



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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LEMAY-HEBERT: Good evening, thank you very much for sharing some of your precious time with us. My first questions will be about your personal background. Would you tell me first about the jobs you held before you took this position and maybe briefly introduce yourself.

SARDARA: *My name is Ranjit Singh Sardara. I am from Malaysia. I have been serving in the Royal Malaysian Police for the past 27 years. I joined the police academy in 1980, in December. After graduating I was deployed to a state, a northern state of Malaysia called Berah. There I held my first normal police duties. Initially I started with general duties, meaning to say community policing, station jobs in the office, looking at the detainees....In our country we call them the cells, we call this temporary detention cells. If a convict is arrested, or a suspect is arrested, they are detained temporarily in the police cells before being brought to the courts for the next course of judicial actions or procedures.*

After some time I was doing traffic cases. I used to be a photographer. After then a short photographic course, I was assigned in the photographic section along with investigators in regards to accidents, fatal accidents, sudden death, murder cases and so on. After two years then my officer in charge put me to the crime prevention unit, so I was doing detective jobs, trying to track down criminals in regards to crimes statistics in my area.

The advantage I had there was because I could speak, besides English and Bahasa, I could speak my mother's tongue which is Punjabi. I could speak Hindi. I was also well versed in Tamil Indian language. While serving in this area I picked up Chinese and basically Cantonese. My first experience there was kind of a culture shock because a big number of that population could not speak English or even Bahasa there because 90% of the locals there were Chinese and I had problems dealing with them so I took the trouble to pick up local Chinese language which is Cantonese.

My day-to-day job became easier if I could interact and converse with them. It was easy to get information, kind of get myself suited with the local population there. It helped me in many ways to get my job done. So I was in that unit for roughly five to six years. I could track down a lot of criminals in regards to serious crime, drugs. After serving ten years in that state then I moved down to the big city. I asked for a redeployment.

In 1991 I was deployed to the Police Unit in Malaysia with the Royal Malaysian Police. I was assigned to operations and intelligence section and I have been there to this day. I have been serving in that section. So basically there I was doing operational jobs, programming ops in regards to our coastal operations, territorial, in our Malaysian territorial waters, coordinating with other law enforcement agencies, maritime agencies, collecting information, intelligence. We used to go to the ground, we used to talk to the local fishermen. We took them as they were the eyes and the ears of our intelligence section because by the local fishermen going to the sea, they could see what we could not see. We used to have dialogue with these fishermen from state to state, all over the country.

Then we used to have joint operations with our Asian counterparts in regards to the Straits of Malacca. Lately in the last couple of years, there was rise in the sea piracy. So we coordinated with our Asian counterpart, basically the Straits of Malacca were shared by Singapore and Indonesia. So yearly we have two joint

operations in the Straits of Malacca with all the maritime agencies. I was doing liaison officers job, coordinating, joining also. The ops could last roughly three weeks. It was both preparation for the ops. Then we could go into the ops. Then we could do post mortem of how successful our operations were. Then we could sit down again and plan to improve.

So this has been going on for at least, I think, 16 years. Then in the Sulu Sea we had problems about illegal immigrants crossing over and also transport of crime. The illegals cross over, they bring drugs, firearms in this Sabah area. So then we have a joint operation, a yearly joint operation with our Philippine counterpart, the Eastern Command. There also I am involved in that operation. So we coordinate with all, with both countries and enforcement agencies, maritime agencies such as air force, navy, marines, customs, immigration, the fisheries and all.

So it was kind of a good experience to impart and get knowledge from all the relevant agencies and enforcement agencies. So that was basically what I was doing. Then in 1999 I sat for a UN examination to participate in a UN mission, a UN peacekeeping mission. In July 2000 I was in a UN mission in the Balkans in Bosnia – Herzegovina which was called UNMIBH which means United Nations Mission in Bosnia – Herzegovina.

After undergoing initial training I was deployed to the borders between Serbia and Montenegro, a district called Visegrad. So I was there, performing my normal duties as newly joined the mission to get familiarized with the area, with the patrol. I was doing that for a month. Then my station commander nominated me to become the election officer. I was very new in that mission so I objected to my nomination saying that there were seniors, much more seniors in experience, UNPOLs (United Nations Police) serving in that district. They should be given that opportunity. But my station commander was from Norway I think, Paul, I cannot remember his full name. He told that he had full trust with me seeing the way in interact with the local police and the local community. He found me more suitable. So he nominated me and trusted me to put an operation plan in regards to the coming election.

So the election was held somewhere in November if I'm not mistaken. So I had to survey all the polling stations, roughly there were around fifty polling stations in my district. I had to conduct a regular meeting with S4, the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) army in regards to security and also with the President of the courts who was actually nominated as the chairman of the election committee for that district, the mayor for that district. So that was going on for a month. I put up my report and then came election day. So the elections were concluded successfully without any incident. So not forgetting the international independent observers were there also. International observers were there also to record any what they call any kind of mismanagement while the elections were being conducted. So I had good interaction with all the internationals there.

Then I was, I went for an interview for the Deputy District—the Deputy Station Commander, they nominated me, appointed me. After some time my station commander ended his mission so he wanted me to succeed him. I applied after a competitive interview and I was nominated, also appointed. During that time, my area actually before the war, it was inhabited by Bosniaks but during the war the Serb ethnics took over that area and we had a lot of problems. Initially one experience that I could encounter, I'm a Sikh, wearing turban so the Serbs they thought that I am a Muslim. They used to put up kind of reaction that I'm a Muslim, I don't know why, maybe they thought that I am a Mujahideen because

during the Bosnian war the Mujahideen missionaries volunteered to participate in the war, to help the Bosniaks. So I think that they felt that I was kind of a Muslim.

LEMAY-HEBERT: What kind of reaction?

SARDARA: *They used to say, not very friendly reaction. When we used to go for games they would not want to participate with me. They would not want to—like if I go for a drink in the local café I could see kind of hostile reaction from the locals there. Then slowly they came to know that I came from Malaysia and I used to tell them that I'm a Sikh not a Muslim. So I took it as a challenge that I would not ask for a deployment from there, I want to face the challenge. So what if I'm a Muslim or anybody. I can be of any race or religion as long as I came here to serve with the UN. I would do my best to fulfill. It is a lifetime experience for me to be in an international environment, to do the best as I can and also to see what others are doing and learn from them. It is kind of sharing and imparting knowledge. So I was there for at least a year.*

My biggest task there was, we were very close to evacuation, but I managed to get things done with the cooperation of the local police. There were four war criminals who came to reclaim their property and the Serbs came to know. In Bosnia it was something, when you go to the Bosniaks' region they have a list of war criminals of the Serbs and when you go to the Serbs' region, they have a list, they have their own list of the war criminals which were the opposite ethnics, the Bosniaks.

So these four guys came to reclaim their property and they went in the mayor's office and they were kind of held hostage by the local Serbs there. So they burned a couple of cars in the streets. So we were trying to calm them down. We got the local police in action. They managed to bring all these four Bosniaks to the safe area which was the neighboring district called Gorazde. I appreciated the way the local police coordinated the operation with the UN staff. Everything was calm and peace after roughly twelve hours of action.

So then came one day we were patrolling and we found some skulls at the river bed during the summer. Upon investigation we found more skulls. Then we put up the reports. Then the international ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) team came from the Hague so the army S4 took over the operation. They started digging and it was roughly after the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid) test to identify roughly around 200 bodies in that mass grave.

After that, these bodies, after identifying, their relatives wanted them to be buried in their native district or their village. Since now it was the stronghold of the Serbs, the eastern region of Bosnia was actually the stronghold of the Serbs and it was kind of very difficult for the internationals to penetrate because the Serbs would not want to cooperate with the international NGOs or whatever international organizations because they feel, they felt that the UN and also the international UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) or other NGOs (Non-governmental organizations), they were biased. So they always wanted to treat the Bosniaks, the other ethnics better than them.

Then the whole eastern Europe was watching how these bodies were to be buried there. So we organized a big plan, we had a meeting with the Commissioner at that time the Police Commissioner was Winston Guadrara from French, one star general, Winston [Guadrara], I could remember him. So we had a couple of meetings, we organized, then the bodies, the coffins were brought

from the capital of Bosnia, Sarajevo, by road to Visegrad. It was roughly four-hour journey.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Crossing the border from—?

SARDARA: *Crossing from one district, from the Bosniak area to the Serb area and then it was quite a tense situation, but the local police did a very good job, they were very professional in coordinating the success of the convoy to reach their destination which was in Visegrad. Then the burial took place and everything was concluded at the end of the day, peacefully, without even one shot being fired. The armies did well, the S4 army. We call them the NATO S4 armies, the Germans, the Italians, the French. They all coordinated very well and it was kind of a very successful mission. So then came the—the Commissioner appointed me to be the Deputy Regional Commander of Sarajevo region which was the capital of Bosnia.*

So my last six months I spent in directing, dealing with a lot of community policing, NGOs, local police, having meetings with ministers, how to get things done the best way which could benefit the local population. So after that, after 18 months I went back and continued with my same job. Became the supervisor for operations and intelligence unit until lately I came to this mission in February, the 14th to be exact on the 14th of February this year.

After initial induction training of a week I was temporarily deployed to Dili district during the state of siege. After a month I was deployed to Viqueque district. My initial deployment was in Viqueque. There for the first couple of weeks I was doing patrolling, I was assigned to patrol duty, familiarizing with all the Viqueque area. It is kind of a good experience because that Viqueque district was kind of a hot district because of the past year's election and also arson cases. So after a couple of weeks I was assigned to investigation, so I was under the investigation section until I think I was redeployed to Manatuto district I think end of May.

So in Viqueque also I was doing, going from village to village. We organized the briefing session with the Sucos, the chief Sucos. I would call the VPU (Vulnerable Persons' Unit) section with me and also the Community Policing section. Actually I arranged a program with the Suco chief to call their local population at their community hall. So we would go there and educate the locals what are the responsibilities and duties of the police in regard to the public's right. What are human rights violations? How should the police react to complaints made by local citizens. What is child abuse, domestic violence? And also to educate the women in thee villages because what I found was the illiteracy level in this country is quite high.

I see the ladies in the villages, they are working from dawn to dusk. They have to collect firewood, take care of the family, cook for the family. The man's work, doing very little job. They just attend to their fields. They come there in the evening the men just to have drinks, a drinking session with the man's group, drinking wine and having cock fighting every day. So I actually felt very, very disappointed and I felt like it was kind of, you know, imbalanced responsibility between men and women. But then I found out it was kind of a culture in this country, the tradition that the man always has the upper hand to ladies.

So we used to have—I had the opportunity to organize four briefing sessions in different villages, to tell them about child abuse, how to avoid, and also to educate them, the men and the women to share equal responsibilities to bring up the family institution. Because when you build a family, the burden to bring and

have a very happy family is the responsibility of both men and women. That is why they get married, they want to have children. So I even gave example in the hospital when I visited a local hospital. I used to tell them, see, I'm not offending anyone. A man, everyday I see him, even in the morning or in the late evening, they used to carry their rooster, carry their rooster with so much pride. But I haven't seen a man cuddling their own kid with that much pride.

So to me I feel the roosters in Timor Leste are gifted. They have been given so much of love and care by their owner. But the child is only the responsibility of the women in the family. So I think this should change. I even told a couple of men who came to the hospital, please go back. One day, spend your time with your young kid, give him the love which you are giving to your rooster. Feed him with your own hand, cuddle him, bring him in your arms and take him to the school or to the market. You will feel how much your kid appreciates you.

LEMAY-HEBERT: What was their reaction?

SARDARA: *They actually agreed with my point of view and the ladies in the hospital they supported me very much. They were very happy that I said this. They were telling yes, we haven't heard such a command for a very long, long time. This is something that you gave and you actually opened up their minds and hearts, to be more responsible to their family.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: But have you been able to see a change of attitude in this regard?

SARDARA: *I didn't have much time there, but their reaction was positive. They told yes—actually I told them, the children in the family is their wealth. You cannot buy love with money. Maybe you can buy a rooster with your money but not your kid. You cannot get your kid with the amount of money which you are going to spend on your rooster. Maybe your rooster loses in the fighting competition, in the cockfighting today, he may die. You may have the money, you can buy another good one, but you won't get a good child which is the sign of love between you and your wife, you won't get there.*

So it is, you know to change the mentality of a man it is quite difficult. But if we continue giving them examples, showing them how to do it, I think there is a possibility that humans can change. So see, we, UNPOLs, we only come for a short stay here, maybe a year. If we get extension, if our government policy approves, we get three months or six months. So it is a very short stay. To change the mentality of a human it takes maybe a couple of years. So what I was saying was, I was actually trying to educate the women and the young girls, especially those that are from the age of 9 to 18.

I told them they can make the impossible possible, they can do it, not we because it is your community, it is your people, it is your tradition and your culture. So a foreigner can put up the ideas but to implement and change and to get the thing done will be you locals—. I leave it to you. My only advice on this part was to give the best education to all the young generation in this country because education is very vital for this nation. With education it will be easier for us to change the mindset of the new generation.

We would not be able to change or to get these elderly people to do what we want because they are hardcore. They have lived like that for the past 30, 40, 50 years. It is in their bones, not even in their blood. So in their blood, maybe if we do a blood transfusion you can change them, but when it is in the bone you cannot do anything. They will die with that tradition; they will have to die. They

will leave this world with that tradition. But, for this younger generation we could do something.

Number one I told that schools must be set up. Schools are very important. We must try to get free education until higher secondary to every young generation in this country because once the kids are educated they would want to change their lifestyle, they would want to see new things around. They would want to have better living standards and also they would want to be like some developed countries. So by giving them education it would be easier for us to get international policies through across the country, so that is number one.

Number two is to educate the women. They should actually have a life partner who is willing to share the burden equally. No doubt in their tradition or in their culture man has the upper hand over the women, but this can be changed. This can be changed if we have briefing and we make the women understand their rights. Because what I see in their Constitution women and men are both treated equally. So that question does not arise if she is illiterate. That was actually what I'm doing is if these NGOs and also the local women's organization groups can be more active in this line, bring up the life standard of these locals.

The third thing is what I see in the rural areas, the road conditions, the transportation is very bad. They need immediate attention, maintenance of roads. By doing that, if you get good transportation means, these locals can bring their farm products to the big cities and earn some good money, if not these people are being exploited. Those come from big cities, they come with big trucks, they buy their crops at very cheap prices, very, very cheap. Can you imagine one whole sack of corn they can only get one dollar for that. Also you see they buy bananas for only ten cents and sell them for one dollar in Dili. And this poor farmer, you know, they are working in the fields the whole day and are paid the minimum wages.

Also the agriculture ministry should look into that, actually should look into that. If this rural population earned more they can also upgrade their living standard. Can you imagine a child has to walk through the forest or the bushes for five or six kilometers to attend school. It is kind of unthinkable in the 21st century. This should not be happening, is what I think. Then also I've talked to a lot of local police. To me their mind set is still like what the Indonesian police used to do. They always have the authoritative power and the upper hand over the local population. So this has to be changed by introducing new training, upgrading the human rights knowledge to them, giving them all this human rights knowledge. Also seeing the policeman as a guardian, he is a guardian to the law. We cannot be policemen using excessive power or abusing the authority.

The locals when they have no where to go they come to the police for help—.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Or martial arts?

SARDARA: *Martial arts groups and all that. Martial arts groups are actually good. You see back home in my country martial arts groups are very, very respected. They don't have these kinds of local martial arts gang fight and all that. You see we joined the martial arts organization, the association, and the instructors or the so-called teachers, they teach them to exercise patience, not to use the knowledge of the martial arts to attack someone. It is only for defensive. But here martial arts groups are kind of like mafia groups. So I think since the last visit of this, our UNICEF Ambassador Jackie Chan, that was a good move by the United Nations child education site to bring him in and to show these martial arts groups.*

Actually martial arts is a kind of sport. We have this international competition like Olympic games, the Commonwealth games, so they should be introduced to participate in this international competition so that then they will change their mindset. That is also good because a lot of youngsters they are involved, they get recruited in these martial arts groups. So it is kind of recreational organizations for the local kids. It is good. The only thing is their ideology has been diverted to small groups who like to retaliate or have grudges among themselves. So I think that by Jackie Chan's visit this can be changed.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Except from Jackie Chan's visit do you have any specific programs to actually face these challenges?

SARDARA: *Yes, we have, I initiated one meeting when I was in Viqueque we had these martial arts groups fighting, assaulting each other. Then I had a meeting with the Suco chiefs to call them to negotiate, negotiate and tell them, to educate them. See the elders should get involved in these martial arts groups to advise the youngsters or the youth how to benefit from participating in these martial arts groups. How to benefit and not, you know, to use martial arts as a foundation to attack the other group. So I was finally successful after initiating two meetings. After that we didn't have any martial arts problems among the groups there.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: Are you implementing the same programs here in Manatutu?

SARDARA: *Here I'm only one and a half month's old here, I'm only one and a half months here. I have not got the opportunity to do it here because when I came here I was on the patrol and now I am under the chief of operations. So I will try to organize something when I have time to group with our UNPOLs like the investigation unit. We will go and visit the sub-district and talk to the Sucos and try to find out if these martial arts groups can have monthly or yearly competition programs. So it will be a kind of recreational thing. But at the end of the day it all comes to the budget. See if someone has to come up with the budget to get things organized. We can give them the idea; we can be part of the co-organizer. We can advise them. We can give them all the ideas that they need, but it all depends on the district and the top district administrator, how he is going to get this project on the road.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: You mentioned certain obstacles concerning the PNTL (Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste or the National Police of East Timor) especially the professionalization of the PNTL force. Can you tell us a little bit more about the projects you maybe implemented in Viqueque or the projects you are seeing, implementing here.

SARDARA: *What we did actually in Viqueque actually was to go to the stations and the sub-stations. We used to organize meetings with all the PNTL personnel from the commander to the last man in the station. We used to tell them, we used to educate them what are the responsibilities of a police officer. A police officer has to maintain order and the peace and the security of this country. So he has to be a role model. He has to demonstrate good values in life while working and also when he is off duty. Because what I see a lot, maybe 90% of the PNTLs they are working in their own racial district where they are brought up. So it is much easier for them to communicate with the public because they are born there, they are brought up there and they know the whole geographical area of that region they are working. So it is kind of an advantage for them to know who to consult, who to talk to and how to get the public to cooperate and at the same time to deliver the best and make this police institution respected by the locals and by the whole nation of East Timor Leste.*

So what we do is we organize short classes and also short courses in line with the mentoring plan, the mentoring sessions which we have which is ongoing to today. So we try, we give them knowledge. We give them examples of developed countries, how the policeman executes his duties. It is kind of a democratic policing standard.

Policemen actually should be respected by the public. To gain respect is to give respect. So he should demonstrate good values to the public for him to be respected and accepted in the local community. That is number one. Once he can attend that, I may consider him successful by 50%. Then the other 50% is how he is going to deal with his day-to-day duties. He has to be very impartial, very transparent in dealing with everything in regards to the responsibilities entrusted to him. If he can manage to do that, I think it will be much easier for the UNMIT (United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste) to accomplish their mandate here. We could be able to accomplish before the timeframe that has been given to us.

So in getting, to achieve this, both parties, the UNMIT missionary and the PNTL missionaries have to work together. So we have to put ourselves in the PNTL shoes and the PNTLs have to put themselves in our shoes to get things done easier. By doing so we could understand and exchange information and knowledge very easily. That means we will be working on the same frequency so that we could be able to understand and impart knowledge easily. That is what I'm doing here.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Do you have a specific example maybe to show us how this relationship can be successful?

SARDARA: *To have a successful relationship in any organization, number one is we have to understand their background, number one. Number two is to have mutual respect among each other, number two. Number three is we are not their masters and they are not our subordinates. When we have these three examples instilled in our heart and mind. We could easily communicate with them.*

You see if there is barrier, or breakdown in communications we would never be able to get our message or our lessons across to them. Then it will be a failure to us. It will take longer time and it may even cause frustration among the PNTLs because to what I understand after interviewing a couple of them, roughly they have police experience of at least five to fifteen years. So they are not recruits. They have been entrusted and they have done their job in the past as professional police officers based on their local constitution and laws.

So number one for us is to have mutual understanding that we should respect each other. We are here to reconstitute the PNTL in regard to reform, restructure and rebuild their force, that's all. Once, we can only accomplish that if we can, you know, send across our lessons, which have been set by UNMIT. To me as a Malaysian I find it easy because I can speak Bahasa and most of the time when I speak to them I foresee and I actually realize that when I talk or when we speak the same language as the opposite person they tend to catch or they get our lessons very objectively. They tend to understand us much more easier. But they can't have all the Malaysians doing all this. So every UNPOL here has a certain degree of specialty which he has to impart or share with the local PNTL. I think most of the UNPOLs here are very professional as the criteria set by the UN is they want a police officer who has ten years of experience in active policing. So if you have ten years of active policing to me you are versatile. We can deploy you

to any section, any unit and you will be able to perform and you will have 70 or 80% of the knowledge.

What I'm trying to say here now is see, every country has its own constitution and laws. Basically the responsibilities of all policemen in this world is the same, to uphold the law. That means to maintain law and peace, to provide security, to to apprehend criminals and to look into intelligence. That's the same thing that every policeman in this world is doing. With that basic knowledge and understanding the local or Timor Leste CPT could make our job much more easier.

And you see, I have spoken to a lot of PNTLs during my stay in Viqueque and also in Manatutu. They are ever willing to learn from the UNPOLs, they want to learn. They want to acquire as much knowledge as they can. Even they come to a certain extent of telling us to organize English classes. In Viqueque the district commander came to me. He told me Mr. Singh could you have time for English classes in my district, I want my PNTLs to learn from you.

I told him very well, I could have English classes for one hour every day, it would be ok for me. We could do that. We can organize it. I'll be there to give basic English lessons. And again, we should have some English courses in the academy for all the UNPOLs, no, sorry, for all the PNTLs. They want to know more about English so that it will be easier for them to deal with the internationals, easier to understand.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Shouldn't it be the contrary, the UNPOLs should actually learn the local language don't you think?

SARDARA: *See that is, I consider that as the additional point for the UNPOLs. If they have the initiative, why not. But you see the UN can't be giving Tetum classes to UNPOLs. Then we may divert from our UNMIT mandate. They can have this on their own if they want to be more professional and more approachable by the PNTL. They can learn basic Tetum. It would make their day-to-day duties much more pleasant, it would be okay. That's a good idea I think.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: What are the major obstacles you face in your relationship with the PNTL, your monitoring activities that you mentioned?

SARDARA: *To me the major obstacles that I face are the PNTLs, they have very poor logistic support. You see sometimes when I address them, I could see they are wearing the uniform, but they don't have proper uniforms also. They only have a pair of uniforms and they have to use that for seven days in a week. They don't have enough good shoes for them. So logistically they are very poorly equipped, very, very poorly. I feel very sorry for them.*

Anytime when they look at our UNPOL's uniform they always say could you please leave your shoes behind when you end your mission or would you please leave your jacket behind when you end your mission. So these kinds of things are very sad kind of, we feel pity for them. So something should be done for this.

LEMAY-HEBERT: But was that known in 2004 by the previous mission? I'm wondering what happened to all the logistics that were there before in the previous two missions?

SARDARA: *I actually, I have no information on what happened in 2004 about their logistics support.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: Right now it is lacking.

SARDARA: *Right now what I see visually it is lacking. Sometimes they have multi—varieties of shoes, varieties of belts across their pants. The only thing they have normal blue uniforms. That's what everybody has. But I think this will be upgraded from time to time. It will be upgraded from time to time. I think the, actually the coordinators of the logistics department in Dili, they are aware I think. They are aware of all this, these disadvantages which are actually causing the PNTLs to, not to perform—sometimes they can't perform the duty in proper attire.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: Do you face any problem related to either the influence of gangs, martial arts groups inside the PNTL? I know that you posed a problem in 2006 when actually members of the PNTL were fighting each other when martial arts groups were actually involved in the fight. Also my second question will be: do you face any problems related to the influence of political leaders on the PNTL, on the district base, on Viqueque and here because I know also it was a problem in 2006, the influence of political leaders on the PNTL?

SARDARA: *Since I came to the mission in February, I have not sensed any influence by the political or the local politicians in regards to police executing their duties. In these two districts I have not experienced it. I don't know, but what I came to know when I was investigating the arson cases committed during 2007. The Viqueque District Commander was involved with some politics. The station commander and some of the PNTLs and also I think one Suco chief and a couple of teachers.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: Were involved?

SARDARA: *Yes, were involved in some kind of a political fight. But after that, that case is still under investigation. I think the NIDs came. I came to know from them. Then I was going through the file. Then we have to recollect the statements of all the victims. I think now the force is very clean because they have actually, did what we call a kind of scanning in regard to all the PNTLs if they are involved in any past crime, allegations, or violation of human rights. So now the force is considered to be very clean to my point of view. Because whenever we go to districts or to sub-districts I don't find any factions. By visiting, having weekly or sometimes surprise visits to this station, we actually can gather some information, but I have not sensed that lately. Even in the past, since I've come to the mission I've never sensed it. To me, whenever there is a need to work together I see them very cooperative. I see them performing their duties very professionally and they are very united. So kind of having factions or they disagree or agree, disagree with some terms, that question does not arise in me.*

You see these PNTLs they are a bit of frustrated with the programs set by the UN in regards to [Indecipherable]. You know it is set by someone, he leaves the mission and goes, a new UNPOL takes over, maybe he doesn't understand 100% of what is wanted from that training program. So there is some kind of remarks given by the PNTL, they are telling, let's say a European comes, he teaches his way of policing, then an Asian comes, he teaches his way, and there is some kind of a bit of conflict there. Basically that is only the only major thing.

I told them they have to suit according to what—we are only going to teach them what is within their constitution and also within their CPC. We can only give examples.

LEMAY-HEBERT: CPC meaning?

SARDARA: *Criminal Procedure Code of Timor Leste. The police they use this Criminal Procedure Code to do their day-to-day job.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: That was interesting what you mentioned concerning the change of the staff actually, the UNPOL staff. Did you meet your predecessor in this job and did he leave you any records or advice that you found especially helpful, maybe either here or in Viqueque?

SARDARA: *Actually my job there was investigation so I found it very interesting because everything was documented and the PNTL investigator also was very efficient. So I had access to a lot of information very easily. Basically what they were doing was according to the normal procedures, the normal operating procedures to do investigation and all that.*

Also patrolling. See in patrolling we used to bring them along. They know the area very well, they know the area very well and they know each and every citizen in the area. That is something that I found very interesting. So to me, for them to perform their responsibility was not a major obstacle. So I found it very interesting working with them because whenever we wanted to go to any part of the area they would just give us a brief what is the road condition, how were the roads, roughly the population, the Suco chief. They could even mention how many schools, local schools they had there or churches or other public structures.

LEMAY-HEBERT: They know the local—?

SARDARA: *They know the locals very well.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: Were you able to actually speak to them to meet your UNPOL predecessor, the one who was actually right just before you?

SARDARA: *No, no. Actually I joined the investigation. Before me we had three UNPOLs on the team, so I was the fourth member of the team. So to me my predecessor was still there, he was still serving. So I could interact and communicate with him all the time.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: And here?

SARDARA: *Here I am under the operations so I was here before he left. He handed over to me pretty well. He explained to me and everything was fine.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: You have an extensive knowledge of intelligence and I would like to briefly discuss this matter with you especially concerning the mission here but we also welcome comparisons to Bosnia and Viqueque. Can you talk a little bit about how you and also the mission gather information about the environment you are policing?

SARDARA: *You see actually, my personality is to know everything which is within my capacity and also to know something which is beyond my capacity, just for knowledge sake. So I would be very friendly to all my surroundings. I would listen and then try to make a point, or try to evaluate what did I gather from the particular briefing or conversation. I think maybe my job has taught me to do that. Maybe basically that is what basic intelligence training—we don't write anything. We become very good listeners and then we summarize all, we put up our own conclusion. It can be right, it can be wrong, that is our opinion.*

Usually it turns out to be maybe sometimes 70% right or maybe 30% negative. It happens. To me, you see, when I mix around, I talk to them. Sometimes I share my food with them, even play games with them. Sometimes I would go beyond that to visit their family, to see how and in which conditions are they living, to understand the person better. By doing so you actually instill a certain level of trust in the opposite person with you. By doing that he would not feel, not think that you are a stranger to him.

Then, after developing that kind of relationship he may tend to talk freely to you. Sometimes he may say something which he personally thinks is not right or personally thinks if brought up to some internationals, we will have our main channels to channel that request or information to the higher authority so that they will know and they could take remedies, action, to rectify or to upgrade certain conditions or level of work to be done, to accomplish certain tasks.

Actually we should listen or we should talk a lot to the field players who are actually doing active police duties, those who were active in police duties. They are the main players. They are the ones who we should talk to, we should understand them. Then we will know what are the weaknesses, which areas we need to stress more, to upgrade the mentality and the standard of working conditions here. They don't give a conducive environment for someone to work. He will not be able to produce good results.

He may be working, may be able to perform, but the quality may drop from 100% to maybe 60 or 70%. So it all depends on the environment in which they are working, long hours of working. Maybe a human being can produce quality work for seven hours. Then another five hours he can't produce because the level, the brain functioning will drop. The level of that will drop. He will produce. He may carry on if you tell him to work more than what he can handle, but we will not get quality work, output, from him. So that's the way it should be done.

LEMAY-HEBERT: I would like now to discuss the UN internal management and also the relationship between the UN and the host country personnel. We have discussed this throughout the interview but I would like to ask you specific questions regarding this.

SARDARA: *Um-hum.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: First of all, regarding the UN internal management issue. If you could create a wish list, what two or three changes in the UN internal management would you want in order to be more effective in your work?

SARDARA: *Number one, for a mission to be successful, all the newcomers should be given induction training first on the local laws. That is very important, to understand their criminal procedure codes. See when I came to this mission they only give something very brief. Being a law enforcer I took my own initiative to dig and dig and understand what was actually in their criminal procedures laws. Then only I could perform efficiently and professionally in the field. If I don't understand the basic law of the host country how am I going to contribute?*

LEMAY-HEBERT: But I heard it's really difficult because it is a mix of Indonesian laws, UN laws and Portuguese.

SARDARA: *It's okay, to me it's okay. Laws are always laws. If we understand them, we read them and understand them we would be able to utilize them in our work. If you*

don't have even basic knowledge of the laws how are you going to work? So what actually happens is that the UN depends on the PNTL rather than the PNTL depending on the UN. You see? So this is what would happen. That is what I think.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Do you have any other recommendations?

SARDARA: *My only other recommendation is whenever an UNPOL is deployed to the outer districts he should be well equipped with knowledge in the field he is going to perform. If he has some specialties in some section he should be deployed to that area and he will be able to perform the best there. I see sometimes, it is better to have a very initiative UNPOL, one UNPOL than having ten UNPOLs who don't want to perform well, who just come here for the sake of coming. To know what his mission is all about. So the mindset of our UNPOLs should be put in place during the induction training. I saw that in my previous mission in Bosnia.*

They had an induction training, very good lecturers. They talked about the past history. How did this mission integrate here, why we are here, what we are supposed to do?

LEMAY-HEBERT: That was not the case here?

SARDARA: *That was the case here but only in-between breaks, not well organized. I can honestly say the induction training you need when I arrived here was not well organized. We had to walk from our hotel to the venue where the classes were held, no proper transportation, no proper arrangement of timing. So all these are the disadvantages of a mission. You see, to me, I have the kind of thinking you say UN, we think oh, it is professional. UN means professional because it is the world body. So to me if I think about UN, I must upgrade myself also. I must take the initiative to think globally, to think internationally. But when I experience that in my first week I was kind of disappointed. But I told them it happens so we have to bear with it and I'll try to upgrade my knowledge, I'll take my own initiative to do that. So these are the kind of obstacles which can be rectified. It can be rectified.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: You mentioned how having one UNPOL, one very professional UNPOL is maybe better than having ten UNPOLs who are not really committed to the mission. Could you offer two or three recommendations for improving recruitment for example to find people better attuned to local conditions or increase the talent pool? Do you have any recommendations in this regard?

SARDARA: *I came across—this is a police mission but there are some UNPOLs who say they are from the military organization. So I find it kind of change.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: The military police.

SARDARA: *Yes, the military police. It struck my mind, the UN wanted to recruit active policemen who are engaged in active policing. Then I see alongside us there are some military background personnel working with us. So I kind of, it is a contradiction between police and army knowledge. The level of thinking between the police and army is very wide, a big gap. So I don't know how the UN recruits such personnel. It is my personnel view. I don't know how this thing came into the mission.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: That was the same situation in Bosnia?

SARDARA: *No in Bosnia we were all policemen, normal policemen who have performed more than ten years of police duties back home. So I didn't experience any army joining a UN peacekeeping, a police mission. UNPOL means United Nations police officers. Maybe this army UNPOL with us, maybe they are doing police duties back home, but it is only a guess, I don't know.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: Are there two or three mistakes you commonly observe in the way donor countries or international organizations like the UN make with respect to the relationships with the local personnel or the local population? Maybe you can contrast Bosnia and East Timor in this regard, you have the knowledge of both missions.

SARDARA: *This is a totally different mission. Bosnia it was totally different, what we experience here is different. There we were doing co-location; here we are doing active police duties together alongside the PNTL. There we were monitoring them, we are actually monitoring how they do the job and when we find some discrepancies or some kind of mistakes we used to correct them and educate them. Also we were investigating human rights violations committed by the local police in regards to performing their duties with the locals.*

What I see here, where we are doing active policing. So when we are doing active policing we have the same powers entrusted to the PNTL in carrying out police duties. Here the question of investigating them in the field does not arise. When they do, we are there together doing with them, together performing the same duties. So we actually are buddies performing the same duties with them. Sometimes we are together, it is—we tell them you do one part, I do one part, then we get it together.

LEMAY-HEBERT: So you have the experience of Bosnia and East Timor in this regard, two very different missions as you mentioned.

SARDARA: Yes.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Which one was more successful in this perspective, monitoring missions or giving them the chance to learn on the ground and by their own experience and being able to actually review their work and teach them how to do it or to actually do it with them which is more or less the East Timor way?

SARDARA: *To do it with them is much more conducive, to do it with them and then to educate them, to do it with them. And when the time comes when we have full trust in them we hand over. But in Bosnia that initial stage was concluded so the later stage came when we were monitoring and doing co-location. So I think this mission will also experience that in the later stage, they will experience that also, this co-location, monitoring and supervising or supervision. They will come to that phase also. So we are, actually we are approaching that phase in a couple of months.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: What are the biggest challenges you think the local police force, the PNTL, will face when the UN will withdraw from the country. We are talking about 2009 usually.

SARDARA: *The local police challenges to what I see—. As far as executing the police duties and responsibilities, I don't see any challenges they will face, no challenges. Because at this stage also they are performing considerably very good. They can work long hours. I've seen some sections working 12-hour shifts a day and not been given off for two weeks. That means they are continuously working for two*

weeks and not been given off. They are very punctual, they are very patient in executing their duties.

The challenges that they face, they are always complaining about a very small monthly pay slip, very small pay they are getting. Secondly they are under-equipped with logistics. So now you see anytime they want to go to the interior, sub-districts, to investigate, we bring them in our UN vehicles.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Which breaches the UN—?

SARDARA: *No it does not breach it, actually we get the waiver formed signed so we are covered also.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: That's good.

SARDARA: *So they, you know, 60-70%, they depend on the UN logistics in regards to vehicles. Sometimes we do patrolling. We have to bring victims to the station or to the prosecutors, the suspects or the defendants, sometimes to serve warrants and notifications in the interior. We bring them along in our vehicles. Most of the time they are telling us their vehicles are unusable, they are broken down or something, they run out of gas. So most of the time we are sharing the burden and we are helping them. So that is what our mandate is, it is also I think. We have to do that also.*

That is the second obstacle that they will face when the UN completes its mandate here. Then lastly they should be given proper accommodations. That also has to be looked into. I have not seen any district with police barracks in my two districts, in Viqueque, in Manatutu and also in Dili. Lately only I saw them building a few houses, a very small number of houses and accommodations for the PNTLs. That is insufficient. Let's say in a district they have around 90 to 100 personnel. So if they only have ten to twenty accommodations it will not be sufficient for the whole lot.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Thank you very much. I just have two more questions if you are willing. Is there anything about the context or history or maybe culture in East Timor that means that most lessons learned elsewhere for example in Bosnia are inapplicable here or don't translate very well?

SARDARA: *No, they translate very well. Most of the UN missions have the same background. The country is ruined. Sometimes we have to go and set up the new police force. We have to implement the UN mandate. To me, as far as UN mission in regards to United Nations police are concerned it is the same. The only thing is there must be slight changes only. That means some missions you are unarmed, some missions you are armed. Some missions you do monitoring, some missions in the initial stage you have been vested with normal police powers. That means you can do search, arrest, all the normal duties. So I think basically if you have served in one mission, you can get at least 60% of knowledge applicable to any other mission.*

LEMAY-HEBERT: If you had a chance to write a handbook for police officers who are, who have to build civilian police units in a challenging environment, what kind of topics would you consider most important?

SARDARA: *First I would consider basic civic lessons. In these civic lessons you will be educated, you will be taught, you will be given good advice to be very respected human being. These civic lessons to me are taught in schools, in primary periods*

and also secondary schools. Secondly what I think is, if given a chance, every policeman should be given good and professional basic training. Then get it on by short courses in regards to police duties and change of laws or bylaws which will be implemented from time to time in the country's constitution and their procedures, criminal procedures.

Also they should be given an opportunity to have cross culture among the neighboring countries. They should be given the opportunity to visualize themselves, how a foreign country, police academics are established. What can they learn and incorporate in the local police academy. That is very important. Because learning process is an ongoing process. Criminals become educated, become very professional from time to time. So the policeman should also have the upper hand in regards to tracking down criminals, how to deal with modern crimes which are very sophisticated. That's my point of view.

LEMAY-HEBERT: Thank you very much.