



**PROVEDORIA DOS DIREITOS HUMANOS E JUSTIÇA**  
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**SPEECH**

Excellency Minister of Justice, Mr. Manuel Cárceres da Costa

Excellency Secretary-General of APT, Ms. Barbara Bernath

Distinguished Guest!

Good Morning Ladies and Gentleman,

It is a great honour for me to take part in the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Justice Timor-Leste (MoJ), Provedor for Human Rights and Justice Timor-Leste (PDHJ) and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) concerning a cooperation on Torture Prevention in Timor-Leste that unfortunately we are having to host partly online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would like to welcome you all this morning, particularly the Minister of Justice of Timor-Leste, Mr. Manuel Cárceres da Costa and the Secretary-General of the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), Ms. Barbara Bernath, thank you for taking part in today's ceremony.

The partnership between the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) dates back from 2013, initiating from the "Torture Prevention Ambassador" project, and more recently intensified with the development of the torture prevention guidelines for South East Asia National Human Rights Institution Forum (SEANF), which was chaired by the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice of Timor-Leste in 2019.

On that occasion, APT had visited Timor-Leste in October 2019 to assess the potential needs of support that Timor-Leste required for the implementation of strategies for torture prevention in Timor-Leste. PDHJ and MoJ having signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2019, with the main objective to strengthen institutional cooperation

and collective efforts to enhance promotion and protection of human rights by prison guards as well as develop and promote capacity building for prison guards and reinforced the commitment both institutions.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, I met with the Swiss Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Kurt Kunz during his visit to Timor-Leste and had the chance to present him with a concept paper entitled “*Development of Cooperation Projects within the area of Torture and CIDT Prevention between PDHJ and the Swiss Confederation*”. This paper served as the bases for the Memorandum of Understanding, which will be signed today, of which APT’s vital participation has been made possible, thanks to the financial support of the Government of Switzerland.

Main activities planned are digital consultation between project partners, online surveys on national measures to prevent torture, and the development and piloting of torture prevention training modules for prison officials. The people directly benefitted from this project will be MoJ and law enforcement officials such as the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and the Timor-Leste Defense Force (F-FDTL), governmental ministries, agencies and civil society organizations working on torture prevention.

It is hoped that through this new cooperation between MoJ, APT and PDHJ, we will be able to realize the main activities that have been agreed and set up in the Memorandum of Understanding, reaching new grounds for the development of a national roadmap, which will serve as a concrete blue print to assist national stakeholders in collectively implementing policies and measures to reduce torture and ill-treatment throughout the country.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our huge gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for providing financial support to the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) to establish this trilateral cooperation between MoJ, APT and PDHJ. I also would like to thank the Minister of Justice for his support for this initiative and lastly I would like to thank all technical teams from MoJ led by the Director-General, PDHJ led by the Deputy Provedor for Human rights and APT led by Ms. Shazeera. Thank you very much for all of your contributions to make this event possible and successful.

Thank you very much for your attention.