



Fundasaun Mahein, 9 October 2023

Press Release

Report to Committee B of National Parliament on Defence, Security and Foreign Affairs Priorities in the Proposed General State Budget for 2024

In this report, FM has identified several areas which we consider to be particularly important for driving the development of the defence sector, in line with the IX Government's stated aim to "Review and update the "Force Strategic Study - 2020" and redefine the development and consolidation plans of the F-FDTL, in what is still necessary until the construction of the structuring documents of the Strategic Defence and Military Planning". The policy mentioned above is also aimed at strengthening the capacity of the naval component of F-FDTL related to defence, surveillance, control and oversight of maritime and port activities under the scope of the Maritime Authority of Timor-Leste. The latter are particularly important for preventing illegal activities in the southern sea of Timor-Leste (Tasi Mane) such as illegal fishing. This is highlighted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' 2022 report which found that Timor-Leste loses around \$300 million in revenue due to illegal fishing activities each year. FM also suggests to the Ministry of Defence to continue providing training to strengthen the capacity of the armed forces to support the civilian population during natural disasters and other emergency situations under the scope of the integrated national security system.

In relation to internal security, FM suggests evaluating, revising and updating the Internal Security Strategic Plan (PESI) 2030, so that it conforms to current challenges related to internal security and civil protection. In 2024, in addition to revising PESI 2030, FM suggests that the Ministry of Interior prioritises the elaboration of the National Security Policy (NSP), which should have been developed during Phase I and II of PESI 2030. FM also recommends that the Government continue to prioritise the PNTL Strategic Plan, as mentioned in PESI 2030. As outlined in this study, community policing must continue as the central philosophy and strategy underpinning PNTL's operations. The Strategic Plan also introduced the VIP concept (visibility, involvement, professionalism), which has become the main doctrine of PNTL.

With regards to intelligence services, government must invest in cybersecurity and cybernetic intelligence, as in today's globalised world, all systems including governance systems are becoming digitalised. It is therefore important for all security institutions, particularly intelligence services to be adapted to these realities. This is even more relevant given that the submarine

cable project will soon be constructed, meaning that the state must guarantee the security of this essential infrastructure.

Based on FM's observations, the Government should revise the Law on Organisation of Criminal Investigation (LOIC) and invest in building PNTL's capacity in the area of criminal investigation. FM views LOIC as likely to provoke further institutional fragility and rivalry between the two police institutions. Therefore, FM supports government programs to reform PCIC, including by placing it under the command of PNTL, with the objective of increasing its capacity for actions related to prevention, detection and investigation of crimes. It is also important to invest in laboratories and scientific equipment while increasing training of PNTL in the area of criminal investigations.

Finally, an important document related to the external or foreign policies of Timor-Leste is the Foreign Policy White Paper. However, during the last twenty years, this document has not yet been elaborated. Therefore, FM suggests that MNEC prioritise the development and approval of this document. At the same time, number of Timorese going to work abroad continues to rise, and the government must therefore prioritise protection for Timorese living and working abroad. This requires strengthening Timor-Leste's diplomatic services stationed abroad to provide protection and assistance, as this is a right which the state must guarantee.

Recommendations

FM recommends to Committee B of the National Parliament and the IX Government to prioritise strategic issues related to defence, security and foreign affairs, including the elaboration and development of:

1. National Security Policy
2. National Defence Policy
3. Foreign Policy White Paper
4. Internal Security Strategic Plan
5. PNTL Strategic Plan

We also recommend that the National Parliament revise LOIC and reform PCIC, including by placing it under the command of PNTL, while investing in laboratories and scientific equipment and increasing training of PNTL in the area of criminal investigations.

Investment is also needed to strengthen PNTL capacity to conduct patrols and collect information to identify and prevent activities which contribute to crime. Similarly, the intelligence services require investments to increase their capacity to collect and analyse data, and to boost cybernetic intelligence and security capabilities of the National Intelligence System.

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