



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

Press Release
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Commemoration of International Children's Day: JSMP requests guarantees for the adequate protection of children

JSMP requests for the Government, namely the Eighth Constitutional Government, through its relevant institutions to ensure the adequate protection of children against all forms of violence and sexual abuse.

In recent cases JSMP has observed that children aged between 3¹ and 5² have suffered serious sexual abuse committed by a family member or neighbour who spends time with them. Most cases involved female victims aged 9-11, who have suffered sexual abuse committed by a person who should have provided protection to these children in society.

Regular monitoring of the courts from January 2017 to December 2017³ and from 2018 to March 2018 in all of the jurisdictions of Timor-Leste has shown that there were 73 cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse involving children. This figure only represents cases observed by JSMP in the courts and JSMP believes that more cases have occurred that were not processed through the formal justice system.

“JSMP is really concerned that if the relevant institutions do not take some extraordinary actions to end or prevent violence, it is possible that even more violence will be committed against children in the future. Cases have shown that the State has generally failed to provide protection and promote a secure environment where children are free to enjoy their rights as children”, said the Director Executive of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

JSMP hopes that with the commemoration of International Children's Day, the entire community of Timor-Leste has an opportunity to think about and reflect on what needs to be further strengthened in the future and how to protect children against all forms of violence and discrimination.

¹ Case Summary - March 2018, No. 11, Case No: 0010/17. VQWTL; published in 2018

(http://jsmp.naroman.tl/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Sumariu-kazu-Tribunal-Distrital-Baucau_TETUM.pdf);

² JSMP Press Release: http://jsmp.tl/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Final-PR-TDB-kondena-pena-prizaun-13_ba-kazu-abuzu-seksual-agravadu-JSMP-husu-investiga-kean_Final.pdf

³ Please refer also to the 2017 Overview of the Justice Sector Report on the JSMP website: <http://jsmp.naroman.tl/publications/relatoriu/> and cases summaries from January-March 2018 at: <http://jsmp.naroman.tl/publications/sumariu-kazu/>

JSMP demands for State organs, especially the Government, to establish a responsive system and develop policies to guarantee adequate protection for children's rights. JSMP also requests for the new legislature of the National Parliament to amend the Penal Code and include a specific article on incest without reference to age and consent and to immediately prioritise the discussion and approval of the Draft Law on Child Protection.

The State of Timor-Leste needs to comply with its obligations in the Constitution and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by the State. Both the Timor-Leste Constitution and the Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantee that the State has a duty to ensure special protection against all acts such as neglect, discrimination, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation.

Every year on June 1 International Children's Day is commemorated for children around the world, including in Timor-Leste. International Children's Day is important because it gives recognition to all children to guarantee and promote respect for their rights, and promotes joint efforts to prevent all forms of violence, discrimination and sexual abuse against children in many nations including Timor-Leste which has recently experienced a trend of serious threats against children.

In relation to the commemoration of this important day, JSMP would like to congratulate children around the world, especially children in Timor-Leste.

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