



GUIDE TO CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES TIMOR- LESTE



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All photos by Jennifer Hardy/CRS.



Welcome to Timor-Leste

This document provides you with information we think you'll find useful to get settled in Timor-Leste safely and with minimum hassle. The target audience is short-term visitors and new expatriate staff. Below, you'll find information on Timor-Leste's history, facts about the country, travel details, health issues, places to go and things to do, the current security situation, safety and security guidelines and, finally, emergency contact information.

Since information about services, prices and basic statistics are constantly changing, we would appreciate your feedback with new information (a great dish you have eaten at a restaurant perhaps), and about other topics that you feel would be useful to include.



Country Background

Timor-Leste (East Timor) is a country in Southeast Asia, officially known as Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. The country comprises the eastern half of the island of Timor and the nearby islands of Atauro and Jaco. The first inhabitants are thought to be descendant of Australoid and Melanesian peoples. The Portuguese began to trade with Timor by the early 16th century and colonized it throughout the mid-century. Skirmishing with the Dutch in the region eventually resulted in an 1859 treaty for which Portugal ceded the western half of the island. Imperial Japan occupied Timor-Leste during World War II, but Portugal resumed colonial authority after the Japanese surrender.



Timor-Leste declared itself independent from Portugal on 28 November 1975, but was invaded by neighboring Indonesia nine days later. The country was later incorporated as the province of Indonesia after wards. During the subsequent two-decade occupation, a campaign of pacification ensued. Although Indonesia did make substantial investment in infrastructures during its occupation in Timor-Leste, dissatisfaction remained widespread. Between 1975 and 1999, there were an estimated about 102,800 conflict-related deaths (approximately 18,600 killings and 84,200 'excess' deaths from hunger and illness), the majority of which occurred during the Indonesian occupation.

On 30 August 1999, in an UN-sponsored referendum, an overwhelming majority of Timor-Leste voted for independence from Indonesia. Immediately following the referendum, anti-independence Timorese militias — organized and supported by the Indonesian military — commenced a punitive scorched-earth campaign. The militias killed approximately 1,400 Timorese and forcibly pushed 300,000 people into West Timor as refugees. The majority of the country's infrastructure was destroyed during this punitive attack. On 20 September 1999, the International Force for Timor-Leste (INTERFET) was deployed to the country and brought the violence to an end. Following a United Nations-administered transition period, Timor-Leste was internationally recognized as an independent nation on 20 May 2002.



VISITORS' GUIDEBOOK

Fast Facts

Full Name	Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
Capital	Dili
Population	1.3 million (estimate in 2019)
Area	15,007 km ² (about the size of Maryland)
Major languages	Tetum and Portuguese (official), Indonesian and English (working languages). Tetum is spoken by at least 60% of the population.
Religion	Roman Catholic (over 90%). Religious minorities include Muslims, Protestants, Hindu, Buddhist and traditional animist minorities.
Independence	From Portugal, 1975. From Indonesia, 1999. From UN, 2002.
Independence Day	20 May 2002 (UN), 28 November 1975 (Portugal).
Government system	Democratic Republic
President	Francisco 'Lu Olo' Guterres
Currency	US Dollar (with national coins in denominations of one, five, 25 and 50 cents) Life expectancy (2010): 62 years
Child mortality rate (2010; under 5)	64 per 1,000 population
Annual per capita income	USD366
Main exports	Coffee, marble, potential for oil exports
International dialing code	+670
Time zone	GMT + 9 (no daylight savings)
Flag	
Coat of Arms	

CRS in Timor-Leste

From 1979 to 1986 during the Indonesian occupation, Catholic Relief Services Timor-Leste was a sub-office of CRS Indonesia, carrying out emergency and food programs. After the 1999 referendum for independence, CRS coordinated with church partners to provide relief assistance to families affected by the ensuing violence of the pro-Indonesia militias.

CRS Timor-Leste became an independent country program in June 2000 to better respond to the devastation of Timor-Leste and work directly with partners and beneficiaries. Today, CRS has two offices in Timor-Leste, the main office in Dili and a sub-office in Baucau in the eastern part of the country.

The majority of families in Timor-Leste live in rural communities and more than 80% make their livings as subsistence farmers. Many struggles to grow enough food to put on the table year round. Catholic Relief Services and our local partners work with farming communities to increase food production as well as promote simple technologies for families to have safe places to store the food that they grow, ensuring they have seed for the next planting season. CRS also helps to increase the choices that farmers have so that they can grow a variety of crops, become more resilient to the long-term effects of climate change and ensure the availability of nutritious foods for healthy families.

Timor-Leste has suffered from numerous man-made disasters that Catholic Relief Services has helped them to respond to in the past. Moving into the future, CRS and our local partners help reduce the risks of natural disasters such as increased landslides and flooding in some areas, or the threat of drought and limited water resources for agriculture and household use.

CRS is supporting communities to become stronger and more resilient by helping families have enough food, engaging communities to manage natural resources in an inclusive and sustainable way, and strengthening community level structures to be able to respond to disasters when they occur.

Timor-Leste has one of the world's worst nutrition rates. CRS is working with mothers' groups to show them the importance of a good diet, how to prepare nutritious food and how they can grow their own nutritious foods locally.

Building on its experience in community peacebuilding, CRS helps prevent domestic violence, promoting non-violent methods of communication and ensuring that all women feel safe in their homes. Since peacebuilding is an active and ongoing process, CRS also designs our projects to be inclusive and participatory, while promoting democratic decision-making.

Overview of Dili and Baucau

CRS/TL has offices in Dili and Baucau

Dili Office:

Address: Rua Dom Boaventura no 12, Motael-Vera Cruz, Dili |
Office Phone #: +670-332-4641

Dili is the capital, largest city, chief port and commercial center of Timor-Leste. The 2010 census recorded a population of 193,563 in the areas of Dili district classified as urban. The city is divided into the subdistricts of Nain Feto, Vera Cruz, Dom Aleixo and Cristo Rei and is divided into several sucos, which are headed by an elected chefe de suco. 18 of the 26 sucos of the four subdistricts are categorized as urban.

Baucau Field Office:

Address: Rua: Samadigar, Buibau- Baucau district | Phone Number: Baucau Office Manager, (+670) 7723-0865

Baucau is the second-largest city in Timor-Leste, after Dili, the capital, which lies 122 km east of Dili. Baucau has about 16,000 inhabitants, and is the capital of Baucau, located in the eastern part of the country.



Arriving in Dili

Flights

Flights to Dili arrive from Indonesia (Denpasar) or Australia (Darwin). Depending on when you arrive in Denpasar, you may need to stay at least one night.

Arrival

When you arrive, you'll be met at the airport by a representative from CRS. If, for some unforeseen reason, there is no-one to meet you, call the Country Manager, the Operation Manager or the Baucau Office Manager (see Constant Companion for contact information). Do not leave the airport. Unless you have a Timor-Leste SIM card for your mobile phone, you will need to borrow someone's phone. Some Asian SIM cards may have roaming in TL.

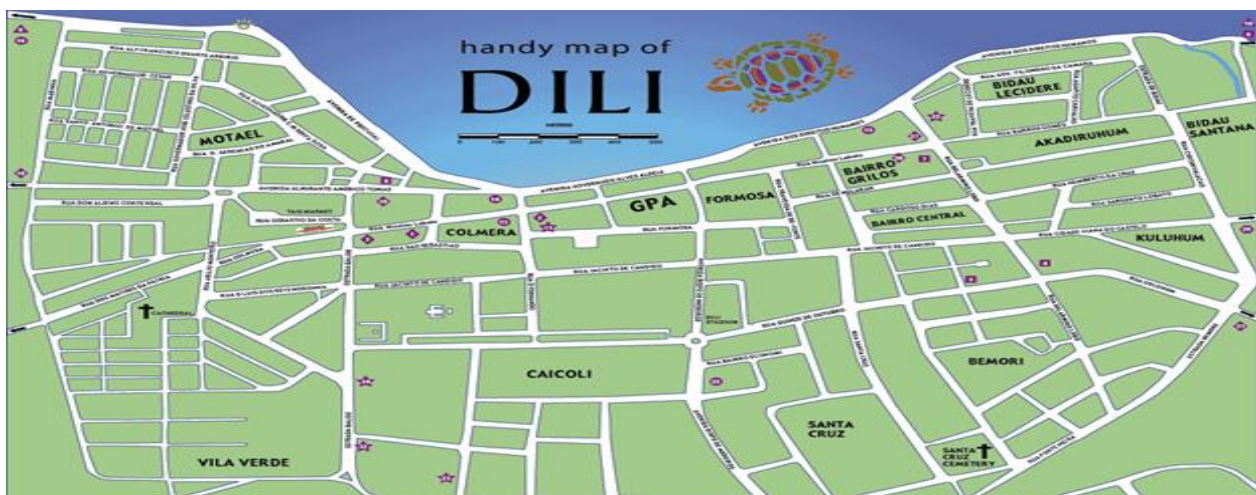
Every visitor will receive a security briefing within a day upon arrival. As part of this orientation – depending on whether you are a visitor or incoming staff – you will receive a mobile phone, emergency contact card, and other assorted support items.

You will be lodged in one of the CRS pre-approved hotels or CRS guesthouse. If you are arriving on a long-term contract, it may take some time to find suitable housing.

First-time visitors should understand that while Dili is a small 'city', it takes a while to get oriented due to the lack of street signs and addresses, and the resulting usage of landmarks and neighborhood names for reference. There are also many one-way streets so often you will be taking a circuitous route to get from place to place.

Except for Indonesian nationals and Portuguese nationals, all visitors arriving at a land border post must apply in advance for a "Visa Application Authorization" at Timor-Leste Consulate in Kupang, West Timor. It is a one day process. In order to get the visa authorization, you will need to complete and submit visa application form, copy of your passport, copy passport of your contact in Dili, support letter from CRS Timor-Leste and your return flight ticket – if you plan to leave Dili by plane.

When the visitor arrives at the border, the "Visa Application Authorization" must be presented to an immigration official. Then, if the visitor meets the other requirements the visa may be granted on payment of US\$30. It will take another 3 hours from the border to Dili.



Upon Arrival:

- After the plane lands, you will walk down the portable staircase and across the tarmac toward the airport arrivals hall
- Before you enter the arrivals hall and before you proceed toward immigration you will have to get a Visa-on-Arrival from the window just before you enter the doorway to the arrivals hall – Visa-on- Arrival is \$30. Keep the receipt.
- Once you get Visa-on-Arrival, enter the building and enter one of the immigration lines. You will need to fill out an Immigration form.
- Once you're cleared in the immigration, baggage claim is immediately on your right and usually chaotic – there are not enough baggage trolleys, so grab one if you can (unless you don't need). Keep your luggage claim ticket at hand as you are often requested to present it before clearing customs.
- Clear customs and proceed outside (you will need to give the customs form to people waiting near the exit).
- A CRS driver will be there waiting.

Safety and Security

Timor-Leste is a relatively safe place to live and work – as long as you are aware of the potential threats, exercise caution and avoid the “no go” areas as directed by the Country Manager.

Critical Few and Personal Responsibility: In CRS Timor-Leste, we put great emphasis in all staff members making good decisions. To make this happen, we are emphasizing the “critical few” of personal responsibility. Along with this, all staff must understand that if you are ever in a situation where they do not feel secure, you must move to a safer location. As noted in the “critical few”, the immediate reporting of the situation you are facing and keeping your supervisor apprised of your movements is critical. Each Staff Member is responsible for the “Critical Few” specified below:

Reporting – If there have been any incidents, threats, or changes in the CRS security status? Is so, the staff must communicate to your supervisor within 15 minutes. This information must quickly reach the CR.

Communication Equipment – Am I going to the field with the ability to communicate at all times? Does your cell phone have critical phone numbers programmed in it? All staff should keep the cellular phone switched “on” 24/7 in case we need to communicate critical safety and security information.

Staff Movements and Tracking – Has your trip been approved? Do you know who to communicate your movements to (at departure and arrival)? If you do not know, do not travel. All staff must use the Staff Locator when traveling outside of Timor-Leste.

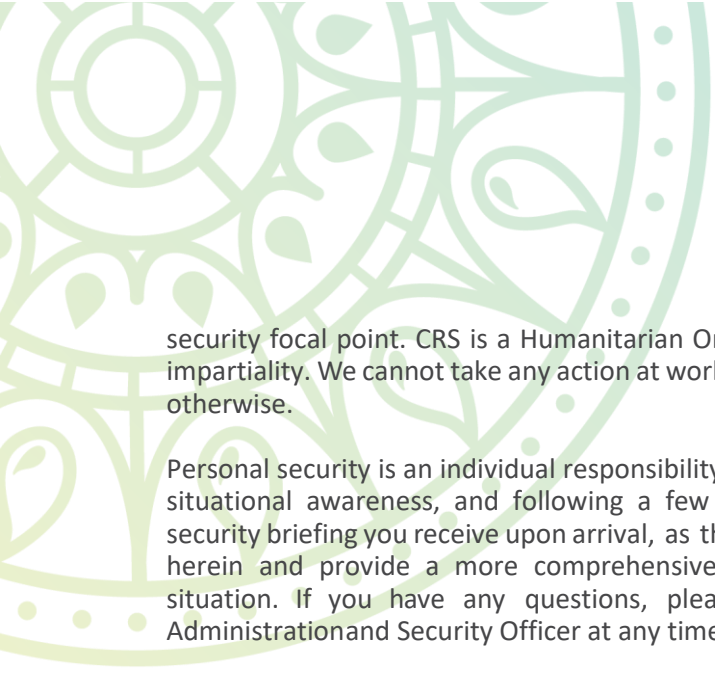
Curfews – Will your movement (between cities/towns) violate the curfew policy? You need to be traveling between sunrise (varies from 6:10-6:50) and sunset (varies from 18:30 -19:00)? If you have to drive to outside of curfew hours, did you contact the CR for approval to travel? If you're staying in a location beyond curfew is not safe, immediately contact CR.

Road Safety – Is the vehicle you are driving in a safe condition? If not, do not continue. Is your vehicle operator driving in a safe manner? If not, let them know and discontinue the trip if driving does not immediately change.

Medical Treatment – Each staff is responsible to quickly seek medical attention when they are not feeling well.

Acceptance – Our acceptance by the local government, communities, Church is critical to our security. Is there anything you have observed that may jeopardize our acceptance? If so, please report to your





security focal point. CRS is a Humanitarian Organization that works on the basis of impartiality. We cannot take any action at work or outside of work that would appear otherwise.

Personal security is an individual responsibility. It requires a dose of common sense, situational awareness, and following a few basic guidelines. Pay attention to the security briefing you receive upon arrival, as this will flesh out the details contained herein and provide a more comprehensive and timely appraisal of the security situation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Administration and Security Officer at any time, day or night.

Crime: Crime appears to be on the rise. There have been a number of incidents of bag snatching, vehicle break-ins and home invasions. Common sense applies: don't display or carry expensive jewelry and other valuables, keep your documents (passport, air tickets) in a safe place, don't walk by yourself at night, check taxis before leaving and secure your vehicle and house. If someone does try to take your belongings or vehicle, do not resist. Calmly comply with all instructions and hand over whatever the person wants.

Harassment: There has been several cases of harassment reported for females out early getting exercise or out late. This is not recommended to do either by yourself.

Health/Medical: Please only drink bottled water/drinks. Your host can help you understand the risk of locally prepared foods. Let your host know immediately if you are not feeling well.

Crowds and Demonstrations: Please avoid areas where people are assembling as these can become unpredictable.

Road Accidents: If you are involved in a road accident, it may be best to drive away and go to the police station. There has recently been violence at traffic sites. Please give CRS driver immediate feedback on their driving if you have any concerns.

Road Hazards: People tend to drive very slowly, mostly to conserve fuel, although the relaxed island mentality may also have something to do with it. In theory, people drive on the left; defensive driving is a lifesaver. Vehicles tend to swerve wildly to avoid potholes and motorbikes weave erratically in all directions. Taxis travel at around 10km an hour. In general, road rules are observed on a whimsical basis. Overtaking is done on the left or right, usually by heading straight into oncoming traffic and hoping for a sudden swerve from whatever is approaching. Microlets add to the randomness as they meander around the road and suddenly stop wherever anyone wants to get on or off.

Driving at night: In the past, it was common for idle youths to throw the odd, angry stone at passing vehicles. This practice seems to have largely tapered off, however. Nevertheless, it is good practice to drive

with your windows, up and, if you see trouble ahead, turn around and take another route.

Natural Disasters: Timor-Leste sits within the so-called ‘Pacific Ring of Fire’, bringing the possibility of earthquakes and Tsunamis. Earthquakes are a fairly common occurrence, although no damage has resulted from recent seismic events.

Accidents: In the event of an accident it is up to you to decide whether it is safe to remain at the scene or drive on to a safer location. Depending on what has happened, a crowd may form (very quickly) and, if someone has been badly injured or killed, it is possible they will become violent.

Each CRS office will have a Security Focal Point: In Dili, the Operations Manager is the Security Focal Point. In Baucau, the Security Focal Point is the Office Manager. The Security Focal Point is responsible for gathering security information from various sources, providing information on changes in the security environment, and providing advice to the Country Manager or delegate, including for trips outside cities. All staff and visitors are expected to report security incidents, concerns, and observations to the Country Manager or Security Focal Point.

Cultural Acceptance: One of the single greatest determinants of CRS’ acceptance in the communities where it operates, and the subsequent security of staff, is respect for local cultural norms and values. The following are general guidelines for the behavior expected of CRS staff in Timor-Leste:

DOs:

- Always show respect to religious, community, and government leaders/ representatives and behave politely with others, both CRS and non-CRS.
- Show respect to religious sites, rituals, traditions, etc.
- Dress modestly and in a fashion appropriate to local custom
- In rural areas, visitors must offer to remove their shoes before entering a home. In many cases, the host will decline the offer, but it is always best to ask.
- In villages and rural areas, the playing of loud music, talking loudly on mobile phones, and overly informal conversation and behavior, even with CRS colleagues, must be avoided.
- Homes in rural areas must only be visited with the express permission of the homeowner and while accompanied by a member of the local community.

DON'Ts:

- Staff must avoid discussions of Timor-Leste’s political, religious, and military situation in public places, on the phone, or in the presence of strangers.
- Staff must not lose their temper or raise their voice in public.
- Staff must avoid public movement or visible work activity during strikes or demonstrations.

Traffic and Transportation

CRS Vehicles: If you are a short-term visitor you will have a CRS driver to pick you up and take you places. If you have any doubt whether one has been arranged (or whether it has been remembered that one has been arranged), speak to the Operation Manager.

All field travel will be undertaken with a CRS driver. Seatbelts are always to be worn and driving while under the influence of alcohol or other similar substances is prohibited. Travel away from Dili for any reason requires prior authorization by supervisor.

Taxis: During the day, you will have no problem finding a taxi. They are well marked and will announce their availability with a honk. The fare around Dili is usually USD2-3. Have exact change if possible. If you're here for a while it's worth finding a reliable, trustworthy taxi driver (see the Administration and Security Officer for a list of taxis). Please note that taxis do not often operate at night and females are strongly advised not to travel alone after dark. Blue taxis are recommended (Contact number: 7742 777)

Microlets: These minibuses are prohibited as a mode of transport for visitors







Cultural Considerations

Appropriate standards of dress

- Shorts and sleeveless tops are unacceptable in a formal setting.
- Dress is conservative. Best to avoid tank tops except when on the beach.

Greetings

- If you do not know the person, shaking hands is considered polite.
- If you know the person well, you may embrace and kiss both cheeks.
- People often ask “Where are you going?” (“Ba nebe?”) As a form of greeting.

Social interaction

- It is considered rude not to accept an offer of drinks or food.
- Do not touch members of the opposite sex as this will be found offensive.
- Public outbursts are considered offensive.

Eating

- When food is put in front of you, wait to be invited to eat.
- Tipping is acceptable but not expected

Gestures

- When gesturing to someone to approach, always gesture with palm facing down.
- Pointing with your finger is considered rude.

Religion

- No jokes are to be made about religion or religious figures/leaders.
- It is common to pray before formal meals and important events.
- If you meet a funeral procession, slow down or stop your car and keep silent

Common Tetum Phrases

- Good morning – Bondia
- Good afternoon – Botardi
- Good evening – Bonoiti
- How are you? – Diak ka lae?
- Thank you – Obrigadu (male); Obrigada (female)
- See you later – Ate logu
- Goodbye – Adeus

Weather in Timor-Leste

Climate: Timor-Leste can be hot and humid throughout the year, so remember to drink lots of water and avoid direct exposure to sunlight for extended periods of time. Loose, comfortable cotton clothing and a wide-brimmed hat is recommended to prevent sunburn and sunstroke. Use a high factor protection sunscreen if you are spending time outdoors. Prevent dehydration by drinking a lot of water. In the highlands, it gets quite cool at night and if you intend to travel into the interior, it is a good idea to bring something to keep you warm.

Wet Season: Wet season (Nov – April) brings with it extra mosquitoes, so be vigilant (see Health, above) and makes already bad roads to become more dangerous. There is a risk of landslides and flooding, meaning you could face immediate danger or become stuck somewhere and not be able to reach your destination. Prepare for this by taking extra food and water in your vehicles and checking with the Administration and Security Officer before and during your trip, especially if road conditions and weather are worsening.

Others

ATMs are available in Dili but difficult to find in the districts. Always bring small bills/change when traveling outside Dili. Sim cards with 3G and 4G are available in Dili. CRS can also provide flash modem for your computer and a phone.



Key Contact Information

Name	Position	Cell Phone
David Palasits	Country Manager	+670-7723-0866
Yane Pinto	Operation Manager (Security Focal Point)	+670-7723-0862
Erin Baldrige	Baucau Head of Office	+670- 77526399
Cecilia X. Fraga	Baucau Office Manager	+670-7723-0865
Alberto Freitas	Partnership Capacity Strengthening PM Baucau	+670-77340827
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