



JUDICIAL SYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA SISTEMA JUDISIÁRIU

Press Release
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14th Anniversary of JSMP: Launch of annual Overview of the Justice Sector Report, Parliamentary Watch Report and JSMP Institutional Report for 2014

On 30 April 2015 JSMP will launch two important reports, namely an Overview of the Justice Sector in 2014, and a Parliamentary Watch Report 2014, together with JSMP's annual Institutional Report for 2014 and at the same time JSMP will celebrate its 14th anniversary which falls on 28 April.

JSMP is very happy to present these two important reports to the public. These reports comprise JSMP's analysis on progress and challenges faced by the justice sector including the processing of cases in the courts and legislative process at the National Parliament as well as important events that were observed by JSMP in 2014.

“It is an institutional tradition of JSMP that every year we inform the people of Timor-Leste about progress achieved and challenges faced by our justice sector and provide recommendations to the competent institutions in order to improve and strengthen the justice system, democracy and good governance in Timor-Leste. In addition, JSMP also explains the institutional activities that took place in 2014 as part of its accountability to the public,” said Luis de Oliveira Sampaio, the Executive Director of JSMP.

JSMP recognizes that in 2014 the justice sector continued to work independently and has tried corruption cases including those involving State officials even though the courts have faced major challenges. These challenges included threats to judicial independence through Parliamentary and Government Resolutions that ordered the immediate removal of international judges, prosecutors and advisors. These events presented serious challenges to the functioning of the justice sector in 2014 and the consequences will continue into the future.

JSMP observed that in 2014 the courts were very productive. For example, the Dili District Court tried 994 cases in 2014, in comparison with 808 cases in 2013, the Baucau District Court tried 285 case in comparison with 139 cases in 2013 and the Oecusse District Court tried 259 cases in comparison with 173 cases in 2013, and it was only the Suai District Court that tried fewer cases in 2014 in comparison with 2013. In addition, mobile courts continued to operate, tried more cases and were conducted on a regular basis each month at the Baucau and Suai District Courts. While recognising this progress, JSMP also identified some matters that could be

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improved in the future. In particular, JSMP recommends that the courts prioritize high frequency cases such as those involving gender based violence, the sexual abuse of minors, and domestic violence. JSMP also encourages the court to provide compensation to victims of gender based violence as a form of recognition of their suffering.

JSMP also increased the volume of cases monitored in 2014. During this period JSMP was able to observe a total of 977 cases, comprising 951 criminal cases and 26 civil cases, in comparison with 496 cases in 2013 that comprised 481 criminal cases and 15 civil cases.

JSMP also noted concerns relating to the allocation of funding to the justice sector, with only a small increase in comparison with the allocation for 2013. JSMP continues to note that problems with the use of Portuguese language, infrastructure and interference in the justice sector were major challenges to the functioning of the justice system.

In 2014 JSMP also monitored the legislative process at the National Parliament and noted that several proposed draft laws which are pending from previous years have still not yet been rescheduled for discussion and approval, for example the draft Anti-Corruption Law, draft Law on a Public Memorial Institute, draft Law on Reparations, etc. In this report JSMP also analyses those draft pending laws and other draft laws.

JSMP hopes that the overview of the justice sector in 2014 will provide beneficial information to the general public and specifically to relevant State bodies and institutions so they can contribute directly or indirectly to the functioning of the formal justice system. Therefore, in addition to providing the results of monitoring and analysis, in this report JSMP makes several important recommendations that are directed at the competent State bodies and institutions for their consideration.

Several of these recommendations are similar to those published in the 2013 Overview of the Justice Sector Report because there have not yet been changes to the systems and performance of the relevant bodies and institutions. This report is available in Tetum and can be accessed at the JSMP website: www.jsmp.tl; and the English version will be made available in the next few weeks.

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