



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

Press release
10 March 2016

**Sexual violence is a critical problem for women and children in Timor-Leste:
JSMP Thematic Report for the period 2012-2015**

JSMP (Judicial System Monitoring Programme) is launching a thematic report entitled: ‘Charging, Trials and Sentencing in cases of Sexual Violence in Timor-Leste for the period 2012-2015’. This report will be launched on 11 March 2016 at the JSMP Office, Rua Setubal, Colmera, Dili.

This report explains the circumstances of women and children who are directly affected and victimized by sexual violence. This report was compiled based on JSMP’s research and monitoring of charging, trials and sentencing in cases of sexual violence.

“Sexual violence against women and children has its own set of special and complex characteristics and is an extremely critical problem in Timor-Leste. Therefore, it is important for everyone, especially the judicial system, to prioritize this problem so that women and children do not continue to be victims of sexual violence” said the Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

JSMP has observed that the courts of Timor-Leste have achieved important progress in some aspects of sentencing in cases of sexual violence, including imposing appropriate penalties in cases of sexual abuse against children and awarding compensation for victims. JSMP has also observed that the Public Prosecution Service, Public Defenders and judges continue to endeavor and work hard to prioritize cases characterized as sexual violence.

JSMP understands that even though a range of limitations and obstacles continue to be encountered, the courts have still managed to make important and significant changes to strengthen the legal system and increase the faith of victims and the general public in the justice system.

However, JSMP also observed that many cases of sexual violence are still not being dealt with properly by the courts, especially in relation to the charging of defendants, and sentencing is not always consistent and often does not reflect the seriousness of the criminal offence committed by

the defendant. Our legal system has also adopted practices that have failed to adequately protect the rights of victims, including the right to confidentiality and security.

In relation to these findings, JSMP recommends for court actors to select more appropriate charges and apply sentences that are commensurate with the severity of offences committed by defendants. JSMP also recommends for sentencing guidelines to be issued to ensure consistency in the application of penalties in cases of sexual violence.

JSMP hopes to receive your comments or responses to this report. This report is available in Tetum and English. You can access this report at: www.jsmp.tl.

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For more information please contact:

Luis de Oliveira Sampaio
Executive Director of JSMP
Email: luis@jsmp.minihub.org