

## TIMOR-LESTE



**Flag Description:** Red, with a black isosceles triangle (based on the hoist side) superimposed on a slightly longer yellow arrowhead that extends to the center of the flag; there is a white star in the center of the black triangle.



**Background:** The Portuguese began to trade with the island of Timor in the early 16th century and had colonized it by mid-century. Skirmishing with the Dutch in the region eventually resulted in an 1859 treaty in which Portugal ceded the western portion of the island. Even though Portugal was a Neutral in World War II, Imperial Japan occupied Timor-Leste from 1942 to 1945, with Portugal resuming authority after the Japanese defeat. Timor-Leste declared independence from Portugal on 28 November 1975 but was invaded and occupied by Indonesian forces nine days later. Incorporated into Indonesia in July 1976 as the province of Timor-Leste. An unsuccessful campaign of pacification followed over the next two decades, during which an estimated 100,000 to 250,000 individuals lost their lives. On 30 August 1999, in a UN-supervised popular referendum, the people of Timor-Leste voted for independence from Indonesia. Between the referendum and the arrival of a multinational peace-

keeping force in late September 1999, anti-independence Timorese militias - organized and supported by the Indonesian military - commenced a large-scale, scorched-earth campaign of retribution. The militias killed approximately 1,400 Timorese and forcibly pushed 300,000 people into western Timor as refugees. The majority of the country's infrastructure, including homes, irrigation systems, water supply systems, and schools, and nearly 100% of the country's electrical grid were destroyed. On 20 September 1999 the Australian-led peacekeeping troops of the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) deployed to the country and brought the violence to an end. On 20 May 2002, Timor-Leste was internationally recognized as an independent state. A military strike led to violence and a near breakdown of law and order in late April 2006. Over 2,000 Australian, New Zealand, and Portuguese police and peacekeepers deployed to Timor-Leste in late May. Although many of the peacekeepers were replaced by UN police officers, 780 Australian soldiers remained as of November 2007.

**Geography:** Southeastern Asia, northwest of Australia in the Lesser Sunda Islands at the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago; note - Timor-Leste includes the eastern half of the island of Timor, the Oecussi (Ambeno) region on the northwest portion of the island of Timor, and the islands of Pulau Atauro and Pulau Jaco. Area: total: 15,007 sq km. Area - comparative: slightly larger than Connecticut. Land boundaries: total: 228 km. Border countries: Indonesia 228 km. Coastline: 706 km. Climate: tropical; hot, humid; distinct rainy and dry seasons. Terrain: mountainous. Natural resources: gold, petroleum, natural gas, manganese, marble. Natural hazards: floods and landslides are common; earthquakes, tsunamis, tropical cyclones.

**Military Notes:** Timor-Leste Defense Force (Forças de Defesa de Timor-Leste, FDTL): Army, Navy (Armada) (2005). (CIA World Factbook 2008)

### 2007 Car, Armd, 4x4. Textron Commando V-150.

Timor-Leste received an unknown number of Commando V-150 armored cars from Portugal for the FDTL.

### 2007 Carr, Pers, Armd, 4x4. Condor UR-425.

Timor-Leste received an unknown number of UR-425 Condor APCs from Portugal for the FDTL.