



The F-FDTL's Internal Security Activities

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I. Introduction

The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste states that the F-FDTL is the only force mandated to protect National Independence, Timor's territorial integrity, and the safety of the population against external threats.¹ Apart from that, the F-FDTL also carries out some other missions as necessary, such as providing humanitarian assistances after natural disasters.²

National Defense Law article 4, part 3 and the National Security Law 02/2010 article 18 part 1 and 2 permit the F-FDTL to coordinate national security activities with other security sector institutions to respond to national threats, particularly when the general public is in danger.³

In addition, Internal Security Law 04/2010, chapter II, article 15, part A, permits the intervention of the army forces to ensure internal security. However, such intervention is only permitted under necessary circumstances, when the intervention of the F-FDTL is crucial.⁴

The F-FDTL's presence is legally guaranteed to respond to security threats such as the political military crisis of 2006. Historically, the F-FDTL was the first organization to re-establish national security through "Operation Halibur".⁵ During this time, the security sector was not established and the stability of Timor's new independence was not secure. As a result of this dysfunction, 37 people died and at least 150,000 people evacuated their houses.⁶

This report aims to inform the public about what the F-FDTL has done thus far to support internal security. This report covers both the successes and challenges faced by the PNTL, including FM's recommendations to improve and develop in the future.

¹ Constitution of RDTL, (22 March 2002) Defed Security's. Article 146 Part 2.p115

² Decree Law (2006). The Statutue Organic of FALINTIL-FDTL's. Chapter I Article 2 Part 2.

³ Law of the National Parliament. (2010). Exclusive Principl. Article 4 Part 3.
Law of National Defense

⁴ Law of Parliament. (2010). Complementary Duty of the Internal Security. Article 15. Part a. Law of the
Internal Security

⁵ Agi. (14 March 2008). Front Line of the Operation Salsinha Free From Siege of KOG Batallion. Media
STL. <http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/east-timor-studies/conversations/topics/16037>

⁶ CIGI. (2009). Monitoring Reform of the Security Sector.
<http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/06/SSRM-East-Timor-v.1-Tetum.pdf>

I. Contribution of the F-FDTL to Internal Security

a. Establishing Posts in Districts and along the Border

The Fifth Constitutional Government has guaranteed that it will ensure the continuation of the F-FDTL, in order to defend the sovereignty of Timor-Leste and to support internal security.⁷ The F-FDTL has established posts in ten districts: Oe-Cusse, Atauro, Tilomar, Tunubibi, Bobonaro, Gleno, Ainaro, Same, Uatulari and Ferik Sare (Same).⁸ The government also plans to set up permanent posts in Oe-Cusse district and Atauro sub-district.⁹

The fundamental reason to establish a post in Oe-cusse district is because it links with the border with Indonesia, which is a strategically important position for the security of state sovereignty. The post is also important for minimizing problems faced by people living along the border, especially in the area of Oe-cusse.¹⁰ This includes providing humanitarian assistance to communities in the district, which is part of civilian-military cooperation efforts.¹¹

As part of The Defense Cooperation Program (DCP), the F-FDTL cooperates with the Australia military to reconstruct school buildings in the all territories of Timor-Leste. The F-FDTL also collaborated with the Ministry of Health to distribute medicine to sick people in rural areas.¹² They also work to establish clinics in rural areas to facilitate easier access to medial assistance.¹³

The F-FDTL has also built houses, roads, and renovated irrigation to protect community paddy fields. They renovated schools in Kasait, Bazartete sub-district of Liquica district,¹⁴ renovated houses and schools in Fatubesi-Ermera and Bobonaro districts in 2010,¹⁵ and renovated irrigation systems in Seical, Laga sub-district of Baucau district (which was destroyed by the natural disaster in the beginning of July 2013).¹⁶ The F-FDTL also provided security to the

⁷ RDTL. (26 August 2012). THE FIFTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM, 2012 – 2017.pdf.p72.

⁸ Paixão, Filomeno. Vce of the General Commander of the F-FDTL. (12 September 2013). Private Interview.

⁹ May. (29 July 2013). The Government Built Permanent Posts of the F-FDTL in Atauro-OeCusse. Media Diariu Nasiona

¹⁰ Da Cruz, Joana. (15 August 2013). Major General Lere Inform the Internal Security, Go Calmly. Media Independent

¹¹ Flo. (21 December 2013). Military Prepares only for War. Media Timor Pos

¹² Fundasaun Mahein. (22 November 2012). *International Stabilisation Force* – Realized by ISF 2006 – 2012. Mahein Nia Lian No. 42.pdf

¹³ Fundasaun Mahein. (22 November 2012). *International Stabilisation Force* – Realized by ISF 2006 – 2012. Mahein Nia Lian No. 42.pdf

¹⁴ Cax, (4 July 2013). F-FDTL support to reconstruct School in Kasait. STL Newspaper

¹⁵ Tempo Semanal, (15 February 2011). Maliana Calm Community Proud the F-FDTL: <http://temposemanaltimor.blogspot.com/2011/02/maliana-hakmatek-komunidade-hahi-f-dtl.html>

¹⁶ May, (10 July 2013). F-FDTL Built a Protection Walls for Seical's Paddy-Field. Media Diariu Nasional.

communities of Welaluhu (Same) who felt threatened because of the CPD-RDTL's presence in the beginning of 2012.¹⁷

The humanitarian assistances offered by the F-FDTL thus far has shown positive medical, economic, and educational impacts on community life. As mentioned on the Organic Law of the F-FDTL, the other mission of the F-FDTL is to cooperate with civil authorities to advance standard of living and ensure security for Timorese communities.¹⁸

b. Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

Timor-Leste restored its Independence in 2002 and adopted a democratic and multi-party system. However, this system has not yet matured politically, which is a fact that threatens national stability. Timorese feel that the general election is an important event for the formation of national stability. In reality, however, the general election period has often been marred with violence, as was the case during the general presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007 and 2012. During those elections, conflict broke out between militant supporters of political groups.¹⁹

The fragility of Timor-Leste's National Police force results from and lack of human resources it has to control crime and guarantee internal security. This issue has been considered at the national level, leading to the decision to permit the F-FDTL to support the PNTL when necessary to ensure internal security.²⁰ This was the case during the general presidential and parliamentary election of 2012, when community leaders urged the F-FDTL to establish posts in their communities to ensure that the democratic election process was carried out smoothly.²¹

At the same time however, F-FDTL presence has sometimes been a cause for public debate questioning the legality of the F-FDTL's intervention during a general election period. Critics usually point to the fact that the F-FDTL oversteps its boundaries by enforcing internal security, which is the primary responsibility of the PNTL.²² In response, defense institution leaders maintained that the presence of F-FDTL forces during general elections are just meant to be additional forces to support the PNTL in maintaining order throughout the election.²³

The government has expressed its confidence in the F-FDTL to support internal security. The success shown by the F-FDTL during the general election is cited as an example, becoming a

¹⁷ Ade & Gim. (14 December 2012). Tomorrow, the F-FDTL Actuate the CPD-RDTL. Media Timor Post. <http://www.diariutimorpost.tl/berita-431-aban-ffdtl-atua-cpdrdtl.html>

¹⁸ Decree Law (2006). The Statute Organic of FALINTIL-FDTL's. Chapter I, Article 2, Part c.

¹⁹ Fundasaun Mahein. (28 April 2011). Potential of the Security Threaten Through the Election 2012. <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/mahein-nia-lian-no-19-elisaun-20123.pdf>

²⁰ RDTL. (10 January 2012). F-FDTL and PNTL Strengthen the Cooperation in order to Guarantee the 2012 General Election. <http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=6316&n=1&lang=tp>

²¹ Paixão, Filomeno. Vce of the General Commander of the F-FDTL. (12 September 2013). Private Interview.

²² Fundasaun Mahein. (24 February 2012). Circumstances that the FALINTIL-FDTL could have Role of the Election of 2012 in the Security Side according to the Election's Law No. 30. <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/MNL-no-30-24022012-F-FDTL2.pdf>

²³ Paixão, Filomeno. Vce of the General Commander of the F-FDTL. (12 September 2013). Private Interview.

fundamental reason why the people of Timor-Leste should appreciate the F-FDTL. According to Fundasaun Mahein's opinion, the government needs to provide a clear definition of the F-FDTL's jurisdiction in regards to providing security during future elections. This clarification is necessary due to the experience of the 2012 election in which the F-FDTL was requested to provide security support without a clear understanding of their jurisdiction to do so.²⁴

c. F-FDTL Internal Security Successes

The F-FDTL is the primary defense institution of Timor-Leste, assuming the large responsibility of the securing state sovereignty and the safety of the people of Timor-Leste. To this end, the F-FDTL should continue to work improve in order to ensure that any possible external threats will be stopped, and that it can support the PNTL to implement internal security measures. Along with the PNTL, the F-FDTL will work to secure national stability.²⁵

With a strong commitment of service to the nation, the F-FDTL will continue to gain the trust of the population and of local leaders through the establishment of more F-FDTL posts in the districts. For example, during the 2012 general election, the government permitted the F-FDTL to establish posts in the districts, in response to a proposal submitted by district administrators, in order to ensure security during the elections.²⁶

The F-FDTL continues to receive appreciation from the general public, including the community of Bobonaro, which credits the F-FDTL's presence with eliminating violence related to Martial Arts Gangs from their district.²⁷ The F-FDTL also supported the PNTL in combating CPD-RDTL movement in the Bobonaro area.²⁸

It is also important to recognize the challenges and obstacles the F-FDTL must overcome to ensure security. One large challenge is the coordination of field operations between the F-FDTL and the PNTL. At times the F-FDTL reacted too swiftly to conflict in the field, leaving some community members as victims.²⁹ FM believes F-FDTL members in all posts should be given a clear explanation regarding security intervention protocol and regulations. This is especially

²⁴ Fundasaun Mahein. (24 February 2012). Circumstances that the FALINTIL-FDTL could have Role of the Election of 2012 in the Security Side according to the Election's Law No. 30.

<http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/MNL-no-30-24022012-F-FDTL2.pdf>

²⁵ Paixão, Filomeno. Vce of the General Commander of the F-FDTL. (12 September 2013). Private Interview.

²⁶ Paixão, Filomeno. Vce of the General Commander of the F-FDTL. (12 September 2013). Private Interview.

²⁷ Tempo Semanal, (15 February 2011). Maliana Calm Community Proud the F-FDTL: <http://temposemanaltimor.blogspot.com/2011/02/maliana-hakmatek-komunidade-hahi-f-dftl.html>

²⁸ Ade & Gim. (14 December 2012). Tommorrow, the F-FDTL Actuate the CPD-RDTL. Media Timor Post. <http://www.diariutimorpost.tl/berita-431-aban-ffdtl-atua-cpdrdtl.html>

²⁹ TDW. (11 December 2012). Majority Members of the F-FDTL Involve Iha Violence. <http://www.thediliweekly.com/tl/notisias/direitos-humanos/1906-membru-f-dftl-barak-involve-iha-violensia>

important in regards to criminal cases that should be conducted in collaboration with the PNTL, so that each organization knows its role.

II. Conclusion

The F-FDTL is a unique defense institution in Timor-Leste, possessing the constitutional power to guarantee the national sovereignty as well as to secure the stability of the state and people from disruption by external threats. In addition to its normal operations, the F-FDTL also assumes other responsibilities, which it is bound to carry out according to the legal procedures outlined in the Organic Law of the F-FDTL, National Security legislation, and the Law of National Defense and Internal Security. These laws permit the F-FDTL to collaborate with the PNTL when necessary to ensure internal security.

Based on the Constitution and legal protocol, the F-FDTL is tasked with securing Timor-Leste from external threats as well as conducting civil-military responsibilities to support communities, such as building houses, school buildings, medical clinics, and more. Ultimately, it is the F-FDTL's responsibility to respond to neutralize any threats to national stability, as well as to educate the public on their mission and vision.³⁰

III. Recommendations

1. Recommend that the government take steps to strengthen human resources and equipment supplies in the F-FDTL in order to allow it to better respond to emergency risks or threats that may affect public safety.
2. Recommend to F-FDTL leaders to better define the services and responsibilities of the F-FDTL to prevent misunderstanding between the members of the F-FDTL and the PNTL in the field. The public should also receive a clear explanation regarding the F-FDTL's roles and responsibilities as well as where the F-FDTL posts are stationed, to avoid public confusion between the services provided by the F-FDTL and PNTL.
3. Recommend that the government re-evaluate legislation and provide a better definition regarding the F-FDTL's responsibilities and rights to provide security support during general election in the future. This must be done to alleviate any future concerns that the F-FDTL is over-stepping its boundaries or attempting to seize power from the PNTL.

³⁰ Tempo Semanal, (15 February 2011). Maliana Calm Community Proud the F-FDTL:
<http://temposemanaltimor.blogspot.com/2011/02/maliana-hakmatek-komunidade-hahi-f-ftl.html>

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