



## *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*

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Department of Political Affairs - Security Council Affairs Division  
Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch

### **18. The situation in Timor-Leste**

#### **Overview**

During the period under review, the Security Council held five meetings in connection with the situation in Timor-Leste, including one closed meeting with the troop-contributing countries,<sup>1</sup> and adopted one resolution and one presidential statement. The Council received briefings from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and Head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), the President of Timor-Leste, as well as the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of UNMIT. The Council focused on the efforts to transfer the functions of UNMIT to the Timorese authorities in preparation for the Mission's withdrawal at the end of 2012, on the preparations for the presidential and parliamentary elections due in the first half of 2012, on the downsizing process of UNMIT's police component after the elections and on the role of the United Nations in the country following the departure of the Mission. There were no meetings on this item in 2013.

On 23 February 2012, the Council extended the mandate of UNMIT<sup>2</sup> until the end of that year and endorsed the Secretary-General's plan of its phased drawdown.<sup>3</sup> In line with the Secretary-General's recommendation, UNMIT was terminated on 19 December 2012.<sup>4</sup> The Council also went on a mission to Timor-Leste from 3 to 6 November 2012.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [S/PV.6714](#)

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see part X, sect. I, with regard on the mandate of UNMIT.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution [2037 \(2012\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [S/PRST/2012/27](#)

<sup>5</sup> For information on the Security Council mission to East Timor, see present part, sect. 34, with regard to Security Council missions; and part VI, sect. II, with regard to Investigation of disputes and fact-finding.

The table at the end of the section lists the meetings at which this item was considered, and gives information on, inter alia, invitees, speakers and decisions adopted.

### **Briefing on transition planning and final renewal of UNMIT mandate**

On 22 February 2012, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIT reported that Timor-Leste had made significant strides in advancing peace and stability and that in the light of the overall stable situation, the closing of UNMIT continued to be planned for the end of 2012 and the post-2012 engagement of the United Nations in the country was already being discussed. She provided an overview of the preparations for the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held on 17 March and late June 2012 respectively, and the operational support provided by UNMIT in this context. Regarding the transition of UNMIT, the Special Representative commended the efforts by the Government and the Mission in advancing the implementation of the Joint Transition Plan, noting that the main challenge was to ensure that institutions taking on new responsibilities had sufficient capacity and funding to carry them out effectively.<sup>6</sup>

The President of Timor-Leste informed the Council that after a number of initiatives had been taken by his Office to address the root causes of the 2006 crisis, peace was palpable in Timor-Leste. While acknowledging that too much remained to be realized, he stated that the country would not have come that far without the generous assistance of the United Nations through UNMIT, specialized agencies and programmes, as well as of their bilateral partners and neighbours. In his statement, he outlined the main achievements in the ten years since becoming an independent country, in different areas including human, social and economic development, good governance and human rights. He underscored UNMIT's contributions since its establishment in 2006, especially in the areas of good offices and public security and policing. He declared that by the end of 2012, the goal was to see peacekeeping come to a close and to form a new partnership with the United Nations, underpinned by a modest mission tailored to the specific needs and priorities of Timor-Leste, to be decided by the newly elected Government. In that regard, he said that a High-level Committee on Transition chaired by himself with the support of the Prime Minister and the Special Representative had been established; the emerging consensus was that the United

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<sup>6</sup> [S/PV.6720](#), pp. 2-4.

Nations role could include support to further enhance democratic institutions, capacity-building of the security sector institutions, in particular the Polícia Nacional de Timor-Leste (PNTL), and continued support in areas such as governance, justice and human rights.<sup>7</sup>

Speakers generally welcomed the continued overall progress and stability attained in Timor-Leste and agreed that a successful electoral process in 2012 would be critical to ensure a smooth transition from peacekeeping to a post-conflict peacebuilding phase. Several speakers expressed their support to the Joint Transition Plan as a positive example of collaboration between the Government of Timor-Leste and UNMIT, agreeing that the format of the future United Nations engagement in the country must be guided and owned by the newly elected Timorese Government.<sup>8</sup>

### **Briefing on the concluding work of UNMIT and consideration of the transition and post-Mission periods**

On 12 November 2012, the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIT stated that the end of peacekeeping operations in Timor-Leste was justified by the successful completion of critical benchmarks in the course of that year. Most notably, the full reconstitution of the PNTL on 31 October had been an acknowledgment that it was fully capable of conducting all police functions throughout the country, and thus had marked the beginning of the drawdown of UNMIT's personnel. The other major event had been the conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections, on the basis of which a new Government was formed and in which a political opposition had space to operate in line with democratic principles.<sup>9</sup> While stating that UNMIT's phased drawdown had been moving apace for the withdrawal on 31 December, the Acting Special Representative acknowledged that work on the investigations into cases relating to crimes against humanity and other serious crimes committed in 1999 would not be completed by the end of the Mission's mandate. He stressed however that Timor-Leste still faced many challenges, but stated his opinion that a peacekeeping mission was no longer best placed to support efforts to meet those challenges. The Acting Special Representative concluded by saying that the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 10 (South Africa); p. 11 (India); p. 12 (United Kingdom); p. 13 (Portugal); p. 15 (United States); p.18 (Azerbaijan); p. 18 (Guatemala); p.20 (China);p. 21 (Germany); p. 22 (Pakistan); p. 25 (Brazil); p. 27 (Australia); p.31 (New Zealand).

<sup>9</sup> See [S/2012/736](#), annex.

Government had expressed its wish for an innovative working relationship with the United Nations after the closure of UNMIT and that the priorities concerning development and institution-building in Timor-Leste would require the continued commitment of the international community.<sup>10</sup>

The Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste highlighted the country's developments in different areas such as health, education, multi-party democracy, participation of women and economic development. He noted that the Timorese Government had instituted critical reforms in the security and defense sectors, established new institutions, including an independent civil service commission and an anti-corruption commission, and strengthened the justice sector with the aim of promoting good governance and the rule of law. Acknowledging that Timor-Leste's success was also that of the United Nations and of the international community, he stated that, as a Member of the United Nations, Timor-Leste would continue to share its experience and lessons learned, as they were doing through the Group of Seven Plus, and continue to contribute in a modest way to United Nations missions and agencies.<sup>11</sup>

Speakers generally saluted the continuous progress made towards achieving a secure and stable political situation in the country as evidenced by the successful presidential and parliamentary elections, with results accepted and legitimacy endorsed by all parties. In that regard, several speakers welcomed the full reconstitution of the PNTL, which had proved to be capable of ensuring domestic security.<sup>12</sup> Some speakers acknowledged that the Security Council mission sent to Timor-Leste from 3 to 6 November had been a timely opportunity for first-hand verification of the progress achieved.<sup>13</sup> Regarding the contours of a United Nations presence in the country following the departure of UNMIT, most speakers expressed their support for the request by the Timorese Government for a post-UNMIT innovative working relationship of cooperation with the United Nations, focusing on institutional strengthening

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<sup>10</sup> [S/PV.6859](#), pp. 2-5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.5-7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7 (South Africa); p. 10 (Russian Federation); p. 11 (Azerbaijan); p. 12 (Guatemala); p. 15 (China); p. 19 (United States); p. 20 (France); p. 20 (India); p. 21 (Brazil); p. 25 (New Zealand); p. 26 (Australia).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7 (South Africa); p. 9 (Togo); p. 9 (Morocco); p. 11 (Russian Federation); p. 11 (Azerbaijan); p. 16 (Portugal); p. 18 (Pakistan); p. 20 (India); pp. 23-24 (Mozambique, as the Chair of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries); p. 26 (Australia).

and development.<sup>14</sup> In that context, some speakers expressed favourable views on the removal of Timor-Leste from the agenda of the Security Council.<sup>15</sup>

### **Presidential statement preceding the departure of UNMIT**

By a presidential statement<sup>16</sup> of 19 December 2012, the Security Council, in the context of the completion of UNMIT's mandate on 31 December 2012, recognized the important contribution of the Mission in promoting peace, stability and development in Timor-Leste, including through its work to strengthen the capacity of PNTL. Applauding the Government and all Timorese for their steadfast collaboration and partnership with UNMIT and the United Nations Country Team since the establishment of the Mission, the Council noted that the Government of Timor-Leste had indicated that the United Nations would continue to be an important partner in the new phase of the development of the nation.

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<sup>14</sup> p. 8 (South Africa); p. 10 (Togo); p. 11 (Azerbaijan); p. 14 (Colombia); p. 16 (Portugal); p. 18 (Pakistan); p. 19 (United States); p. 22 (Brazil); p. 25 (New Zealand); p. 25 (Australia).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8 (South Africa); p. 11 (Russian Federation); p. 18 (Pakistan); p. 20 (France); p. 21 (India).

<sup>16</sup> [S/PRST/2012/27](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/12/S/PRST/2012/27.html)

### Meetings: the situation in Timor-Leste

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
<a href="#">S/PV.6720</a> 22 February 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) ( <a href="#">S/2012/43</a> )		Angola <sup>a</sup> , Australia, Brazil, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Timor-Leste (President)	Special Representative of the Secretary- General for Timor-Leste and Head of UNMIT, Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation	All Council members and all invitees	
<a href="#">S/PV.6721</a> 23 February 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIT ( <a href="#">S/2012/43</a> )	Draft resolution submitted by 12 Member States <sup>b</sup> ( <a href="#">S/2012/106</a> )	Australia, Brazil, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand		United Kingdom	Resolution <a href="#">2037 (2012)</a> 15-0-0
<a href="#">S/PV.6859</a> 12 November 2012	Report of the Secretary-General on UNMIT ( <a href="#">S/2012/765</a> )		Australia, Brazil, Japan, Mozambique <sup>c</sup> , New Zealand, Timor-Leste (Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation)	Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of UNMIT, Deputy Head of the European Union Delegation	All Council members and all invitees	
<a href="#">S/PV.6892</a> 19 December 2012			Timor-Leste			<a href="#">S/PRST/2012/27</a>

<sup>a</sup> Angola spoke on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP): Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste.

<sup>b</sup> Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>c</sup> Mozambique spoke on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP): Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor-Leste.