

MINISTER OF JUSTICE LUCIA LOBATO IS OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED AS SUSPECT IN BERE CASE

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Dili Flash, Thursday 8 July 2010:

Lucia Brandao Lobato, Minister for Justice has been officially notified by the Timor-Leste Prosecutorial authorities as a suspect because of her suspected involvement with the release of former Laksaur militia leader, Maternus Bere.

The Minister for Justice Lucia Lobato appeared in the company with her lawyer Sergio Hornay to give her statement regarding her involvement in the release of Maternus Bere on 30 August 2009.

During this interrogation process the Minister had to comply with her legal obligations to answer numerous questions regarding her involvement in the case.

Shortly after giving her statement to the Prosecutorial Authorities, Lucia Lobato told journalist that she was the one who released him, but that the decision had been made by the President of the Republic (PR) Jose Ramos-Horta, because Horta had already promised to Jakarta before 30 August 2009 that Maternus Bere would be handed over to the Indonesian government.

"As a political leader who released Maternus Bere, I take responsibility for my actions, but other political leaders must also accept responsibility," stated Lucia.

"I have already asked the Prosecutorial Authorities to also take statements from President Horta, Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao as well as the Prosecutor General of the Republic, because they were all involved, but in the end it was the Minister of Justice alone that has had to answer, that is unjust," Lucia pointed out.

Lucia Lobato received the notification letter on 22 June 2010 notifying that she had been made a suspect in the case of the release of Maternus Bere from Becora Prison.

"I want to say that the accused states that I took Maternus Bere out of jail, this I do not accept, because everyone was involved," affirmed Lobato.

Sergio Hornay as defense counsel to the Minister for Justice, Lucia Lobato confirmed that high level figures should not wash their hands of this case, but that it is in everyone's interest that everyone take responsibility and not just his client. (CJITL Editor)

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