



Press Release
04 November 2024

JSMP wishes to celebrate the National Women's Day in Timor-Leste and demands for all entities to ensure protection and to free women from all forms of violence against women

On the 3rd of November each year we celebrate National Women's Day in Timor-Leste. This is an important date for all women in Timor-Leste, because this date is set aside as a National Day of Celebration. This commitment shows that the State of Timor-Leste recognises the importance of the contribution, role and participation of women in the context of national construction and development. The theme for this year is "Women in the National Development Process 25 Years After the Referendum."

By commemorating this day, we are all reminded that women have played a very important and decisive role in all aspects, even though in reality many women continue to suffer many forms of violence in society. Unfortunately, these forms of violence happen most often in the family or the home where women are supposed to be given protection and feel secure. The 2022 JSMP Institutional report reaffirmed that between 2020 - 2022, cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) continued to be very high, namely between **71% to 75%** of all of the criminal cases monitored by JSMP at the courts.

Even though there are legal instruments and initiatives to protect and ensure that women and girls are free from all forms of violence in the family and society, and especially to ensure that women and children are free from cruel treatment, or loss of freedom or life because of many different types of violence, however in reality it is apparent that women and girls continue to be victimised. A recent case that occurred on 11 October 2024 involving a pregnant woman who lost her life together with her unborn child clearly shows that efforts and investments to protect women from violence are yet to show positive results.

"JSMP hopes that the commemoration of this day can remind all components of society to come together to prevent violence against women and girls so that they are no longer victimized and are free from all crimes and to ensure that women and men work together for national development," said Mr. Casimiro dos Santos, Acting Executive Director of JSMP.

JSMP monitoring at all of the courts of first instance indicated that women and children continue to live with violence, as evidenced by the fact that most cases tried by the courts are cases of gender based violence and most often women and children are victims.

JSMP is aware that women in rural areas continue to face a range of structural challenges in defending their constitutional rights, because of the influence of local customary practices that often discriminate against, ignore, and undermine their

rights, even though the Timor-Leste Constitution does not allow for these discriminatory practices. However, in reality this is what occurs.

The government, civil society organizations and international agencies engage in many efforts to combat violence against women and girls in Timor-Leste, however violence against women and girls remains high and in some cases women and girls lose their life.

Therefore, JSMP demands that the responsible entities, as well as relevant institutions in the justice sector and the entire society should review the strategies and efforts that they have implemented over the last decade to ensure that efforts and interventions are oriented towards the general prevention of violence against women in society.

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