Introduction

In 1960, The United Nations (UN) added East Timor to its list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. At this point in time, East Timor, also known as Timor-Leste, was governed by Portugal. East Timor is located in the South of Southeast Asia which makes up the Eastern portion of the island of Timor, with the Western side belonging to Indonesia. East Timor gained independence from Portugal officially in May, 2002 after much bloodshed, and it is still a fairly developing nation, much of this due from the ruins of its battle for independence with Indonesia. The UN expressed concern for the deteriorating situation in East Timor and appointed a multinational force in order to bring peace and security to the nation, to support the forthcoming UN peacekeeping missions there, and to further promote humanitarian efforts. The UN mandate in East Timor was scheduled to end in May 2006, however a culmination of events resulted in a devastating political, humanitarian, and security crisis, and this led the Security Council to prolong its mandate. With an unstable national situation over different periods of time, UN mandates have been consistent in East Timor through the last decade. However, the East Timorese government also requested international aid from other nations to fortify national security, against the UN’s wishes. The situation of the continuous UN missions in East Timor seek resolution in order to allow the nation to become self-sufficient, both politically and economically.

Definition of Key Terms

Mandate

An official order or commission to do something.

Special Autonomy

The quality or state of being self-governing. Special Autonomy of Timor-Leste included being within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.
**Peacekeeping Mission**

Issued by the UN to help countries torn between conflict to create solutions for lasting peace, guided by consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and in defense of the mandate.

**Referendum**

A general vote by all the people in a country or an area are asked to give their opinion about or decide on an important political or social question.

**Unitary State**

A state governed by a single power in which the central government is ultimately supreme.

**Background Information**

**How East Timor gained independence**

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste is a sovereign state occupying the Eastern portion of the island of Timor, with its Western side belonging to Indonesia. East Timor was populated in 3000 BC by migration from the regions of South China, Indochina, Southeast Asia, and Melanesia. As a result of this, the population was composed of a variety of cultures from the Eastern Hemisphere. It was occupied by the portuguese in the early 1500s, and in 1613 the Dutch arrived on the Western side of East Timor. These two colonial nations fought over control for the territory until the Treaty of Lisbon was signed in 1859, giving the Portuguese the eastern half of the island and the Dutch the west side, setting up a definitive border in 1914. In 1975, Portugal decided that its rule in East Timor had to come to an end and because of their abrupt leaving, a conflict broke out between political parties to take control of the new government.

**Indonesian invasion**

In that same year, Indonesia invaded East Timor, in order to prevent it from falling to communism or creating secessionist movements in tense Indonesian areas. Indonesia imposed Indonesian language and customs on the Timorese, and this repressive-style rule strengthened the rise of Timorese nationalism. The Timorese denied this occupation and fought back, and this became known as the East Timor Genocide, claiming more then 100,000 civilian lives. This violence continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s, including a number of massacres, most importantly the Santa Cruz Massacre of 1991, in the capital of Dili. This was seen as a step
forward towards independence as it was condemned worldwide the killing of peaceful pro-independence protesters by Indonesian troops in a cemetery.

**Achieving independence**

In 1999 a referendum was proposed to the public, called the 1999 Popular Consultation, questioning if they accepted the proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. The majority voted to reject the proposal and to push forward with full independence. Nonetheless, this came with a rushing wave of violence with anti-independence militants attacking civilians and destroying property. By this time, more than 75% of the population was displaced, either fleeing to West Timor or residing in camps around the capital. As a multinational military force mandated by the UN arrived in 1999, the last of Indonesian soldiers exited East Timor territory. By May 2002, East Timor finally gained independence, erupting a number of political, national, and social crises.

**Dealing with independence and crisis**

Timor-Leste was now faced with high vulnerability to political conflict and electoral violence. The UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) was a peacekeeping mission, issued to provide assistance to East Timor until all operational responsibilities were completely passed on to and managed by Timorese authorities, and to help this new nation achieve self-sufficiency, with an end to this mission scheduled for May 2005. When this date was reached, another political mission, called the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) was issued to aid in the development of critical state institutions and police, and to help provide training to maintain a democratic state of government, with an end foreseen for May 2006.

**The 2006 crisis**

A political crisis broke out in 2006 because of the dismissal of 600 soldiers from the Timor-Leste Defense Force (Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste, FDTL), a result of a petition presented in January 2006 to the Brigadier General and President of East Timor, commenting on negligence from the troops and accounts of discrimination to westerners (originally Indonesians) in the military. These dismissed men objected to the petition, all in while rivalries and political tensions were also thrown in the mix. This compilation of factors created violence in the streets between armed gangs, police, protesters, and defense forces throughout East Timor. All of this resulted in deaths, displacement, and property damage. This led to the resignation of prime minister Mari Alkatiri. A cause for this uprising came from historical competition between political parties during the resistance against Indonesia during the 1980s and 1990s and continued into post conflict government. Antagonism between ex-soldiers also played a huge part. This rancor came from the poorly managed demobilization of post independence troops, leaving many
unemployed with the contracting of many officers who previously worked for the Indonesian police force. A failure to define land and property regimes to resolve rivalries, tension between easterners and westerners, and even unresolved tensions between the population from the Portuguese colonial era, all played a part in amplifying this security crisis. Politicians, wanting to expand their support from the public, manipulated the divide between pro-independence east and pro-indonesia west, and this helped reinforce tensions even more. This crisis then led the Security Council to prolong the UNOTIL’s mandate to 20 August 2006 and requested the Secretary-General to introduce new recommendations for the situation. Timor-Leste, against the recommendations made by the Council, requested military assistance from New Zealand, Malaysia, Australia, and Portugal, with these international forces starting to secure the country from May 2006. In a report from August 2006, the Secretary-General stated that a level of composure had been achieved and that the level of violence had decreased significantly, with a new government being issued. However, he believed that resolving the crisis of the nation as a whole still had a long way to go, with many factors still needing significant attention in order to be resolved and to allow the new nation to prosper. A proposal was established for a UN Multidimensional Integrated mission (UNMIT), with a mandate to aid the government of East Timor and to resolve the social and security crisis in the nation. The Council decided that because of the causes and consequences of the crisis in 2006, there would have to higher numbers of civilian security, and arrangements had to be reviewed between the UNMIT and international security forces to reach a consensus on how the mission would play out, being compliant to both the recommendations of the secretary general and the Timorese government. Because of the deployment of the UNMIT and the work they did together, the 2007 elections ran smoothly and a new government was established in Timor-Leste.

The 2008 attacks

On February 11, 2008, an armed group affiliated with former members of the FDTL made separate armed attacks against the president and prime-minister of East Timor. The situation created challenges to the State, however surprisingly did not create an imminent nationwide crisis, like the one in 2006. The Security Council proceeded to extend the mandate of the UNMIT, via resolution 1802, passed in 25 February 2008, and deeply condemned the attacks with the intention of attempting to destabilize East Timor.

Continuation of the mandate into the 2010s

Following these crises, East Timor has remained stable, with some fragility. The UNMIT’s attempts to promote reconciliation and other parts of its mandate continues until the end of the mandate in 2012. The efforts of the UNMIT, the Timorese government, and of helping nations were key to aiding East Timor to achieve its goal of a politically stable and secure nation. In 2011,
the government and UNMIT signed a Joint Transition Plan (JTP) in order to ensure commitment to identify the objectives to be achieved before the UNMIT’s end in 2012. The departure of the UNMIT, however, does not mean that the UN has stopped working in East Timor, as it continues to face challenges in its development and institutions.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Indonesia

With past events, such as the invasion of East Timor and the East Timor Genocide, Indonesian relationship to East Timor is fragile and uncertain. Even though a referendum was done and respected leading to the independence of East Timor, security, political, and economic issues still arise, as talks between the two nations to solve not only political but also public tensions, which are rising. The limitation of territorial boundary between the two nations is yet to be decided and Indonesia wants to solve the issue of East Timorese refugees in its territory. Since East Timor’s independence in 2002, relations have been stable between it and Indonesia, since it is the largest trading partner of East Timor.

Portugal

Portuguese colonization of East Timor centuries ago still has lasting effects in the territory today. The Portuguese language is still spoken through East Timor and its culture is still there. With the Portuguese leaving abruptly the nation to decide on what to do with its future by itself created even bigger tensions into the events that played out. The population still has resentment towards Portuguese culture because of what they had to face by themselves. Portugal still maintains a strong relationship with East Timor and has pledged to strengthen various sectors in East Timor such as education, technology, justice, and politics.

UNMIT

The UNMIT was established in East Timor to assist the nation to overcome the consequences and causes of the 2006 crisis amid political, social, and safety tensions. The UNMIT was committed to supporting and assisting the East Timorese government in consolidating stability, enhancing a culture of democratic governance, and facilitating political dialogue among Timorese stakeholders, in their efforts to bring about a process of national reconciliation and to foster social cohesion.
Australia and New Zealand

Responding to the call made by the East Timorese government resultant of the ongoing violence and crisis, Australia and New Zealand took part to a great extent. Australia yielded 5,500 personnel and New Zealand followed closely behind, yielding over 1,200 personnel. These nations yielded the largest amount of troops, hardware, and equipment to missions in East Timor.

Timeline of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Portugal leaves East Timor. Indonesia invades the territory and occupies it for the next 24 years.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Santa Cruz massacre happens and receives international condemnation, with Indonesia being accused of human rights violations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>East Timorese independence referendum is held, with 80% voting for independence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>UN forces arrive in East Timor.</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>East Timor gains independence and becomes the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>A violent political crisis erupts throughout the nation and a UN mission is dispatched to East Timor.</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>An armed group attempts attacks against the government, however the country quickly gains back stability surprisingly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>UNMIT mission ends.</td>
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Relevant UN Treaties and Events


Previous Attempts to solve the Issue
The United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) was a political mission following the UNMISET, which ended in 2005. Its main goal was to support the development of critical state institutions and the police and to provide training in democratic governance with the establishment of proper human rights. The UNOTIL was set to end in May 2006, however was extended with a cry for help from the East Timorese government as a result of the 2006 political crisis that had broken out, leading East Timor down a path of a humanitarian, political, and security disaster. The mandate was then extended into August 2006, with remarks being made by towards Secretary General that East Timor needed a stronger UN presence in order to maintain stability throughout its territory. The UN failed to respond in time to this plea for support and the Timorese government decided to request international aid from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Portugal, and these nations started securing installations around the nation within the coming months. With not only the UN forces acting in East Timor, now there were other nations with different policies acting all within the same borders. This added onto the tensions that were already present. By July 2006, the Secretary General issued a statement communicating that the level of violence had decreased significantly, however the underlying factors of the crisis were deeply rooted into the country and would take constant and long-term resolving.

The UNMIT was a mandate issued to aid East Timor in consequences and resolving the causes of the 2006 crisis. The mandate was composed heavily of civilian help, being comprised of over 1,608 police personnel. Special agreements were made between the UNMIT and the international security forces present in order to not overstep boundaries. The deployment of the UNMIT was overall successful in stabilizing the country, however the issue of safety remains in a volatile state and the political climate unstable. In the 2008 crisis, the UNMIT took the situation very well and the outcome was much more successful than the 2006 events. The institutions of state responded quickly and within constitutional procedures, demonstrating firm leadership from the structural institutions of the state. The mandate is seen to have been successful specifically because of the well coordinated activities between the areas of the mandate.

Possible Solutions

Privatization

To continue its development into an independent and self-sufficient nation, East Timor should invest in its private sector. Patent laws, which are laws that give inventors the exclusive right to own their invention, should be introduced and marketed toward the youth as to decrease
poverty and unemployment rates, while at the same time endorsing the industrialization of the nation.

**Fixing the framework of overlapping mandates**

Returns of UN missions have turned out to be successful and their implementation of durable solutions too. However, these solutions will not sustain the long-term consequences because of the gaps between mandates, culture, and funding. Thus, participants from different mandates and organs should recognize how their contribution fits into the bigger picture of the mission as a whole. An example is how humanitarian aid should be knowledgeable about the work and roles of the security sector and vice versa. The local police would also benefit from this since they would know how the overall framework of the mission works and so could structure their services accordingly to solve issues of internally displaced persons, and peacebuilding aids could utilize information gathered by local actors to identify the root causes of the ongoing national instability.

**Educating Timorese youth**

With almost 38% of the population living below the poverty line and over 50% of the population being illiterate, East Timor needs to invest in improving the economic and social level. The youth are the ones who will be leading the nation in the forthcoming future, and so if there is a gap in their education, the country will only be held in an ongoing cycle of unavoidable crises and tensions. Investments could be made into state owned organs and institutions in order to make a goal to provide free schooling to kids, with the goal first to complete high school, and then extending into uniiversity education. By learning about their history and the causes of the issues the country faces today, the tensions political tensions between Indonesia and East Timor could eventually be resolved, and the overall situation of the country improved.

**Guiding Questions**

1. How may your delegation tackle the unstable relationship between Indonesia and East Timor?
2. How have the past crisis in East Timor affected the infrastructure of the nation as a whole? What could be considered the roots of problems faced today?
3. What are some limitations that East Timor faces as a nation in the global spectrum?
4. How successful have the UN mandates been in East Timor? If they were not successful, what aspects could be improved upon?
5. How has international cooperation impacted the UN missions in East Timor?
Bibliography


