



## The United Nations Hands Over Power to Timor-Leste

**Dili/New York**– The final batch of United Nations peacekeepers is expected to complete its withdraw from Timor-Leste in December, another demonstration of the international community's support for Asia's newest nation.

"By the 15th of December there will be no UN police (peacekeepers) left in the country," the UN said. The head of the UN mission, Finn Reske-Nielsen, said that under the peacekeepers' guidance the Timorese police had "made significant progress" in many areas.

● ● ●

**"As the UN now reduces its footprint in the country, you are continuing to set a global example of how to successfully emerge from conflict to lasting peace," said UN Sec. General Ban Ki Moon**

● ● ●

In March 2011, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (as it is formally known) handed some responsibilities to the Timorese police and has since focused on training instead of frontline duties. The current UN deployment, which arrived in 2006, began withdrawing in earnest this

month in line with a timetable to leave by the end of the year. The largest batch will leave in November with the last of the peacekeepers due to depart in December, Reske-Nielsen has said. At its peak, the mission had 1600 peacekeepers.

Timor-Leste -- a country of 1.1 million in Southeast Asia -- has recorded impressive gains since becoming independent. Rich in natural gas and oil, Timor-Leste celebrated a decade of formal independence after a 24-year occupation and is one of the fastest growing economies in the region.

## A Timeline of the United Nations in Timor-Leste

**1999:** Timor-Leste voted for independence from Indonesia in 1999.

**2002:** Timor-Leste became a fully independent state. From 2002-2006, three UN missions in Timor-Leste (UNAMET, UNTAET, and UNMISSET) successfully complete their mandates to support the government. Following these peacekeeping missions, a UN political mission, UNOTIL, was implemented from 2005 to 2006 that supported infrastructure development.

**2006:** The UN Security Council Resolution 1704 established the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT)



**2008:** After a coup attempt in February 2008, the Timor-Leste government requested a UN police force.

## The Future of the Bilateral Relationship After the UN Withdrawal Looks Positive

by Ambassador H.E. Constancio Pinto

It is a question that I am often asked: What will be the future of the bilateral relationship after the UN withdrawal?

My answer: Stronger than ever.

Timor-Leste enjoys a permanent partnership with the United States. We are grateful to the United Nations for supporting our government as we shifted from a post-conflict zone to an strengthening economy in the fastest growing regions in the world. Our relationship with the UN and the U.S. remains a cornerstone due to our shared values of democracy, human rights, peace and stability.

The new government and continued furthering democratic governance, facilitating political dialogue, fostering socioeconomic cohesion, strengthening the security sector, promoting an effective judiciary system and seeking new ways to promote leadership among our youth.

The U.S. and Timor-Leste shared democratic values and our most recent elections demonstrate our commitment to peace, stability, social cohesion and empowerment.

During our last election, for example, women's participation increased. The elections consisted of 12 candidate, two of whom were women. The UN and civil society organizations held roundtable discussions on women's leadership that helped prepare women for political life. Women's participation in the election before last reached 32.1%, even higher than the U.S. Together, Timor-Leste, the United Nations and United States have been focused reducing poverty and spurring development. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton underscored this point in her most recent visit. It was just 10 years when this small island became its own country and political pundits quickly declared us a failed state.

Today, I walk around the streets of Dili, and I talk to young Timorese who are eager to join public service, study or become entrepreneurs. They remember the sacrifices of their elders and family members, but they more focused on the future. When I hear their optimism, I become all the more sure that we are headed in the right direction and will continue that way.

### *A Timeline of the United Nations in Timor-Leste*

**July 2012:** Peaceful, free and fair parliamentary elections were held in Timor-Leste, with voting overseen by a reported 586 international observers from 33 international organizations and an additional 2,618 Timorese observers.

**2012:** the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2037 in February to extend its mandate until December 31.



**October 2012:** Prime Minister Gusmão wrote to the UN Secretary-General appreciating past support and stating, "Timor-Leste no longer requires United Nations support through the presence of a United Nations mission, either peacekeeping or political, beyond the end of 2012."

**December 2012:** The UN plans a full withdrawal.