



**JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME**  
**PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN SISTEMA JUDISIAL**

## **Press Release**

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### **Oecusse District Court tries domestic violence cases for three consecutive days**

For three consecutive days (07 - 09 February 2012) the Oecusse District Court tried cases involving light maltreatment that were categorized as domestic violence.

Based on monitoring conducted by JSMP, each day the court tried two cases involving domestic violence. Therefore the court was able to try six cases. The hearings took place in the morning and the afternoon in accordance with the predetermined schedule.

The aforementioned cases involved suspects with different backgrounds. One case involved a member of the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL)<sup>[1]</sup>, another case involved a technical consultant in the field of Civil Construction, and another case involved a carpenter, and the remaining cases involved ordinary citizens such as farmers.

The six cases reached the final stage of proceedings with the announcement of the final decision of the court. Three defendants were fined amounts ranging between US\$ 21 and US\$ 90<sup>[2]</sup> including the payment of court costs, and the other three defendants were given sentences of imprisonment of up to one year six months, with the sentences suspended for periods between one year six months and two years.

The hearings were presiding over by single judge João Ribeiro, while the Public Prosecution Service was represented by Afonso Lopes and Jacinto Babo Soares and the Oecusse Public Defenders Office was represented by Sebastião Amado Nheu de Almeida and Calistro Tout.

The Executive Director of JSMP Luis de Oliveira Sampaio said that “*JSMP values all of the efforts of the court actors, namely the judges, prosecutors and public defenders, who continue to give priority to cases involving domestic violence through effective cooperation and they have engaged in processes aimed at ensuring that these matters are tried and decided to completion*”.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Refer to JSMP Press Release dated 20 February 2012 about a case of domestic violence involving a police officer

<sup>[2]</sup> Refer to JSMP Press Release dated 20 February 2012 about the Oecusse District Court issuing a fine to a defendant in a case involving domestic violence

JSMP would like to use this opportunity to express its appreciation to the court clerks who have dedicated themselves to the aforementioned court because even with extremely limited human resources, they have continued to demonstrate their willingness and dedication to make preparations and help the judges schedule cases of domestic violence and to try these cases.

These cases all involved light maltreatment, and therefore after hearing the evidence and the final recommendations and pleas the judge immediately analyzed the facts and concluded proceedings by formulating a decision and immediately announcing the final judgment.

JSMP also observed that before hearing testimony from defendants, victims and witnesses the judge always provided an explanation about their rights and responsibilities in accordance with the applicable law.

In relation to the victims in particular, the judge provided an explanation about their responsibilities to provide testimony about the legal facts in relation to incidents that have affected them. Also, JSMP observed that after reading his decision the judge always advised the defendants to refrain from repeating such acts in the future.

JSMP hopes that these collective efforts, together with the cooperative spirit and desire demonstrated by the court actors, as well as the relevant stakeholders who contribute to the administration of justice, can make a positive step towards reducing the number of domestic violence cases occurring in Timor-Leste.

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