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Subject: FORCES ENTERTAINMENT TOUR PEPPER SPRAY INCIDENT IN EAST  
TIMOR

Comment:  
Action Area CJOPS

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## HOT ISSUES BRIEF

### ISSUE: FORCES ENTERTAINMENT TOUR PEPPER SPRAY INCIDENT IN EAST TIMOR

**Sensitivity:** Medium, there is potential for media reaction focussing on pepper spray use by ADF and [REDACTED].

#### Key Issues

- On Saturday 12 March at approximately 1430 Dili-time at the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) Helicopter Point of Disembarkation Base a Forces Entertainment Tour (FET) entertainer was voluntarily sprayed with pepper spray.
- During a force capability presentation a decision was made to demonstrate pepper spray. This was not a formal part of the planned demonstration. There were two volunteers, an ADF Corporal and one of the civilian performers from the FET, a [REDACTED]. Both individuals were sprayed with the pepper spray by a [REDACTED] Corporal.
- The Australian Corporal suffered no ill effects. Approximately one hour after being sprayed, the FET member was taken to the Aspen Medical Facility with a rash on his arms and chest. He received treatment at Aspen and was subsequently released. The reaction was deemed to be very mild and the entertainer

continued with the tour program without any delay to concert preparations.

- The FET member advised that he understood the sensitivity of the issue and the potential adverse media impact that the incident could have for the ISF. [REDACTED]

- The incident is currently under investigation.

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## BACKGROUND

The FET is visiting the ISF in East Timor over the period 11-14 Mar 11. As well as performing for the deployed force, the FET receives a range of presentations and demonstrations from different elements of the force. One of these presentations was on the New Zealand Protected Mobility Vehicle (PMV) capability and the ISF Quick Reaction Force (QRF), currently an ADF Infantry Platoon.

During this presentation a decision was made to demonstrate pepper spray. This is not a formal part of the planned demonstration. There were two volunteers, an ADF Corporal from the QRF and one of the civilian performers from the FET, the FET member is a [REDACTED]. Both individuals were sprayed with the pepper spray by a [REDACTED] Corporal.

The Australian Corporal suffered no ill effects. Approximately one hour after being sprayed, the FET member was taken to the Aspen Medical Facility with a rash on his arms and chest. He received treatment at Aspen and was subsequently released. The reaction was deemed to be very mild and the entertainer continued with the tour program without any delay to concert preparations.

The ISF Chief of Staff travelled to the HPOD and spoke with the FET member who confirmed that he was a willing participant in the demonstration. The FET member advised that he understood the sensitivity of the issue and the potential adverse media impact that the incident could have for the deployed force. [REDACTED]

## **TALKING POINTS**

- Defence is aware of an incident in which a visiting entertainer to the International Stabilisation Force in East Timor had a minor skin reaction following the entertainer acting as a willing participant in the demonstration of a defensive spray.
- The individual received medical attention however the reaction was deemed to be very mild and the entertainer continued with the tour without any delay to concert preparations.
- The matter is still the subject of ongoing investigation.