

Ex-priest accused of child sexual abuse arrested in Oecusse

By **Tempo Timor**

November 13, 2019 Tetum tuir mai



East Timorese Police capture ex priestRD, in Mahata Port of Oekuse (13/11)

Foto special.

The former priest who is under investigation for sexually abusing girls in an orphanage in Oecusse, has been arrested again. The suspect was under 'house arrest' in Maliana, but was spotted on the ferry 'Success' which left Dili harbour on Tuesday afternoon (12 November). When he arrived in Oecusse early Wednesday morning (13 November) the police was waiting for the ex-priest in the port, arrested him and took him to the police station in Oecusse. 'I am acting on the orders of the PGR,' confirmed Arnaldo de Araujo, the police commander in Oecusse to Tempo Timor by telephone, referring to the Prosecutor General of the Republic.

Eis Padre Suspeitu Avuzu Sexual fila ba Oekuse, PNTL Kaer Fali

Video: <https://youtu.be/N40VyJ6E6cQ>

Former priest R.D., who is originally from the USA, was the director of the shelter Topu Honis in the hamlet of Kutet in Oecusse. In March 2018 a complaint accusing R.D. of sexually abusing young girls under his care was sent to his congregation Societas Verbi Divini (SVD). In November 2018 the Vatican found him guilty of sexual crimes against minors and dismissed him as a priest. According to sources the abuse at Topu Honis was systematic with R.D. allegedly sexually abusing every single young girl in the shelter in Kutet at least once, molesting vulnerable children for many years.

Last April the Timorese police arrested the former priest for the first time. His passport was confiscated. However, R.D. was not taken to prison. The prosecution and the church arranged that the ex-priest would stay in a house of the SVD congregation in Maliana. 'He can't go around, because he is under house-arrest,' stated the bishop of Maliana, Norberto Do Amaral, earlier in an interview with Tempo Timor. It is unclear how R.D. managed this week to travel freely from Maliana to Dili to take the ferry to Oecusse. The SVD priest who is supposed to control the suspect's movements, doesn't answer the phone.

But there were earlier signs that the suspect could move around. A picture on Instagram showed R.D. in a corner in a restaurant in Maliana using a laptop, while the current director of Topu Honis, Ms. Liliana 'Lily' Tarung, was with him enjoying a beer.

Tarung refuses to believe the allegations against her former boss. Even though she was present when R.D. admitted his crimes in 2018 to the Australian donor Tony Hamilton, who used to financially support the shelter. 'He said that he had molested girls in Kutet and that he always had done it,' stated Hamilton in an earlier interview with Tempo Timor. Sources close to the case say that a criminal complaint has been launched against Topu Honis director Tarung for failing to protect the children she has to care for.

When R.D. was arrested in April, Tarung incited men to attack a woman who used to live in the orphanage as a child, and whom she suspected of having given a statement against the priest to the judicial authorities. The woman was beaten up and was slightly wounded. Sources say that she still puts pressure on victims and witnesses to say that no sexual abuse took place in the orphanage forcing them to keep silent and not speak with the authorities.

The Catholic Church in Timor-Leste has been reluctant to give a full public account to the population about what happened in Oecusse and hasn't reached out to the victims. Recently the NGO Fokupers asked the Archbishop in Dili in an open letter to support the victims of Topu Honis shelter and to visit them. But the Archbishop hasn't reacted to the call.



Eis Padre Suspeitu Abuzu Sexual fila ba Oekuse, PNTL Kaer Fali

By **Tempo Timor** (/raeoa/author/759-tempotimor)

November 13, 2019



Polisia kaptura eis padre RD, iha ponte Kais Mahata iha dadersan tuku 05.30 no tula ba kareta PNTL. RD suspeitu abuzu sexual hasoru minor idade iha uma Mahon topuhonis, Kutet. Video: <https://youtu.be/N40VyJ6E6cQ> *Foto special.*

Iha loron 12 Novembro kalan, tempotimor.com hetan eis padre ne'e iha Ro Success laran wainhira hala'o daudaun viajen ba Oekuse.

Ro refere sai husi Dili iha loron Tersa (12/11) tuku 17.00 no too iha Oekuse loron Kuarta tuku (05/11) dadersan mais ou menus tuku 05.30.

Iha Portu Oekuse nian, kareta PNTL ida para hela no membru PNTL sira mos hamriik hela. Wainhira pasajeru sira tun husi ro, PNTL Oekuse kaptura hikas RD tula kedan ba kareta pntl nian no lori Sai husi portu Mahata.

Komandante PNTL Oekuse, Arnaldo de Araujo ba tempotimor.com konfirma katak 'PNTL ezekuta ordem husi Prokurador Jeral no Prokurador Oekuse nian.'



RD toba hela iha kaer ro Succes laran iha tersa Kalan wainhira halao viajen ba Oekuse (12/11) foto especial.

Iha Abril tinan ne'e autoridade judisiariu kaptura RD iha Kutet no muda ses husi kutet mai hela iha uma SVD iha Maliana.

Tuir Bispo Maliana dehan ba tempotimor.com katak 'RD iha hela tahanan rumah iha Maliana.'