpose of these weapons is somewhat unclear.



Furthermore, the defense force took possession of a number of small artillery (6 cannons) pieces from Indonesia in May 2012. While for ceremonial purposes how are they to be managed, stored, and used?



Conclusion

The public has a right to know how many additional guns are coming into Timor-Leste because of the security forces' egregious track record on keeping the guns out of the wrong hands. In the care and management of lethal weapons, even one gun in the wrong hands is too many. Even 10 days ago, a semi-automatic rifle taken from a car of a high-ranking PNTL officer in Dili (Tempo Semanal, 8/9/2012). That gun may

now be floating around the capital of Timor-Leste, putting civilian lives in danger.

The public also has a right to know for what purpose we need more guns. This is particularly true if the current batch of guns are still working and the government money could be directed to more effective things, such as PNTL management training or a more comprehensive weapons auditing system.

If there is a question of state secrecy? Why does the Indonesian public or media know more than the Timor-Leste public about weapons? Why is our government not informing their own media?

Finally, the public has a right to know the intentions for the old weapons that will no longer be used. This is the better stem the potential flow of old weapons into the civilian population of Timor-Leste, particularly along the border - where gun-related tensions are already high.

Fundasaun Mahein would like for the government to address these five questions for the public every time weapons are procured for transparency purposes:

- 1) Which types of weapons are to be procured?
- 2) How many of each type of weapon are to be procured?
- 3) For what purposes will these weapons be used?
- 4) What is the cost of this procurement?
- 5) Will these guns be replacing other guns, and if so, how will the previous guns be disposed of?

If the government can answer those questions in every situation of weapons procurement, the public will have many viable considerations from which to begin public debate and improve the civilian oversight process of the security sector.

Reference

Indonesia Siap Ekspor Senjata ke Timor-Leste Untuk kerja sama di bidang ekonomi, lebih fokus padapembangunan infrastruktur. Selasa, 22 Maret 2011, 15:11

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