



REPUBLIKADEMOCRATICA DE TIMOR LESTE
PROVEDORIA DOS DIREITUS HUMANUS E JUSTIÇA
Estrada de Caicoli Dili, Timor Leste



25 August 2014

PRESS RELEASE 27 August 2014

The Provedoria for Human Rights and Justice in Timor Leste has submitted its Report on its cooperation with the KOMNAS-HAM (the Indonesian National Committee for Human Rights) on the Timorese Children separated from their parents during the 1975-1999 conflicts to the National Parliament

The Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos e Justiça (PDHJ) has submitted its report concerning Timorese children separated from their parents during the 1975 to 1999 conflict. The PDHJ submitted its report to the Prime Minister, the President of the National Parliament and the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL) last week.

The report was presented by the PDHJ as a result of a cooperative agreement signed between the PDHJ and the national human rights institution of Indonesia, KOMNAS-HAM in 2011. The national human rights institutions of Timor Leste and Indonesia have been cooperating around the issue of forced disappearance, particularly of children who became separated from their parents during the 1975-1999 conflict in Timor Leste. The agreement between the two institutions also included action centering on joint monitoring of the border areas as well as capacity building for the staff of PDHJ and KOMNAS-HAM of Indonesia.

Dr. Sebastião Dias Ximenes, the Provedor of the PDHJ, said that the objective of the cooperation between the PDHJ and KOMNAS-HAM is to search for the children who were taken from Timor-Leste to Indonesia by Indonesians during the 1975-1999 conflict. The Provedor emphasized that the report is not an attempt to force those people to return to Timor-Leste but to facilitate a reunion with their families in Timor-Leste.

The Provedor explained that some of the children were separated from their families as a consequence of the conflict and others became separated because their parents were killed by Indonesian troops during the military occupation of Timor-Leste. During the PDHJ's official visit

to KOMNAS-HAM, the PDHJ received a list of the disappeared people that KOMNAS-HAM had already obtained from its partners. After cross-checking the list against information sources in Timor-Leste, the PDHJ investigation revealed that most of the names in the list given by KOMNAS-HAM could not be considered as disappeared people because they have already returned to Timor-Leste. Others have already been in contact with their families but are unable to return to Timor-Leste due to financial constraints.

When collecting information from KOMNAS-HAM, the PDHJ identified that there are still many Timorese people living in Indonesia who have no contact with their families in Timor-Leste.

The Provedor then revealed some of the challenges faced by the PDHJ in implementing the agreement between the PDHJ and the KOMNAS-HAM to find out the exact number of the Timorese children taken by the Indonesian people during the 1975-1999 conflict. KOMNAS-HAM does not have complete information or a list of the number of the children taken by the Indonesian people from Timor-Leste during the conflict. Also, many of those children who are still missing have had their names changed since moving to Indonesia. For these reasons, it has been difficult for the PDHJ to identify these children based on the information obtained from their parents in Timor-Leste. Another reason is that many children who were taken to Indonesia during the conflict period, have since become adults and have had families themselves.

The Provedor explained that one of the limitations of the PDHJ investigation is that there is no complete list on the exact number of the children taken from Timor-Leste by the Indonesian people. Following recent monitoring activity, the PDHJ has obtained information about a further 18 disappeared people from Village Chiefs and has tried to contact and meet the representatives of the International Red Cross in Dili concerning these missing persons.

Regarding the budget, the Provedor said that there is insufficient budget allocated for the adequate implementation of this agreement done with the KOMNAS-HAM. The PDHJ and KOMNAS-HAM will need to monitor numerous locations in order to uncover clear information on the Timorese children taken from Timor-Leste during the period of conflict between Timor-Leste and Indonesia from 1975 to 1999.

For more information, please contact Sra. Lady Ximenes or Sr. José Tefa via Tlf. 333 10701, Department of Public Relations – PDHJ

