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Warriors for Peace Program Coordinator back from East Timor

August 18, 2007, Bacolod City. Noel J. Fuentes just returned from participating in a seminar with the Peace and Justice Commission of East Timor. The seminar, which started last August 1 and ended August 9, 2007, was organized by Fr. Cyrus Banque, a Filipino resident priest who has been working there for more than ten years.

In line with the peace-building thrusts of the newly born country, Warriors for Peace program was introduced to the seminar attendees in the hope of sowing seeds of alternative peace-building strategies.

Since East Timor is still experiencing conflict between gangs and the martial arts that each gang employs, as well as the government with its internal rift and is still having a hard time bringing different groups together, Warriors for Peace Pilipinas was invited to present its program and Aikido.

Aikido promotes peace and harmony between individuals. It strongly supports respect for humanity and love for fellow human beings. Its appeal for East Timor, a country still in chaos, lies in the fact that it is also a martial art, a midpoint that can link conflict and peace together.

Noel Fuentes' visit was timely in the fact that the newly elected Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmao was being installed and after three days, the burning of some 600 houses followed. Emotions were high but support and faith in the peace-building programs were very good.

Attendees of the seminar consisted of NGOs representatives, religious sector representatives, gang leaders and East Timor police. It was unfortunate though that the military sector, which was also invited, could not attend due to the emergency situation in the area.

The general feedback from the peace-building seminar was very positive especially during the ongoing conflict. Because most martial arts in East Timor are violent, people are very much interested to learn Aikido and its philosophy of peace and harmony.

Warriors for Peace Pilipinas is looking for ways and means to maintain groundbreaking cooperative efforts with the Peace and Justice Commission in East Timor in the near future.



Ruins of burnt houses in Dare', East Timor during a revolt by the Timorese.



A Gang leader and Noel visiting leader's home. A gang leader in East Timor can have a member of 5,000 to 6,000 members



Attendees of the seminar workshop from different sectors, all working towards a more peaceful East Timor.



Justice and Peace Commission participants practice aikido with jo (short staff).