



**JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME**  
**PROGRAMA DE MONITORIZAÇÃO DO SISTEMA JUDICIAL**

*Press Conference*

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**The Suai Police Investigations Unit is not cooperating effectively with the Court**

Between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 13 February 2009 JSMP conducted monitoring of trials at the Suai District Court which has jurisdiction over Same, Ainaro, Bobonaro and Suai.

During the aforementioned period the Suai District Court was scheduled to try eight (8) cases. The court issued summons to victims, witnesses and defendants through the police investigations unit. However the court was only able to try three (3) cases because the written summons provided to the police investigations unit were not delivered to any of the parties required to attend the trials, namely the witnesses, victims and defendants.

The reason why these court summons were not delivered to the relevant parties by the police investigations unit was because the police did not know for sure the addresses of the aforementioned parties.

During one hearing the presiding judge complained about the police investigations unit and reminded them to collaborate effectively with the court to ensure that cases scheduled for trial were not delayed unnecessarily. The aforementioned judge made this complaint because he believed that the police investigations unit did not take responsibility for the summons issued by the court that were supposed to be delivered to the relevant parties, namely witnesses, victims and defendants and/or because the police have absolutely no understanding about the law.

Also, in one case a Suai District police officer had been summoned to attend court but he did not wish to cooperate and had on four (4) occasions ignored court summons. The presiding judge in this case will issue a warrant for his arrest if the said police officer, who is the defendant in this case, fails to attend the next scheduled hearing to enable the trial to continue and for justice to be provided to the victim.

Recalling that the Suai District Court often faces such problems, JSMP believes that the police assigned to the investigations unit should be equipped with copies of all of the applicable laws in Timor Leste so that they will always be prepared to cooperate with the courts and when one member of the police assigned to the investigations unit is transferred to another area there should be a hand over of duties to the new officer so that work requiring immediate attention is not neglected and can be dealt with efficiently.

JSMP also recommends for the government to not only address the working conditions of judicial actors, namely judges, prosecutors and public defenders, but also the government should naturally address the needs of the police, especially the investigations unit so that the judicial system in Timor Leste can meet everybody's expectations, because the work of the police investigations unit compliments the work of all judicial actors, which essentially is aimed at providing justice in all cases, recalling that police provide law enforcement in the community to protect all of the citizens of this nation.

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