



JUDICIAL **SYSTEM** MONITORING PROGRAMME
PROGRAMA MONITORIZASAUN BA **SISTEMA** JUDISIÁRIU

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Members of the village administrative structure and community members in Lalawa Village consider the proportional list system for national parliamentary elections to be unfair

On 4 August 2023 JSMP organized and implemented training for members of the village administrative structure and community members from Lalawa Village, Tilomar Administrative Post, Covalima Municipality at the Lalawa Village Hall. There were 30 participants, comprising 15 men and 15 women.

The aim of this training was to increase the knowledge of community leaders as well as community members about democracy, human rights, the role of the sovereign organs, public participation in the law making process and access to formal justice.

During this training, community members raised their concerns about the proportionality system used for the national parliamentary elections. The community members considered this system to be unfair because in relation to the results of the elections, even if a political party wins in a municipality, what can happen is that municipality will not have a person or representative in the National Parliament because the person from the municipality is not included in the list or is too low on the list regarding the number of seats that the party has obtained.

“The proportional list system is a mechanism that the Government has adopted to facilitate the holding and management of national parliamentary elections, however, the Government has not carefully considered the impact or results that have led to injustice as outlined in the concerns of community members. This is because, often the results in the elections show that some municipalities have obtained a total number of votes to constitute a seat in the National Parliament, however there is no person representing the party from that municipality in the National Parliament because the person from the aforementioned municipality is too low on the list to obtain a seat allocated to the party. Therefore, JSMP believes it would be a good idea to amend the law on parliamentary elections and political parties could use a system to vote for people from each municipality so that they could sit in the National Parliament to ensure that there is a balance in the representation of all municipalities”, said Ms. Ana Paula Marçal, Executive Director of JSMP.

Other concerns were raised about the right to access education. Some community members said that there is still discrimination, because the children of ordinary citizens are smart but they can't continue their studies because they don't receive any support in comparison with the children of important people. Some community members also raised concerns about the protection and promotion of East Timorese customs or culture such as traditional dances (*tebe-tebe*, *bidu*) and wearing traditional cloth (*tais*) during cultural activities and ceremonies. Community members raised their concerns that nowadays during cultural activities or events, many people don't use traditional dances (*tebe-tebe*, *bidu*) or wear traditional clothing, however they only perform modern dances.

The training was split into two sessions. The first session was about the political system or democracy and the second session was about the justice system.

During the first session, JSMP shared information about democracy and how communities can exercise their rights and participate freely in elections, the roles of sovereign organs such as the Office of the President, the National Parliament, the Government and the courts.

During the second session, JSMP shared information about fundamental rights. Also, JSMP shared information about institutions in the justice system and their individual roles, namely the courts, the Public Prosecution Service, the Office of the Public Defender, private advocacy and the police.

JSMP also informed the communities that the main role of judicial institutions is to guarantee a justice process that is fair for all people in all cases, both criminal or civil, at the courts.

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