



Press Release
11 April 2005

VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICE FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE COMMENCES AT JSMP

JSMP has established a new unit aimed at providing legal information to women victims of sexual violence and domestic violence. This unit is called the Victim Support Service (VSS). The VSS commenced work on 5 April 2005 with two East Timorese staff. The VSS was established based on the findings of the “Access to Justice for Victims” assessment conducted by JSMP in July 2004. The VSS hopes to work closely with the other organizations which provide support to women victims of violence. Although the VSS is located within JSMP’s office for administrative purposes, it operates independently of JSMP’s Legal Research Team and Women’s Justice Unit and its work will not conflict with the routine work of these other units.

The VSS will accompany women victims of violence from the police (VPU), to the prosecutor’s office and the court. The VSS will provide information to victims about their rights and the formal justice process. It will also encourage women victims to continue in the formal justice process once they have begun. It is hoped the VSS will help improve the efficiency of the formal justice system when dealing with cases of violence against women. It is also hoped it will help to increase the success rate of prosecutions of perpetrators of violence against women, and improve women victims’ confidence in the formal justice system.

JSMP realizes that a number of organizations have been working to assist victims of domestic and sexual violence, including: Fokupers, Pradet Timor Loro’sae, and the Alola Foundation. We hope that the VSS will be able to work effectively and cooperatively with these organizations in order to contribute to the overall aim of decreasing the rate of violence against women in Timor Leste.

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