



PRESS RELEASE

HABADA Calls for Transparency and Quality Safeguarding in the Recruitment of PNTL Agents in 2025

12 August 2025

HABADA, as a civil society organization with a mission to monitor police governance and human security in Timor-Leste, today released its assessment of the 2025 recruitment process for Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) agents. The process, regulated by Ministerial Diploma No. 17/2025 of 25 June, marks a highly sensitive stage carrying significant political weight in the institutional human resource renewal cycle. The recruitment calendar sets the preparation period from 5 to 29 August 2025, with document submissions open from 12 August to 9 September 2025.

The 2025 PNTL Agent recruitment process, regulated by Ministerial Diploma No. 17/2025, introduces a quota system allocating:

- 20% for children of PNTL officers
- 20% for children of veterans
- 20% for women
- 40% for the general public

While intended to promote diversity and recognition, this model has raised public concerns about fairness, nepotism, and discrimination—particularly due to quotas based on family background, the age limit of 18–23, civil status restrictions, and the use of sequential allocation methods.

In this context, HABADA has identified key risks, including:

- Erosion of public trust due to perceptions of a “family police force.”
- Potential legal challenges to restrictive criteria.
- Possible decline in candidate quality when higher-scoring applicants are excluded due to the sequential quota system.
- Vulnerability to irregularities in documentation and verification processes.

Nevertheless, HABADA also identifies opportunities, such as special quotas for women to further promote gender equality, honoring veterans, and enhancing transparency—provided the processes are implemented effectively.

HABADA’s Priority Recommendations:

- The Ministry of Interior and the PNTL Command should publicly clarify the objectives of the quota system and the merit-based criteria through official statements.
- The Recruitment Commission should publish aggregated recruitment data at each stage of the process.
- The Ministry of Interior should appoint independent observers—such as the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice (PDHJ) and civil society organizations—to monitor and report on the recruitment process.
- The Ministry of Interior and the PNTL Command should reform quota allocation to ensure proportionality and establish minimum score thresholds.
- The Ministry of Interior and the PNTL Command should review demographic restrictions to promote fairness and inclusivity.

Finally, HABADA emphasizes that the 2025 PNTL recruitment represents an opportunity for personnel renewal and a crucial test of public trust. Through transparent communication, technical improvements, and effective oversight, this process can transform from a source of controversy into a model of accountable governance.

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