

## MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES LINGER FOR COUPLE WITH LINKS TO MACAU

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East Timor's capital Dili

Portuguese citizen and former Macau resident Tiago Guerra, who had been unable

to leave East Timor since October 2014, was recently visited by his two sons, who had not seen their parents for over a year.

Mr Guerra and his wife Chan Fong Fong have been accused of money laundering. The couple's bank accounts in East Timor, Macau and Portugal were reportedly frozen unbeknownst to them.

Portuguese news agency Lusa reported that the children traveled from Portugal to spend Christmas in Dili, the country's capital, where Tiago Guerra has remained in preventive custody for eight months.

No formal accusation has been filed by the Public Prosecutor's Office. However, the couple – who were released from custody in June – has been ordered to present themselves to the Dili police every week.

Mr Guerra and his wife still do not have their documents, and live on assistance from family and friends.

"At the moment it's all very confusing. I'm very happy to be able to hug my children, but still very anxious," Tiago Guerra told Lusa.

"We have no idea if and when there will be a formal charge or when there will be any progress in the process. We are talking about 14 months and the only development was the Court of Appeal that recognized some of the things that we had claimed," he said.

The family was reunited in the VIP room of the Dili airport, where the children and their grandmother had travelled with the help of the former President of the Republic, José Ramos-Horta, who was traveling on the same flight from Portugal.

"It is with great joy that I see these parents meet with the children. I have followed this process for over a year. I have known Mr Guerra from long ago. He is an honest person who has always worked to help East Timor," said Ramos-Horta.

"In that sense I am concerned with this case, especially when it involves children traumatized by these situations. I hope the Attorney General's Office and the courts do what they have to do fast, [in order] to reach a conclusion in this case," he added.

While living in Macau during the 1990s, Tiago Guerra worked for Portugal Telecom and owned a consulting company named Olive Consultancy. According to Portuguese newspaper Expresso, the couple's legal troubles are linked to the company, which served as the intermediary in a deal for Bobby Boye, a former advisor to the Timorese government. In June 2014, the U.S. citizen was arrested in America and accused of stealing USD3.5 million from East Timor in oil-related deals. Guerra, Boye's former neighbor in Dili, resorted to an escrow account to transfer USD860,000 to the U.S. from a lawyer's office in Norway. Through Olive Consultancy, Guerra had allegedly held money on behalf of transacting parties upon completion of the agreed-upon conditions.

According to Expresso, the couple was planning to return to Macau at the time of their arrest, having lived in East Timor for many years.