



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA DE MONITORIZAÇÃO DO SISTEMA JUDICIAL

Press Release
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GENDER BASED VIOLENCE CASES IN THE BAUCAU DISTRICT COURT

The Baucau District Court conducted a number of hearings during November 2007. The Women's Justice Unit of JSMP used this opportunity to monitor five cases of violence against women that were heard on the 20th and 21st November 2007. Of these five cases, one related to domestic violence and the other four related to sexual assault. The Baucau District Court is yet to issue final decisions in these five cases.

Based on monitoring conducted by Flora Soriano, a legal researcher from the Women's Justice Unit (WJU) of JSMP, the victims of all of these cases were related to the defendants. In three cases the victims were underage and in the remaining two cases the victims were adults.

Victims of gender based violence experience trauma. In cases where the victim is related to the defendant and in cases where the victim is underage they may experience heightened suffering. JSMP recommends that, when decisions are made in these cases, the relationship between the victim and the defendant as well as the age of the victim is taken into account.

JSMP commends the Baucau District Court for conducting these gender based violence cases during November and for the increasing number of these cases that are being heard by the court.

The formal justice system in Timor-Leste has a particularly important role to play in addressing levels of gender based violence. Sentences that reflect the

serious nature of this violence will act as a sign to the community that violence against women and children is a crime. JSMP hopes that the sentences in the cases discussed above will reflect the seriousness of the situations of the victims.

For further information, please contact:

Flora Soriano, Legal Researcher, WJU-JSMP

Email: lola@jsmp.minihub.org

Or contact:

Timotio de Deus

Director of JSMP

Email: timotio@jsmp.minihub.org

Phone: +670 3323883