



**JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME**  
**PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN SISTEMA JUDISIAL**

Press Release  
Suai District Court  
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**Judge's Residence at the Suai District Court attacked by unknown people**

On 8 April 2014, a judge's residence in Suai was attacked by unidentified people who are suspected of being involved in a case currently being heard by the Suai District Court.

Previously, on 4 April 2014 at approximately 3pm, two people approached a judge at her residence in Suai. One of the two people was identified as a defendant in an ongoing case, and together they tried to bribe the judge with the aim of influencing the outcome of the defendant's case. However, the judge rejected their offer and ejected them from her residence.

Subsequently, on 8 April 2014 at approximately 3am, several unidentified people came to the home of the judge who had been previously approached and banged on the door several times. The judge felt very afraid and yelled out for help, and the people ran away from the scene.

As a result, the judge was not able to freely perform her functions and enjoy her independence as a judge because she felt threatened and was afraid of potential threats in the future arising from this, and other cases.

Although there is no concrete evidence that the unidentified people who attacked the judge's residence were the same people who approached the judge four days prior, the facts suggest that the group that staged the attack and intimidation are likely linked to an ongoing case.

*"This case is very serious because these people tried to destroy efforts to clean up our legal system and remove all forms of bribery. Actions like this do not just impact judges as individuals, but also influence and threaten our legal system, threaten our democracy, because they use any means possible to save their own case and sacrifice our legal system,"* said the Executive Director of JSMP Luis de Oliveira Sampaio.

In a survey of judicial actors conducted by JSMP between July-September 2013 assessing the capacity of legal institutions, and the safety and welfare of judicial actors, JSMP received a lot of complaints. Many judicial actors reported that, whilst carrying out their functions, they faced intimidation and

fear because they were threatened by defendants involved in cases they were dealing with.

JSMP strongly recommends that the Minister of Justice and the Secretary of State for Security coordinate and develop a practical system that can immediately respond to issues regarding the safety of judicial actors.

JSMP believes that before a special and appropriate mechanism is set up in accordance with the circumstances that exist in Timor-Leste, it would be advisable for the Ministry of Justice to implement an alternative and timely solution by installing alarm systems in judicial actors' residences to alert them of attempted threats against their life/safety.

JSMP appeals to all parts of the community to value the legal institutions, court actors and law enforcement officers who devote themselves to upholding the law and guaranteeing justice for all people in Timor-Leste. JSMP also urges the PNTL to thoroughly investigate the two people who tried to influence the functioning of the judicial system by trying to bribe a judge.

For more information, please contact:

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