

East-Timor (Timor Timur),

Last updated: 31-01-2004

Location and area

East Timor is a territory in South East Asia, forming the eastern half of the island of Timor. It is bordered on the north by the Wetar Strait and on the south by the Timor Sea. The western half of the island belongs to the Republic of Indonesia. East Timor was a Portuguese colony until 1975 and was claimed as a province of Indonesia from 1976 to 1999. In August 1999 the East Timorese population voted to become an independent nation, and the territory was subsequently placed under the administration of the United Nations (UN) during the period of transition to complete independence.

East Timor covers 14,609 km² and includes the eastern side of Timor, the enclave of Oecusse (Oecussi Ambeno) in West Timor, and some small islands. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002)

Topography

East-Timor has a mountainous terrain; Tata Mailau (2,950 m), in the west, is the highest peak. Many rivers flow from the mountains through the coastal plains. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002)

Climate

The climate is hot with monsoon rains falling between December and March. Daily temperatures range from highs of 30° to 34° C to lows of 20° to 23° C. The hottest period falls between October and December. The north coast is arid, with a severe dry season (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in East-Timor and 107 km² of gley soils.