

Brazilians Stay Put in East Timor Despite Police-Army Conflict

Contributed by Juliana Andrade
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Brazilian teachers are helping train teachers in East Timor and São Tomé and Príncipe. Through technical cooperation, Brazil is sharing with these countries its experience with the Ministry of Education's Working Teachers Training Program (ProFormação).

The program permits first to fourth-grade fundamental school teachers who did not finish high school to complete their studies and receive pedagogical orientation at the same time.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, Brazilian instructors have already trained 77 local teachers. In East Timor the first 100 participants in the program are slated to graduate in August, 2007.

Besides these countries, Guinea-Bissau is also interested in a partnership with Brazil, according to Luciane Sá de Andrade, coordinator of the ProFormação.

Monday, May 29, at the opening of the International Encounter of ProFormação Instructors, the Brazilian Minister of Education, Fernando Haddad, said that the interest that has been aroused demonstrates other countries' recognition of the Brazilian model.

Help Needed

Brazil's ambassador in East Timor, Antônio Souza e Silva, says that there were only two or three violent incidents Monday, May 29, and that the tendency is for the situation in the country to improve.

However, he declared that there is a need for international aid groups, especially the Red Cross and NGOs, to send more assistance.

According to the ambassador, there are some 50,000 refugees in East Timor who have sought shelter in schools, churches and community centers to escape the fighting that erupted between the police and regular armed forces, and former soldiers last week.

Ambassador Souza e Silva reports that "Up to now none of the 150 Brazilians in East Timor have left the country."

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