

Fear in East Timor

Fiona Willan

POTENTIAL riots and fears of political unrest have left a Montmorency nurse housebound in East Timor.

Crystal Brown, 25, is in “lock down” following the country’s June 30 election.

Ms Brown said UN police and the Portugese army were preparing for possible riots following the release of the election results.

“No one really knows what to expect, which is a little scary at times,” Ms Brown told the *Leader*.

“I have become accustomed to hearing the Black Hawks flying low overhead, seeing the military patrols pass with bulletproof vests, helmets, radio headsets and (weapons) in tow.

“I’m housebound on and off.”

When housebound, Ms Brown has a “grab-bag” packed in case she needs to evacuate.

Ms Brown said she was “humoured” by reports East Timor had been peaceful after the election.

“There are still gang fights, crimes, rock attacks, murders – but I suppose they call it peaceful because it is just normal for Timor and not directly related to the election,” she said.

Despite the many UN police and the “forceful” presence of the Portuguese GNR (Republican National Guard) on the streets, Ms Brown said the feeling in the air was one of hope.

“This is history in the making, the world’s youngest nation voting for its right to freedom and a democratic society for the second time,” she said.

Ms Brown has been working in Timor for Australian Aid International for three months.

She has a six-month contract, but hopes to extend it until the end of the year.



Crystal Brown attends to a young patient.



Crystal Brown works for Australian Aid International.