

## Indonesia-Timor-Leste: Survivors to Reunite and Reconcile Longing to their Families, Home at the Ninth Reunion for Timor-Leste's Stolen Children

“I don't understand what justice is, as I was taken to Indonesia, moved around, sent to another family, as if nobody wanted me.”

**Dili, Timor-Leste, 21 November 2023** – Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) and a working group of organisations from Indonesia and Timor-Leste will facilitate the civil society-led reunion for 'stolen children' again this year. Held for the ninth time, this reunion will mark more than 100 survivors that we have reunited with their families since 2013 – a culmination of relentless work by survivor communities and civil society organisations in searching for these stolen children's whereabouts.

Five *stolen children* will be reunited this November after being separated from their families for almost 45 years. Coming from East Java and South Sulawesi in Indonesia, they will be coming home to Ainaro, Viqueque, and Manatuto in Timor-Leste. The youngest survivor was born in 1984, and the oldest in 1969 (taken from East Timor in 1979).

The reunion process has encompassed three days of preparation and will continue with a week-long visit to Timor-Leste today. As many of the survivors have suffered serious trauma and almost none have had any opportunity for psycho-social assistance, the three days leading up to their return to Timor-Leste were spent at AJAR's human rights training centre in Bali to help them reacquaint themselves with each other and prepare emotionally for the reunion. Some survivors have forgotten their native tongue, Tetun, but it begins to return during the sessions and as they spend time together.

Two separate truth commissions, *Comissão Acolhimento Verdade e Reconciliação* or CAVR in 2002-2005 and the bilateral Commission for Truth and Friendship or CTF in 2005-2008, concluded that thousands of children were taken from Timor-Leste by the Government of Indonesia, military or related personnel or institutions between 1975 and 1999. Additionally, Indonesia issued Presidential Decree 72/2011 in response to the CTF's recommendations, although there has been limited progress in establishing mechanisms to locate the disappeared and separated children.

Civil society organisations in Indonesia and Timor-Leste have been tracking *labarik lakon* or "stolen children" and their families since 2013. Until November 2023, the working group documented a total of 176 survivors, with 101 of them participating in the reunion process in Timor-Leste.

These reunions are just a first step to rebuilding lives torn by trauma and loss. The survivors' personal struggle is intertwined with the challenge for the two nations, who must forge a way to reconcile a difficult past. A fact that we continue to remind the government of Indonesia and Timor-Leste, as *Centro Nacional Chega!*, a follow-up institution charged with ensuring that recommendations of the two truth commissions are implemented, and Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission provided official support to this civil society-led initiative.

After these five stolen children returned home, and still finding a way to make up for lost time, thousands others are waiting to be found, documented, and reunited.

*To learn more about the situation of stolen children in Timor-Leste and other reparations initiatives between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, please visit our website at [asia-ajar.org](http://asia-ajar.org) and [chegareport.net](http://chegareport.net) and follow the hashtag #ReuniteTimorLesteFamilies on social media.*

### **About Asia Justice and Rights**

Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) is a regional human rights organisation based in Jakarta, Indonesia that works to increase the capacity of local and national organisations in the fight against entrenched impunity. AJAR contributes to building cultures based on accountability, justice and willingness to learn from the root causes of mass human rights violations in the Asia Pacific region.

### **About Centro Nacional Chega!**

Since its establishment in December of 2016, Centro Nacional Chega! has centred its mission on promoting the recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation to institutionalise memory and promote human rights through education, training, and solidarity with the most vulnerable survivors of human rights violations. Chega! engages with the community, both the public and survivors, through commemorating historical events, mapping historical sites, organizing educational tours that allow students to visit historical sites and to hear the testimonials of survivors, and creating spaces for intergenerational transmission of memories. For more information: <https://chega.tl/>

### **About the Labarik Lakon Working Group**

The Labarik Lakon Working Group consists of Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), IKOHI, KontraS, ELSAM, Labarik Lakon, KontraS Sulawesi, KontraS Surabaya, LBH Bandung, SKP-HAM Sulteng based in Indonesia, as well as Centro Nacional Chega!, Asosiasaun HAK, Asosiasaun Chega! Ba Ita (ACbit), Timor-Leste Red Cross Society (CVTL), Yayasan Alola, ICRC-TL, Universitas Nacional Timor Leste, and Asosiasaun Vitima Konfliktu Politiku 74-99 based in Timor-Leste.

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## Indonesia-Timor-Leste: Reunidade sobrevivente sira no Rekonsiliasaun ho sira nia Familia, Mai fali Uma iha Reuniaun dala sia ba Labarik Lakon Timor-Leste

"Hau la komprende saida mak justisa, tanba ema lori hau mai Indonesia, muda ba mai, muda ba familia seluk, hanesan ema lakoi simu hau."

**Dili, Timor-Leste, 21 Novembru 2023** – Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) no grupu traballu husi organizasaun sira husi Indonezia no Timor-Leste sei fasilita reuniaun nebe lidera husi sociedade sivíl ba labarik lakon tinan ida ne'e. Iha reuniaun ba dala sia ne'e nia laran marka sobrevivente liu 100 ne'ebé ami halibur hamutuk ho sira-nia família dezde 2013 ne'ebé sai nu'udar kura ba servisu ne'ebé comunidade sobrevivente sira no organizasaun sociedade sivíl sira halo hodi buka labarik sira ne'ebé lakon.

Labarik Lakon na'in liria sei reunidu iha fulan Novembru tinan ne'e hafoin separa tiha husi sira-nia família maizumenus tinan 45 liu ba. Mai husi Java Leste no Sulawesi Sul iha Indonezia, sira sei fila ba Ainaro, Viqueque no Manatuto iha Timor-Leste. Sobrevivente foin-sa'e nebe kiik liu moris iha tinan 1984, no ida-ne'ebé boot liu mak moris iha tinan 1969 (lakon husi Timor-Leste iha tinan 1979).

Prosesu reuniaun ne'e inklui ona preparasaun durante loron tolu no sei kontinua ho vizita semana ida ba Timor-Leste ohin. Tanba sobrevivente barak sofre trauma grave no kuaze laiha ema ida mak hetan oportunidade atu hetan assisténsia psiko-sosial, loron tolu ne'ebé atu lori sira fila-fali ba Timor-Leste ne'e sei hamutuk iha sentru formasaun direitus umanus AJAR nian iha Bali hodi ajuda sira rekonese sira nia ann no sira seluk no prepara an emocionalmente ba reuniaun ne'e rasik. Sobrevivente balu haluha ona sira-nia lian, Tetun, maibé sira komesa fila fali koalía durante sesaun hamutuk iha Bali.

Komisaun lia-loos rua nebe separadu, Komisaun Akollamentu lia los no Rekonsiliasaun ka CAVR iha tinan 2002-2005 no Komisaun bilaterál ba Lia-loos no Amizade ka CTF iha tinan 2005-2008, konkluí katak labarik rihun ba rihun mak foti husi Timor-Leste husi Governu Indonezia husi pesoál ka instituisaun militár ka instituisaun sira ne'ebé iha relasaun entre 1975 no 1999. Aleinde ne'e, Indonezia fó sai Dekretu Prezidensial 72/2011 hodi hatán ba rekomendasaun sira husi CTF, maske iha progresu limitadu iha estabelesimentu mekanizmu sira atu loke labarik sira ne'ebé lakon no ketak.

Organizasaun sociedade sivíl iha Indonezia no Timor-Leste halo monitorizasaun ba labarik Lakon no sira nia familia dezde 2013. To'o Novembru 2023, grupu traballu ne'e dokumentadu ona total sobrevivente hamutuk na'in 176 ne'ebé separadu, ho nain 101 ne'ebé partisipa iha prosesu reuniaun iha Timor-Leste iha okaziaun ualu. De faktu ita kontinua nota tanba ita foka liu ba lia-loos, lori autór sira ba justisa, ajuda hadi'a vítima sira-nia moris no reforma sira hodi prevene atu la akontese fila-fali.

Reuniaun hirak-ne'e hanesan pasu dahuluk atu harii fali moris ne'ebé lakon tanba trauma sira. Luta pesoál ba sobrevivente sira-ne'e iha ligasaun ho dezafiu ba nasaun rua ne'e, ne'ebé tenke hametin dalan ida atu rekonsilia pasadu ne'ebé difisil. Tanba ita kontinua fó-hanoin ba governu Indonezia no Timor-Leste, Centru Nasional Chega!, hanesan instituisaun ida-ne'ebé hetan akuzasaun atu asegura katak rekomendasaun husi komisaun lia-loos rua ne'e implementa tiha ona, no Komisaun Nasional Direitus Umanus Indonezia nian fó apoiu ofisiál ba iniciativa ne'ebé lidera husi sociedade sivíl.

Bainhira labarik Lakon nain-lima ne'e fila fali ona ba uma, sira sei buka dalan atu hadi'a fali tempu naruk nebe lakon. Ema rihun mak hein hela mos atu hetan, hetan dokumentasaun, no reunido.

*Atu hetan informasaun liután kona-ba situasaun labarik Lakon iha Timor-Leste no iniciativa reparasaun sira seluk entre Indonezia no Timor-Leste, favór ida vizita ami-nia website iha Asia-Ajar.org no [chegareport.net](http://chegareport.net) no tuir hashtag #ReuniteTimorLesteFamilies, iha média sosiál.*

### **Kona-ba Asia Justice and Rights**

*Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR) hanesan organizasaun Direitus Umanus rejionál baze iha Jakarta, Indonesia, ne'ebé servisu atu hasa'e kapasidade organizasaun lokál no nasionál sira-nian hodi kombat hasoru impunidade. AJAR kontribui ba harii kultura ida ne'ebé bazeia ba responsabilidade, justisa no vontade atu aprende husi kauza fundamentál ba violasaun direitus umanus iha rejiaun Azia Pasifiku.*

### **Kona-ba Centro Nacional Chega!**

*Centro Nacional Chega! hari iha fulan Dezembru 2016, foka ninia misaun atu promove rekomendasaun sira husi Komisaun Resepasaun, Lia-loos no Rekonsiliaun atu institusionaliza memória no promove direitus umanus liuhusi edukasaun, formasaun, no solidariedade ho sobrevivente vulneravel sira husi violasaun direitus umanus. Chega! envolve ho comunidade, públiku no sobrevivente sira, liu husi komemorasaun eventú istóriu sira, halo mapa ba fatin istóriu sira, organiza tour edukativu sira ne'ebé permite estudante sira atu vizita fatin istóriu sira no rona ba testemuña sira husi sobrevivente sira, no kria fatin ba transmisaun memória interjerasional sira. Atu hetan informasaun liután visita: <https://chega.tl/>*

### **Kona-ba Labarik Lakon Working Group**

*Grupu Tráballu Labarik Lakon ne'e kompostu husi Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), IKOHI, KontraS, ELSAM, Labarik Lakon, KontraS Sulawesi, KontraS East Java, LBH Bandung, Yayasan Satu Keadilan ne'ebé harii iha Indonezia, no mós Sentru Nasional Chega!, Asosiasaun HAK, Asosiasaun Chega! Ba Ita (ACbit), Timor-Leste Red Cross Society (CVTL), Yayasan Alola, ICRC-TL, Universidade Nasional Timor Leste, no Asosiasaun Vitima Konfliktu Politika 74-99 ne'ebé baze iha Timor-Leste.*

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