



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁL

Press Release
Baucau District Court
4 September 2014

11 Cases of domestic violence from 13 cases heard by the mobile court in Manatuto District

From 25 to 29 August 2014 the Baucau District Court operated a mobile court in Manatuto District. The mobile court heard 13 cases, of which 11 involved domestic violence. The other two cases involved the misuse of authority and driving a vehicle in a dangerous manner. However, the court only tried 12 cases and the remaining case which involved domestic violence was adjourned because the defendant was not present.

From those cases that were heard, 9 cases involving domestic violence were decided and the defendants received suspended prison sentences. In one case the court amended the charges from the crime of simple offences against physical integrity, as provided for in Article 145 of the Penal Code, to the crime of mistreatment of a spouse under Article 154 of the Penal Code. The hearing to announce the decision in this case was set for 3 September 2014 at the Baucau District Court.

“JSMP values all initiatives to bring justice closer to the community in isolated areas via the mobile court to facilitate public access and to reduce the number of cases awaiting trial. Nevertheless, JSMP encourages the courts to choose penalties that have the power to deter the same crimes from occurring in the future,” said the Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

JSMP has observed that in both the mobile court and the district courts, the majority of cases being heard involve domestic violence.

JSMP suspects that it is possible that members of the community are not afraid to commit violence because the penalties handed down in cases of domestic violence are not serious and the defendants do not feel that they have been punished when they received a suspended prison sentence. JSMP recommends to the courts to reconsider the sentences which are applied in cases of domestic violence.

The mobile court was presided over by judge Antonio Fonseca. The public prosecution service was represented by Luis Hernani Rangel da Cruz and Grigorio de Lima from the Office of the Public Defender.

The mobile court was conducted with the financial support of UNDP.

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