



UNHCR's Emergency Response to the IDP Situation in Timor Leste

Supplementary Appeal



Some 65,000 people have fled their homes in Dili and sought refuge next to churches, convents, clinics, schools and other sites/ UNHCR/S.Martins/June 2006

June 2006

INTRODUCTION

The crisis in Timor-Leste was brought on by a dispute between the Government and soldiers in the army (F-FDTL) from the western part of the country claiming that they had suffered discrimination in promotion policies and ill-treatment at the hands of officers from the east of the country. A peaceful demonstration at the Office of the President, staged by the 594 plaintiffs, gained momentum and eventually spiraled into violence as other political entities and youth groups with different grievances with the Government joined in.

The ensuing riots and mob violence, including involvement of the F-FDTL, various youth gangs and the police, spread throughout the capital. The riots were followed by the disappearance of the police off the streets and a state of absence of law and order in Dili, where communal fighting between westerners and easterners, as well as lootings and burning of houses and government buildings have continued to date. In fear and panic, some 100,000 IDPs fled from their homes to churches, schools and other places either in Dili or in neighboring districts.

Security in the country has deteriorated significantly over the past few weeks. The looting and violent attacks in Dili triggered the dispatch of international military forces, upon request by the national authorities, to patrol the city. Many of the IDP camps, most of which sprang up spontaneously near religious facilities, or other sites in the city perceived to be safe, and which have been in existence since the end of April, are overcrowded with very poor sanitation. The displaced, women, children and the elderly in particular, are clearly at greatest risk in such conditions. The security situation in a number of the camps is also precarious and there is a concern that violence could erupt amongst the IDPs. Since almost all economic activities have come to a standstill, the population in general, including the IDPs, is in dire need of humanitarian assistance.



IDPs at a make shift camp in Dili/ UNHCR/S.Martins/June 2006

POPULATION OF CONCERN

The breakdown of the population of concern, according to the UN Flash Appeal is estimated at over 100,000 persons comprised of 65,000 IDPs in and around Dili and 35,000 in the Districts. Recent estimations from the Inter Agency Humanitarian Assistance Group indicate a greater number of IDPs in both Dili and the Districts. Out of this, UNHCR's intervention will focus on 30,000 identified vulnerable IDPs, with special emphasis on women and children living in camps.

UNHCR'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

In light of the deteriorating situation in Timor-Leste, President Xanana Gusmao requested that UNHCR assist in the Government's efforts to improve the conditions of the IDPs. The Special Representative of the Secretary General in Dili also requested UNHCR's support as part of the overall response by the UN Country Team. The High Commissioner decided on UNHCR's participation in the inter-agency joint emergency response on 30 May 2006, while taking into account the Office's past experience in the country in bringing back a total of some 225,000 refugees from Indonesia. Prior to this new crisis, UNHCR had phased down its activities and presence to a minimum, focusing only on limited protection activities and building capacity in the government to fulfill its obligations under the 1951 Convention to which Timor-Leste acceded in 2003.

On 30 May, UNHCR dispatched an Assessment

Team from Indonesia to Timor-Leste. Following their recommendation for a UNHCR involvement, this was quickly followed by an Emergency Response Team on 5 June to take care of the initially identified priority needs. Following consultation with the Government of Timor-Leste, the UN Country Team and NGO partners on the ground, as well as other key actors, UNHCR will focus its emergency interventions at this stage on protection and provision of shelter and non-food items. The Office aims to provide assistance to some 30,000 IDPs primarily in Dili and also in nearby districts, in particular to those identified as most vulnerable, namely women, children and the elderly.

The Office has been working with the Government and other stakeholders to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to protection and assistance for the affected population. The President has issued an Action Plan comprised of several measures and activities to resolve the current crisis. The plan includes the creation of a Crisis Cabinet and calls for cooperation with humanitarian agencies, including UNHCR. In addition, contacts have been made with members of the Government, including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour, who have expressed their full support for UNHCR's programme in Timor-Leste.

An inter-agency humanitarian aid coordination group was established in Dili to plan and coordinate humanitarian assistance and activities, which include the UNCT and international and local NGOs, under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Community Reinsertion.

UNHCR has been requested to take the lead in the coordination of the Protection Working Group, which was established locally, and actively participates in the Camp Management and Non-Food Items Working Groups. The Office will work closely with the ICRC, IOM and other actors in the areas of IDP camp management and coordination. A focal point agency has already been assigned to most of the existing sites, and sectoral working groups have been established under the overall supervision and coordination of the Ministry

of Labour and Community Reinsertion. It is expected that in view of the readily available capacity in the country, IOM will take the lead in managing newly created camps and existing camps whenever there is a need, in close collaboration with UNHCR. Further, this agency is planning to capacitate the relevant national authorities in the overall coordinating and managerial role as regards the IDP camps.



The first humanitarian flight being unloaded at Dili airport
UNHCR/S.Martins/ June 2006

UNHCR'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

UNHCR has opted for a phased approach with a first wave of emergency airlift of essential shelter and non-food items to Timor-Leste which aims at covering a initial total of 17,000 displaced persons. A number of NFIs have started to arrive by air and by sea from Darwin, Australia.

UNHCR protection, programme, field staff and site planners have been meeting with religious leaders, IDP representatives, government and other humanitarian organizations to identify those sites most urgently in need. Work is already under way on several sites – Don Bosco College, Canossian Sisters, and the airport – clearing the ground and pitching tents to ease congestion. On 9 June, 80 tents were delivered to the National Hospital to accommodate the families of pregnant women in the hospital and staff whose houses have been destroyed. Blankets and plastic sheets have been delivered to the focal point agencies in a few sites. The distribution of non-food items is carried out daily. UNHCR is also liaising with the Government to consider the feasibility of

additional planned camps.



A UNHCR Staff member watches the preparation of the site where three portable warehouses will sit. These will be used to store incoming goods/ UNHCR/ S. Martins/ June 2006

UNHCR'S OBJECTIVES

The UNHCR's goal is to meet the protection and shelter needs of vulnerable IDPs, especially women, children and the elderly. To that end UNHCR will pursue the following objectives:

- Ensure a coordinated protection response for the internally displaced in Dili and the districts with a particular emphasis on addressing issues of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV);
- Promote an improved level of security for IDPs by working closely with the international security forces;
- Work together with all other agencies for improved living conditions for the IDPs, pending the possibility for them to return to their homes;
- Build the Government's capacity to provide protection and assistance to its displaced citizens, and to then scale down the UNHCR intervention accordingly.

ACTIVITIES

- Advocate for the immediate identification and deployment of international police forces to (a) provide security to all IDP

camps assessed to be at risk and to ensure that no weapons enter the camps, and (b) undertake community policing in the Dili suburbs to enable people to return home in safety.

- Under the coordination of the Government and in cooperation with other actors on the ground, improve conditions in the worst of the existing IDP sites through the provision of protection, shelter and household items. In total, the Office plans to send 400 tonnes of supplies in phases including: 6,000 lightweight tents; 6,000 jerry cans; 6,000 plastic sheets; 6,000 kitchen sets; 1,400 cooking stoves and 30,000 blankets;
- Work with the Government to identify sites in Dili for the establishment of new camps, where needed, which can be used to decongest the worst of the existing sites and which, *inter alia*, are designed with the security of women and children as a priority, ensuring that this is done in coordination with, and with the support of, other agencies with relevant expertise, particularly taking into account the cluster approach. Ensuring that appropriate protection strategies are in place in the camps will be a top priority.
- Ensure that there are Standard Operating Procedures or Guidelines which are used for the management of the camps, and which include the need for the establishment of camp management committees with a good gender balance. UNHCR will undertake a monitoring role in collaboration with other partners concerned.
- In cooperation with the Government and IOM, identify and capacitate agencies or actors on the ground to take the responsibility for managing each new camp that is established, and ensure a procedure is in place for the Government to take over management of the camps at an appropriate time.

- Ensure that the relevant government departments understand the need to encourage people to return home as soon

as security conditions allow. Where houses have been destroyed, encourage families to take the tents with them to their land pending the implementation of a reconstruction programme.

CHALLENGES

Security remains one of the greatest areas of concern on the ground. Cases of murder, SGBV, looting and house burning have been reported throughout the Dili area. The arrival of the Australian military and policing forces, as well as troops from New Zealand and Malaysia, and a police unit from Portugal has led to some improvements in the overall security situation.



June 7, CIVICICM.Rappet, June 2006

Nonetheless, the security environment in a number of the existing camps is assessed as very fragile and volatile. There is a fear that armed elements could enter a number of camps and fighting between rival groups may break out in some of them. In addition, rumors have circulated that attacks are planned against some of the existing camps. The rapid deployment of an international police force to be dedicated to the provision of security at all IDP camps determined to be at high risk is deemed vital.

The situation is compounded by the failure of the government to gain control of armed elements, namely youth gangs, in the Dili area. Most businesses have not been able to operate out of fear of being looted, which has led to serious food shortages. In turn, the lack of food has caused health problems and anxiety throughout the population and

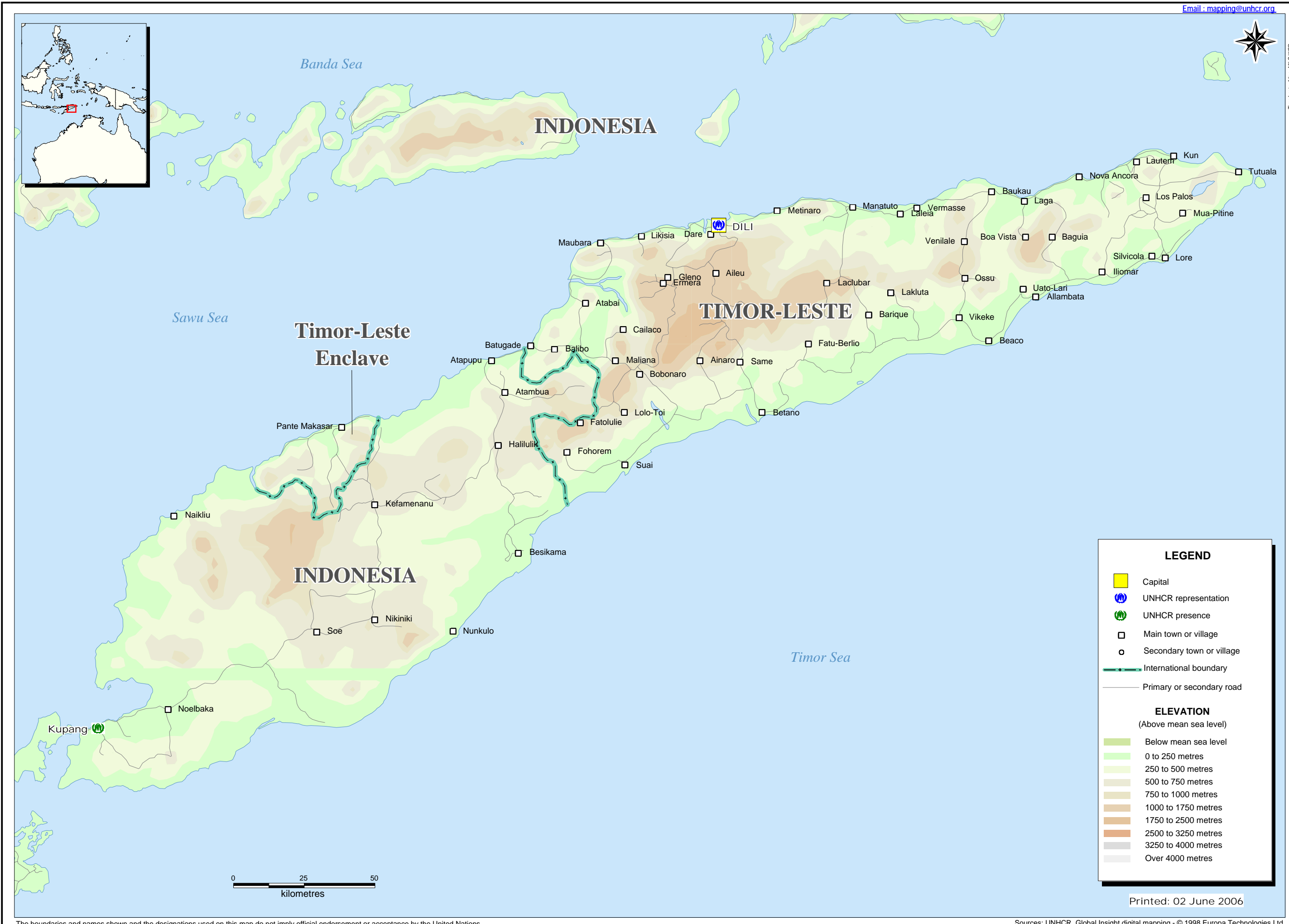
amongst IDPs in particular. Although some shops are beginning to re-open, their ability to stay open depends on the overall security climate.

It is the general assessment recently confirmed by the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy, Ian Martin, that the political and security problems which caused the displacement are not likely to be resolved quickly and hence humanitarian intervention is expected to be probably required for a longer period of time.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

SECTORS AND SERVICES	TOTAL
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	520,000
Domestic Needs, Household Items	255,000
Operational Support (to Agencies)	50,000
Shelter, Infrastructure	1,450,000
Transport and Logistics	2,230,000
Sub-Total	4,505,000
Support Costs (7%)*	315,350
TOTAL	4,820,350

* A 7% support cost has been added to the total operational requirements and will be recovered from each contribution to meet indirect support costs in UNHCR (Field and HQs)



LEGEND

- Capital
- UNHCR representation
- UNHCR presence
- Main town or village
- Secondary town or village
- International boundary
- Primary or secondary road

ELEVATION
(Above mean sea level)

- Below mean sea level
- 0 to 250 metres
- 250 to 500 metres
- 500 to 750 metres
- 750 to 1000 metres
- 1000 to 1750 metres
- 1750 to 2500 metres
- 2500 to 3250 metres
- 3250 to 4000 metres
- Over 4000 metres



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