



**Office of the  
Deputy General Prosecutor  
for Serious Crimes  
Timor Leste**

**SERIOUS CRIMES UNIT INFORMATION RELEASE**

**30 November 2004**

## **SCU INDICTES SUAI CHURCH MASSACRE COMMANDERS**

**On 29 November 2004, the Serious Crimes Unit filed an indictment charging 7 persons with Crimes Against Humanity. The indictees are former Mahidi Militia Commanders, alleged to be criminally responsible for the widespread violence in 1999 that took place in Zumalai, Covalima District, including the Suai church massacre. The indictment also includes charges concerning 22 additional murders and the persecution of 71 independence supporters. All the accused persons are at large and believed to currently be outside of Timor Leste.**

### The organizers of 3 detention centers

This indictment focuses on the crimes committed by the Mahidi militia leaders of Zumalai subdistrict, Covalima district in 1999. Those charged in the indictment are Vasco Da Cruz, Domingos Alves, Guilhermino De Araujo, Napoleon Dos Santos, Simao Tasion, Lino Barreto, and Cancio Lopes De Carvalho who is named as the overall coordinator of the Mahidi militia. All accused are charged, with individual and superior criminal responsibility, for the crimes against humanity of extermination, murder, torture, deportation and persecution.

The indictment alleges that between March and September 1999, Vasco Da Cruz and Domingos Alves, the commander and deputy commander of the Mahidi militia in Zumalai subdistrict had effective command and control over a detention camp in Zulo, where at least 44 pro-independence civilians were illegally detained. They in turn reported directly to Cancio Lopes de Carvalho. These three accused are alleged to be responsible for the torture of the suspected pro-independence supporters during interrogations at the Zulo camp.

The indictment alleges that in the same period, the Zumalai Mahidi Militia also operated a Detention House in Beilaco subvillage. This detention post was located at the house of the Mahidi company commander, Napoleon dos Santos who is alleged to have illegally arrested and detained at least 12 persons.

Lino Barreto, the Chief of Operations for the Mahidi militia, the village chief of Lour, and a government civil servant, is accused of operating a third detention center in the Indonesian Government House, where he lived. At least 15 civilians were illegally arrested in this center. The indictment alleges that he organized and participated in the torture of detainees.

### The Suai Church Massacre

The indictment also alleges that Vasco Da Cruz, Domingos Alves, Napoleon Dos Santos, Simao Tasion and Cancio Lopes De Carvalho were responsible for the massacre that occurred on 6 of September 1999, on the Suai Church compound, where between 27 and 200 civilians, including Father Hilário Madeira, Father

Francisco Soares and Father Tarsisius Dewanto, were killed many others were injured during an attack by the Mahidi militia.

Villagers from Suai, Fohorem, Fatululik, Tilomar, Fatumean and Zumalai had been gathering for months in the church compound seeking refuge from the campaign of terror and violence conducted by the militia, TNI and POLRI. Early on 16 April 1999, during a Militia demonstration in Zumalai, Cancio Lopes De Carvalho and Vasco Da Cruz had already threatened to attack the church. On 4 September 1999, after the announcement of the result of the Popular Consultation, Napoleon DOS SANTOS, aka Napoleon Alves, told members of his Mahidi group in Beilaco that they would attack the Suai Church compound.

On the 6 September 1999, Domingos Alves collected members of the Mahidi militia, including Napoleon Dos Santos, and Simão Tasion and led at least nine Mahidi members in the attack on the Suai Church. Domingos Alves, Napoleon Dos Santos and their militia forces then proceeded to the house of Herman Sedyono, the Bupati (Regent) of Covalima District. Sedyono's house was also a gathering point for the Laksaur militia on this day. From Sedyono's house, the Mahidi militia, led by Domingos Alves and Napoleon Dos Santos, and the Laksaur militia traveled to the Suai Church. When they arrived at the church, members of the Mahidi and Laksaur militia as well as the TNI surrounded the church compound. Two grenades were thrown into the church compound and then militia and TNI started shooting at the compound. The militia and the TNI then entered the church compound and attacked the villagers hiding therein.

**To date, the Serious Crimes Unit has filed 85 indictments charging 370 individuals with some accused charged in multiple indictments. Cases have been completed through trial for 74 accused persons, with 72 convicted of one or more charges.**