



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

**Press Release**  
*4 February 2008*

**WOMEN'S JUSTICE UNIT CONDUCTS MONITORING AND TRAINING  
IN THE DISTRICT OF OECUSSE**

For one week between 25 - 29 February, the Women's Justice Unit of JSMP observed proceedings in the Oecusse District Court and provided training to women's organizations in the Oecusse district. WJU did not manage to conduct any court monitoring because no cases of domestic violence or sexual assault were being heard. However, WJU was given access to statistics on cases tried by the Oecusse District Court since January 2008. During this period, 4 cases of domestic violence have been decided and 3 such cases are still in progress.

Based on enquiries made by the WJU, as well as available statistics, the Oecusse District Court issued decisions in only 10 cases of domestic violence during 2007. We can therefore deduce that the Oecusse District Court did not decide or process a large amount of cases relating to gender based violence. WJU hopes that in 2008 more cases of domestic violence will be processed by the Oecusse District Court, to be more in line with the trend observed by WJU at the Baucau District Court. Several sources, who would prefer to remain anonymous, told us that on many occasions victims of domestic violence and sexual assault submit their complaints to the police, but due to lengthy delays they withdraw their complaints or have their cases resolved through mediation. For this reason we

need to provide regular training to the population to provide them with a better understanding that gender based crimes should be resolved through the existing formal mechanisms.

According to available statistics, the Oecusse District Court did not issue any decisions in cases of sexual assault during 2007. However, decisions were issued in 4 cases during 2006. During January and February 2008 the court did not process any cases of sexual assault. According to court monitoring conducted by WJU, this trend contrasts with the Dili and Baucau District Courts which processed cases of sexual assault during 2007, as well as in January and February 2008. The Women's Justice Unit of JSMP will continue its monitoring activities to find out why cases relating to sexual assault are not being decided in the Oecusse District Court.

In addition to its monitoring activities, the Women's Justice Unit also provided training in partnership with Caritas Australia-Oecusse, about gender based violence and the legal procedure for processing cases of domestic violence and sexual assault. This training was attended by 10 women's groups, namely: *Grupu moris kiak, Ansaupmese, Moris Hamutuk, Bananai, Noinine, Moinseu, Feto hakiak Vineno, Kotbimeon, Netkamese* and *Leolsusu*. The aim of this training was to provide the female participants with a better understanding about their rights and obligations. The women's groups who participated in this training can act as focal points for other women who require advice to deal with issues confronting them, and they can also provide information about how cases of domestic violence and sexual assault are processed.

The participants were very satisfied with the training because it increased their knowledge of how to proceed with criminal or civil cases. The questions posed by the participants indicated that they did not yet have a sound understanding

about how cases are processed. Based on this observation, the WJU plans to return to Oecusse and conduct an evaluation in 3 months time. This evaluation will help the WJU to ascertain if the aforementioned training achieved the desired result. The WJU also has a plan to conduct further training for women's groups in the district of Oecusse on the same topics.

The WJU observed that the participants who attended the training held on 28 February 2008 were nearly all literate, which was in stark contrast with participants who attended training provided by the WJU in other sub-districts. The WJU is very proud of this development and wishes to extend its gratitude to FPWO (*Oecusse Women's Interest Group*) who have been working very hard to build literacy amongst women in the district of Oecusse. The WJU considers this to be a positive step forward for the nation of Timor-Leste.

For further information, please contact:

Flora Soriano

Legal Researcher, WJU

Email : [lola@jsmp.minihub.org](mailto:lola@jsmp.minihub.org)

Or contact:

Timotio de DEUS

Director of JSMP,

Email: [timotio@jsmp.minihub.org](mailto:timotio@jsmp.minihub.org)

No Tlp : 3323883