



Press Release
Likisá Municipality
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Residents of Village Fatumasi raised concerns about the political impasse and cases of child neglect

On 19 March 2020 JSMP held training for members of the village council and the community in Fatumasi Village, Bazartete Administrative Post, Likisá Municipality on “Democracy and the role of sovereign organs, public participation in the law-making process and access to formal justice in Timor-Leste. The participants in this training included the Village Chief, Sub-Village chiefs, male and female youths, members of the village council, teachers and investigative police. There were 30 participants, comprising 11 women and 19 men.

The aim of this training was to share information and increase the knowledge of community members and the village administrative structure about democracy, the role of sovereign organs, public participation in the law-making process and access to formal justice.

“Providing training to the authorities and members of the Village Council as well as community members is a commitment from JSMP that is aimed at increasing their knowledge about important and relevant issues, that will help them perform their role properly and to understand how cases need to be dealt with according to existing mechanisms and to help them deal with issues or problems in their community”, said the Acting Executive Director of JSMP, Casimiro dos Santos.

In the session on democracy, the role of sovereign organs and public participation in the law making process, the participants raised issues about the political impasse that still remains unresolved, the system of democracy that provides more freedom to the people, early elections and the issue of lifelong pensions. Meanwhile in the session on access to formal justice, the participants raised their concerns about children who have been neglected by their parents, crimes of domestic violence occurring with the family, and lastly about people making complaints about cases of homicide when the perpetrators are unknown.

In response to these questions and concerns JSMP provided explanations to the participants and also explained the political impasse that emerged in 2017 that remains unsolved, as well as the meaning of “Early Elections”. In relation to the issue of lifelong pensions, JSMP told the participants about advocacy undertaken by JSMP and other partners that resulted in the National Parliament making changes to this law. In relation to crimes of homicide where the perpetrators are unknown, JSMP explained that to find out the identity of perpetrators in certain cases, the police need the support and collaboration of the community, because their information can simplify and facilitate the work of the police and enable them to identify persons suspected of committing these crimes. Also, JSMP encouraged everybody not to feel

afraid to speak up and provide information, because they can help the police to discover persons involved in such acts.

Meanwhile in relation to cases of neglected children, JSMP explained about legal instruments that ensure special protection for the rights of child both within the family and the protection provided by the State, as well as the role of the Public Prosecution Service in defending child victims.

Regarding crimes of domestic violence, JSMP outlined that these crimes are public in nature so therefore anybody can make a complaint and cases cannot be withdrawn. In addition, JSMP explained about the aim of the Law Against Domestic Violence.

In the opening session Mr. Eduardo A. da Costa, the Village Chief of Fatumasi, stated that this training is crucial to the village administrative structure, because often when there is a case, for example a homicide or an assault that occurs in the home, the local authorities bring members of parliament. Another issue raised was that certain members of the community, especially youths, do whatever they want in the name of democracy, and do not respect their parents and authorities. The Village Chief stated that this training is extremely important for the participants, and therefore he urged them to listen carefully so that they can apply what they have learnt in the future.

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