



**UNITAET**  
**UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN EAST TIMOR**  
**Nasoens Unidas Nia Administrasaun Tranzisional Iha Timor Lorosa'e**

**Office of Communication and Public Information**

**FACT SHEET**

**TRANSITION OF FALINTIL INTO EAST TIMOR DEFENCE FORCE**

- On 12 September 2000, the East Timor Transitional Cabinet approved the establishment of a National Defence Force based on one of three options put forward in the Independent Study on a Security Force for East Timor conducted last August by the Centre for Defence Studies of the King's College of London.
- The new Defence Force will consist of a light infantry force of 1,500 regulars with a phased approach to reach that number over three years, and 1,500 reservists, with Falintil as the core of the force. The framework of the new force has been approved by the CNRT, Falintil and the East Timor Transitional Cabinet. The first battalion will be composed entirely of Falintil. The recruitment and selection process was completed on 28 January 2001. Six hundred and fifty Falintil members have been selected for the first battalion. For the next battalion, recruitment will be open to all Timorese above the age of 18, including women.
- The mission of the Defence Force is to provide for the military defence of East Timor, its people and territory, by stopping militia incursions and deterring aggressors. In addition, it would provide assistance during natural disasters and other emergencies.
- At an international conference with 12 donor countries last November, Portugal and Australia committed themselves to act as lead nations in the provision of initial training of the future East Timor Defence Force.
- The training of the first batch of 250 former Falintil members is due to start on the first week of February in Aileu. The basic training will take 12 weeks and will be conducted by Portugal. Specialist training will be conducted by Australia. The objective is to have one battalion equipped and trained by the time of East Timor's independence.
- The Defence Force will be subordinated to the civil authority. For the duration of UNTAET's mandate, the Transitional Administrator will have command and control

of the defence force, the authority to appoint and dismiss the Chief of the Defence Force and to appoint its officers.

- The current Falintil weapons will be stored under Defence Force guard and are expected to be put on display in a future resistance museum. For the training, donated weapons will be used.
- A World Bank and USAID funded program, the Falintil Reinsertion Assistance Programme, was launched last month to help former Falintil fighters who will not take part in the new Defence Force to settle back into civilian life and to resume or start an activity that will enable them to support themselves and their families. The program is implemented by the International Organization for Migration and will be supervised by UNTAET.
- The Office of Defence Force Development (ODFD) within ETTA will oversee and coordinate all activities related to the development of the Defence Force as well as bilateral and multilateral relations.
- The United Nations Peacekeeping Force will be responsible for the defence and security of East Timor until independence, after which arrangements will be made by the new Government and the UN for safeguarding the country's security, until the East Timor Defence Force is in a position to do so.

*Dili, 1 February 2001*