



Possession of Illegal and Unaccounted-for Weapons Continues

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Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	3
Methodology	4
Weapons from the 2006 Crisis	4
Illegal weapons	5
Access to weapons in Timor-Leste	7
Effects of weapons	9
Recommendations	10
Bibliography	11



Introduction

Problems with unregulated weapons in Timor-Leste have caused concern ever since the 2006 Crisis. The weapons in question were either lost during the Crisis or smuggled illegally into the country. There have already been intense efforts to recover the weapons lost during the Crisis.¹ However, some weapons from the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) have never been recovered.² At the same time, the heads of the security institutions have stated that illegal weapons from Atambua in West Timor have entered Timor-Leste across the border and spread across the country.³

In addition to lost and illegal guns, weapons currently possessed by security institutions—the PNTL and the FALINTIL-Defence Force of Timor-Leste (F-FDTL)—have continued to cause concern for the entire public. Stories have spread on social media about weapons from these two institutions falling into the hands of civilians and children, who may consider them toys. This indicates that these two institutions currently lack adequate management of their respective arsenals.

Regarding the problem of illegal weapons, F-FDTL General Chief of Staff Major General Lere Anan Timur told national media that there is no possibility of war being waged in Timor-Leste.⁴ But Fundasaun Mahein (FM)'s monitoring noted that individuals have been killed, wounded, or had property destroyed as a consequence of these weapons. Guns in the last year killed one person in Bebonuk, Dili, wounded a person in Praia dos Coqueiros⁵ and a child in Colmera, Dili,⁶ and damaged a home in Manleuana, Dili in 2017.⁷ These weapons' origin remains unknown, although it is possible they come from security personnel.

Therefore the objective of this report is to describe the situation involving weapons lost during the 2006 Crisis and weapons smuggled into the country. The report also describes the accessibility of weapons and the consequences of their use. Finally the report concludes with recommendations for the Government, and especially for the security institutions that have weapons in their possession.

¹ F-FDTL and PNTL Arms Investigation Commission Service Final Report. Ministry of Defence and Security, 2011.

² GMN TV, 17 January 2018. Available here: <http://gmntv.tl/id/justica-e-seguranca/2018/01/somotxo-laiha-kilat-ilegal-iha-sivil-nia-liman-%E2%96%A0-difisil-identifika-kilat-lakon/>

³ GMN TV, 12 November 2017. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rafGsx7LHFE>

⁴ GMN TV, 17 January 2018. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JQjOoNmKCo>

⁵ Jornal Independente, 17 May 2017

⁶ GMN TV, 4 January 2018

⁷ GMN TV, 2 January 2018



Methodology

The information in this report comes from various sources including official documents, the FM investigative report into weapons in 2011, statements by security authorities in official meetings, and media publications about smuggled guns and weapons lost during the 2006 Crisis. The report was concluded via FM's method of *Security Sector Discussion* (SSD). SSD involves researchers from FM discussing and analysing the materials related to this report and then producing recommendations.

Weapons from the 2006 Crisis

Since presenting its 2011 investigative report into weapons lost during the Crisis to the Ministry of Defence and Security, FM has stated repeatedly that the Government must take the report's recommendations seriously. This report also identified the state personnel responsible for recovering the lost weapons. In addition, this report advocated disciplinary and criminal prosecution of specified individuals.⁸ So far the Government has not implemented these recommendations.

Some efforts have already occurred as a result of Government Resolution N.^o 24/2014 from 1 September about recovering guns, ammunition, explosives, and uniforms. This resolution established a period to recover the weapons ending on 31 October 2014. The Ministry of Defence and Security subsequently extended this deadline until 31 December 2014, intending to encourage citizens and entities still possessing these materials to hand them over to the PNTL.

Fortunately most of the weapons lost in 2006 have been recovered, although the locations of some remain unknown. Minister of Defence and Security José Agostinho Sequeira stated that 10 PNTL weapons lost during the Crisis have never been recovered.⁹ Consequently in December 2017 the Ministry of Defence and Security dispatched a letter from 1 to 31 December 2017 without any results, meaning that no one handed over weapons to the PNTL or the F-FDTL. Minister of Defence and Security José Agostinho Sequeira stated that the lack of results from this letter indicate that no illegal weapons remain in civilian hands.¹⁰ But other information from the PNTL indicated that seven weapons remain lost, including three large weapons and four Glock pistols.¹¹

⁸ F-FDTL and PNTL Arms Investigation Commission Service Final Report. Ministry of Defence and Security, 2011.

⁹ GMN TV, 15 Dezembru 2017. Available here: <http://gmntv.tl/id/justica-e-seguranca/2017/12/kilat-pntl-10-resin-lakon-seidauk-hetan/>

¹⁰ GMN TV, 17 January 2018. Available here: <http://gmntv.tl/id/justica-e-seguranca/2018/01/somotxo-laiha-kilat-ilegal-iha-sivil-nia-liman-%E2%96%A0-difisil-identifika-kilat-lakon/>

¹¹ GMN TV, 17 January 2018. Available here: <http://gmntv.tl/id/justica-e-seguranca/2018/01/somotxo-laiha-kilat-ilegal-iha-sivil-nia-liman-%E2%96%A0-difisil-identifika-kilat-lakon/>

The PNTL recognizes that intelligence services have made additional efforts to track down the lost weapons. However, it is difficult to identify the guns and there is little collaboration or intelligence sharing between local communities and the police. Therefore the PNTL has asked communities to work together to give information about the weapons that remain missing.¹²

Illegal weapons

Speaking to national media, F-FDTL General Chief of Staff Major General Lere Anan Timur stated that illegal weapons from Atambua, West Timor have entered Timor-Leste. Nevertheless, these weapons' true location has yet to be identified. Lere asked all citizens to collaborate and hand over the arms to the PNTL and F-FDTL.¹³

With regards to this weapons trafficking, Border Patrol Unit (UPF) Commander PNTL Police Superintendent João Belo stated that the UPF received information about illegal weapons from Atambua being sold by ex-militiamen from West Timor who enter Timor-Leste in order to supply their basis needs.¹⁴ But there is little clarity about the current location of these illegal weapons or about who possesses them.

In addition to automatic weapons from Atambua, other non-automatic weapons—commonly called air rifles—also entered across the border in 2017, accompanied by their ammunition. These weapons entered Timor-Leste via illegal business activities on the frontier conducted by Timorese citizens and individuals from Atambua. Some of these weapons have been identified by FM and are depicted in Figure 01 below.

Figure 01: Non-automatic “Air Rifles”



¹² GMN TV, 17 January 2018. Available here: <http://gmntv.tl/id/justica-e-seguranca/2018/01/somotxo-laiha-kilat-ilegal-ih-a-sivil-nia-liman-%E2%96%A0-difisil-identifika-kilat-lakon/>

¹³ GMN TV, 12 November 2017. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rafGsx7LHFE>

¹⁴ Statement by Komandante UPF Police Superintendent João Belo in meeting about national security with the Minister of State and Councillor for National Security and entities for security affairs in the Palace of Government. 20 February 2018.

FM also determined that these weapons entered with ammunition marked *DYNAMIT NOBEL TROIS DOR'T GERMANY BLACK SNIPER 4,5 mm 1,77 CALIBRE*. The bullets were categorized according to two different qualities (number one and number two), which were sold at different prices (number one's price was US \$1.00 and number two's price was US \$1.50). This ammunition is shown in Figure 02 below.

Figure 02: BULLETS Dynamit Novel Trois Dor't Germany Black Sniper 4,5 mm 1,77 Calibre



The weapons depicted above have spread across the country and FM's monitoring noted that in rural areas some communities use them for hunting. FM is concerned that this practice entails serious risks, as well as the possibility that these weapons could be used to practice crime. A case in Taibessi, Dili in 2017 confirmed this possibility, when one person died during a gang confrontation because he was shot by an air rifle.¹⁵

Furthermore, a case also occurred in Manufahi in 2016, where F-FDTL members confiscated a weapon with 30 bullets from three citizens. It was determined that the weapons and ammunition were purchased from abroad, not from the PNTL or F-FDTL.¹⁶ Another incident occurred in Lautem District, where veteran Renan Selak confiscated a pistol on 19 June 2017 from a civilian on a motorcycle who had threatened people at a cockfighting location. The weapon was delivered to the PNTL. It was determined that this pistol originally belonged to UNPOL and was lost in 2003.¹⁷

¹⁵ RTTL-ep, 4 October 2017. Available here: <http://rttlep.tl/id/radio-news/2017/10/konfrontu-ihha-mercado-taibesi-ema-ida-Dead>

¹⁶ Hallo Online, 4 October 2016. Available here: <http://hallo.tl/kilat-prende-ihha-manufahi-hola-husi-rai-liur/>

¹⁷ Tatoli: News Agency of Timor-Leste, 22 June 2017. Available here: <http://www.tatoli.tl/2017/06/pistola-ida-dezarma-ihha-lospalos-forsa-nepal-nian/>

Finally, the Scientific Police for Criminal Investigations (PSIK) confiscated two containers at the Dili Port on 26 February 2018. These containers held 50 tons of *Ammonium Nitrate Phosphate* imported from China. Suspicions arose that this material was intended for bomb production. According to Special Police Unit (UEP) Commander PNTL Superintendent Police Chief Afonso dos Santos, it is a sensitive and dangerous substance. When combined with other products, it can be turned into a bomb. This case is currently being investigated. The suspects in this case are two Timorese citizens, another individual from Indonesia, and the manager of the business that imported these materials.¹⁸

Access to weapons in Timor-Leste

FM's monitoring on social media noted various photographs posted by F-FDTL and PNTL members depicting civilians holding weapons. Even if these photos merely depict people posing, FM is concerned about how these individuals were able to access the firearms.

Figure 03: A child holding a rifle from the F-FDTL



When the above photograph spread on social media, it met with widespread condemnation, including from ex-State Secretary for Defence Dr. Julio Tomas Pinto, who on his Facebook page wrote:

“This weapon is called a M4. It is a new generation of the M16 from the United States of America. In order to buy these weapons, since 2009, 2012 the State Secretary of Defence and the F-FDTL vigorously lobbied the American Embassy and developed storage facilities and the capacity to manage these weapons. Because at the time they said that Timor-Leste does not yet have storage facilities and lacked the management capacity for weapons. But finally we got authorization to buy M4 weapons from America and Malaysia, and they told us we fulfilled the criteria. Because since 2006,

¹⁸ GMN TV, 27 February 2018. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwZXvLU52hQ>

Timor-Leste had been on the black list for USA military equipment. But what is going on now? You all can see this photograph. I myself am very sad with this unprofessional behaviour. I believe that when the USA finds out about the behaviour in this photograph, they will no longer authorize us to buy their weapons.

The concerns expressed by the ex-State Secretary for Defence are extremely pertinent to both the F-FDTL and the PNTL. Both must conduct high-quality management of the weapons in their arsenals. Purchasing military equipment requires fulfilling various criteria, especially around the management of weapons. Consequently, F-FDTL and PNTL weapons should not be used randomly. Even if this photograph is merely posing, it still harms our nation.

FM also saw photos on Facebook in which adult civilians pose with weapons. FM does not know where these weapons were obtained, whether abroad or within Timor-Leste. Nevertheless, this raises a serious question: how were they accessed?

Figure 04: Two people with large weapons



Firearms are not toys. FM emphasizes that when guns are in civilians' hands, especially those of small children, disaster looms. Accidents can happen. Wielding weapons requires training, and allowing small children to play with guns can lead to tragic consequences. Furthermore, showing weapons to children and carrying them in the house is risky and children may try to play with them in the absence of supervision. FM once again demands that the PNTL and F-FDTL exercise strong control over their arsenals. FM also asks commanders to take serious measures and punish and arrest members that allow civilians to borrow their weapons or uniforms.



Effects of weapons

On 6 May 2017 a young man died because he was shot, allegedly by PNTL officers that intervened in a confrontation between two groups in Bebonuk, Dili. This young man died in the PNTL operation and the investigation into this case is now complete. Nonetheless, the weapons and suspects involved in this case have yet to be identified.

On 12 May 2017 an unknown person in a car shot and wounded a young man in Praia dos Coqueiros, Dili. The source of the weapon is still unknown, and the suspects in this case remain unidentified. It was suspected that PNTL weapons were used because the shots came from a car without licence plates but with the initials of the PNTL's Close Protection Unit (CSP) written on the side.¹⁹

FM's monitoring recorded an event in 2017 in which an unknown armed person fired at a home in Manleuana, Dili on 31 December 2017.²⁰ A similar case occurred in Colmera, Dili where an unknown person shot and wounded a child in December 2017.²¹ From these two cases it is difficult to identify the guns' origin. One other incident happened at Taibessi Market in 2017 between two groups, during which one person died due to shots fired by another group's air rifle.²²

Another incident occurred in Suku Casa, Ainaro District, in November 2017, when a confrontation broke out between two groups and the PNTL fired shots at the location in order to restore order. Consequently one person injured by the PNTL members' shots fainted and died.²³

Furthermore, the Special Police Unit (UEP) of the PNTL shot one young person in the leg when intervening against groups involved in a confrontation in Fatuhada, Dili in November 2017.²⁴ Another case occurred in Ainaro District when a PNTL member shot and wounded an F-FDTL member in 26 August 2016.²⁵ Another person died in Cova Lima from gunfire from a Border Patrol Unit (UPF) member during an operation in 3 August 2016.²⁶ Finally another two cases occurred in Lautem District and in the Oecussi Administrative Region where F-FDTL members fired warning shots at PNTL personnel in 2016.²⁷

¹⁹ Jornal Independente, 17 May 2017.

²⁰ GMN TV, 2 January 2018

²¹ GMN TV, 4 January 2018.

²² RTTL-ep, 4 October 2017. Available here: <http://rttlep.tl/id/radio-news/2017/10/konfrontu-ihha-mercado-taibesi-ema-ida-Dead>

²³ GMN TV, 7 November 2017. Available here: <http://gmntv.tl/id/justica-e-seguranca/2017/11/membru-pntl-tiru-arbiru-haDead-komunidade-ida-ihha-ainaro/>

²⁴ GMN TV, 21 November 2017

²⁵ PNTL and F-FDTL Press Release on 27 August 2016. Available here: <https://www.pntl.tl/konferensia-imprensa-komandante-jeral-polisia-nasional-timor-leste-pntl-relasiona-ho-kazu-neebe-involve-oknum-pntl-ho-f-ftdl/>

²⁶ Fundasaun Mahein Press Release, 8 August 2016.

²⁷ Timor Now cited Tatoli: New Agency of Timor-Leste, on 9 November 2016. Available here: <https://timornow.blogspot.com/2016/11/ler-kondena-oknum-f-ftdl-ameasa-membru.html?m=1>

Table 01: Victims from weapons in 2017

No.	Consequences	Location	Year	Total
1.	Dead	Bebonuk, Dili	2017	1
2.	Dead	Taibessi, Dili	2017	1
3.	Dead	Casa, Ainaro	2017	1
4.	Dead	Cova Lima	2016	1
5.	Wounded	Praia dos Coqueiros, Dili	2017	1
6.	Wounded	Colmera, Dili	2017	1
7.	Wounded	Fauhada, Dili	2017	1
8.	House damaged	Manleuana, Dili	2017	1
9.	Hunting wild animal	Manufahi	2017	1
10.	Threatening gunfire	Lautem	2016	1
11.	Threatening gunfire	Oecussi	2016	1
Total				11

Sources: Results of Fundasaun Mahein's Research 2017-2018

Furthermore the effects of these illegal weapons include harming protected animals in Timor-Leste. FM received information from communities in Viqueque, Manufahi, and Manatuto that some groups ride in cars and hunt wild animals such as deer and buffalo. These groups are hard to identify, but they use guns to hunt.

In one case in August 2017, community members in Manufahi district captured five individuals and subsequently delivered them to the PNTL because they were using a 12-calibre gun and five air rifles to hunt wild animals. The PNTL confiscated three cars and a deer shot dead during the hunt.²⁸

Recommendations

1. FM recommends that the PNTL and the F-FDTL use the intelligence services to continue searching for the weapons lost during the 2006 Crisis and for illegal weapons that have spread throughout the country.
2. FM recommends that the PNTL and the F-FDTL fix their internal mechanisms regarding the management and use of their arsenals.
3. The PNTL and the F-FDTL must take rigorous measures against members who use weapons unnecessarily and strengthen procedures around the use of weapons.

²⁸ RTTL-ep, 21 August 2017. Available here: <http://rttlep.tl/radio-news/2017/08/polisia-kaptura-ema-sivil-lori-kilat>



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