



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

Press Release

19 January 2015

Courts return to work after 2014 holidays

On 16 January 2015 the Dili, Baucau, Suai and Oecusse Courts recommenced their activities as per normal after enjoying a judicial holiday from 15 December 2014 to 15 January 2015.

Through JSMP monitoring and contact with all of the courts, it was confirmed that on 16 January 2015 only the Dili District Court had conducted hearings for some cases that were scheduled, whilst the Baucau, Suai and Oecusse courts had not yet conducted hearings because they were still concentrating on administrative work.

Article 1 of Law No.20/2012 on the suspension of court activities and holidays states that court activities are suspended each year between 15 December – 15 January, as well as Easter and between 1-15 August.

“JSMP believes that a full month of holidays should be enough time for judicial actors to recover their energy after they have dedicated themselves to upholding justice for all people based on the law and the Constitution,” said the Executive Director of JSMP, Luis de Oliveira Sampaio

JSMP believes that the court faces a lot of work and many challenges in 2015 because of limited human resources following the Government of Timor-Leste’s expulsion of international judicial actors in October 2014.

However, JSMP welcomes the courts’ position to publicly maintain that they will not adhere to the Government and Parliament resolutions (ordering the expulsion) because they violate the principle of separation of powers and judicial independence. JSMP encourages the courts to continue to maintain their independence and credibility in 2015 and in years to come. This is crucial for promoting the rule of law and democracy in Timor-Leste.

JSMP observed that the resolutions issued by the National Parliament and Government in October 2014 had an immediate impact on the work of judges, prosecutors and public defenders

because international court actors had to leave the cases they were working on and pass them on to national court actors. This means that the cases have to be retried from the beginning with limited resources, which has increased the work load of these judicial actors.

JSMP also encourages the Baucau, Suai and Oecusse courts to start scheduling trials of pending cases so that they can use their time effectively, because JSMP has observed that these three courts never have a fixed schedule after they come back from their holidays and recommence their functions.

For further information please contact:

Luis de Oliveira Sampaio
Executive Director of JSMP
E-mail: luis@jsmp.minihub.org
info@jsmp.minihub.org
Telephone: 3323883 | 77295795
Website: www.jsmp.tl
Face book: www.facebook.com/timorleste.jsmp
Twitter: @JSMPtl