



The United Nations peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste ended its operations at the end of 2012, in line with the expiration of its mandate and amidst significant progress made in establishing peace and security in the country.

“The Timorese people and its leaders have shown courage and unswerving resolve to overcome great challenges. Although there remains much work ahead, this is an historic moment in recognising the progress already made,” the Secretary-General’s Acting Special Representative and Head of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), Finn Reske-Nielsen, said in a news release.

The south-east Asian nation has endured a long and often violent journey towards independence and democracy since it formally broke away from Indonesia in 2002, and since it first appeared on the agenda of the UN Security Council 37 years ago. Following another outbreak of deadly fighting in 2006, the UN Security Council established UNMIT – it replaced earlier peacekeeping and political missions there, and provided interim law enforcement and public security until Timor-Leste’s national police could be reconstituted and resume its roles.

Since then, the country has progressed on the path to democracy. This year, Timor-Leste celebrated the 10th anniversary of its independence, elected a new president and held parliamentary elections, which were largely peaceful and held in an orderly manner – and which prompted UNMIT’s expected and definitive withdrawal.

At a recent meeting on Timor-Leste, the members of the Security Council applauded the “remarkable achievements” made by the small nation throughout its transition over the past decade.

“When I first came to Timor-Leste in 1999, the country was ravaged by fighting and political upheaval and shaken by displacement and suffering,” Mr. Reske-Nielsen noted in his remarks. “It has been a privilege to follow Timor-Leste’s path out of those difficult times, towards peace, stability and a brighter, safer future.”