



Press Release
Baucau District Court
22 April 2015

Baucau District Court sentences defendant to 12 years in prison in case of sexual abuse against a minor

On 16 April 2015 the Baucau District Court conducted a hearing in a case of sexual abuse of a minor and sentenced the defendant O to 12 years in prison. The court found that the defendant who is approximately 63 years old was guilty of committing sexual abuse against the victim aged 10, in Baucau District.

The court proved that on 17 March 2013, at 12 mid day, the victim went to get some white palm wine (traditional drink) at the defendant's home in the rice fields. When the victim wanted to go home the defendant held the victim and committed sexual abuse against the victim.

These facts were corroborated by the witness AdC (older sister of the victim) who witnessed the incident and immediately took the victim to the VPU of the police. These acts made the victim feel extremely ashamed and she has stopped going to school until now. At that time the defendant tried to give money to the witness not to tell anyone else about the incident.

“JSMP encourages all components of the State to understand that sexual violence against minors is a very serious crime and causes psychological suffering and has a prolonged impact on the child’s development. JSMP asks for everyone to combat violence against children,” said the Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

Since early 2015 until mid-April 2015 JSMP has noted at least 4 cases of sexual violence against minors where the defendants have been convicted by the courts. In the first case the Suai District Court sentenced the defendant to 14 years in prison for the crime of abusing a victim aged 13, in the second case the Baucau District Court sentenced the defendant to 15 years in prison in a case of sexual abuse (incest) against the victim who was aged 10, and in the third case the Dili District Court sentenced the defendant to 20 years in prison after he was found guilty of committing sexual abuse against a victim aged 6. In addition to a prison sentence in the second case the court also ordered the defendant to pay compensation of US\$2,000 to the victim.

JSMP has suggested repeatedly that in addition to imposing prison sentences all of the courts should also order defendants to pay compensation to victims to acknowledge the serious suffering that they have experienced.

JSMP believes that the sexual abuse of a child can have a negative and very serious impact on the social and psychological development of the child. In this case, the victim felt extremely ashamed and decided to stop going to school. This is evidence that the consequences suffered by the victim were very serious.

Therefore JSMP has encouraged all parties to understand that sexual acts against children are a serious crime and cause psychological suffering and interrupt their development indefinitely.

The hearing to announce this decision was presided over by Afonso Carmona representing a panel of judges. The public prosecution service was represented by Luis H. Rangel da Cruz and the defendant was represented by Mario Fernandes from the Office of the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Baucau Diocese.

For more information, please contact:

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