



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

Press release

Suai District Court

20 April 2015

Suai District Court sentences defendant to 17 years in prison in case of aggravated murder

On 16 April 2015, the Suai District Court sentenced the defendant FdC to 17 years in prison after he was found guilty of committing the crime of aggravated murder against his wife on 29 August 2009 in Ainaro District.

The court found that the defendant slashed the victim in the forehead, head, leg and arm which caused the victim to die immediately at the scene of the crime. This incident occurred when the victim returned from church.

The court found that these actions fulfilled the elements of the crime in Article 139 (g) of the Penal Code on aggravated murder against the victim who was his spouse. This crime carries a penalty of 12 to 25 years in prison. The court's findings were based on the defendant's confession and witness testimony.

"Crimes against women are serious crimes and are widespread in Timor-Leste. JSMP believes that the government should consider this reality as a serious problem in Timorese society because many married women have lost their lives at the hands of their own husbands," said the Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

In a hearing to examine evidence on 26 March 2015 at a mobile court held in Ainaro District, the defendant admitted his actions and testified that he killed the victim because he suspected the victim of having sexual relations with another man.

The witness FdC, who was together with the victim when they returned from Mass, testified that on the day of the incident the defendant waited for the victim near the church and when they left the church, the defendant approached the victim and, without saying a word, immediately slashed the victim in the forehead, head, leg and arm. The witness saw the victim suffer a lot of bleeding and die immediately at the scene.

JSMP applauds the decision to sentence the defendant to 17 years in prison because this sentence acknowledges the severity of the crime that was committed. Sentences like this can encourage people to resolve their disputes without the use of violence.

JSMP asks all parties including government, civil society, the church and the entire community to make a collective effort to combat domestic violence which continues to flourish in society. This is a social phenomenon in which the State must immediately intervene to ensure that nobody in this country can take the life of another person. Women are integral members of Timor-Leste's society and therefore they must live free from all forms of violence so that they can develop themselves and contribute to the development of this nation.

The hearing to announce the decision in this case was presided over by judge Alvaro Maria Freitas who represented a panel of judges. The Public Prosecution Service was represented by Jose Ello and the defendant was represented by Public Defender Manuel Amaral.

For more information, please contact:

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