



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

**Press Release**

**12 September 2022**

**JSMP holds training for members of the village administrative structure on the prevention of human trafficking in Covalima Municipality and Bobonaro Municipality**

**Members of the village administrative structure acknowledge that some community members have encountered cases of human trafficking**

On 8 and 31 August 2022 the Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP) held training for members of the village council administrative structure on the prevention of human trafficking, in Maudemo Village, Tilomar Administrative Post, Covalima Municipality with a total of 21 participants and in Cowa Village, Balibo Administrative Post, Bobonaro Municipality with a total of 22 participants. In this training JSMP spoke about the definition of human trafficking, the aim and way that human trafficking is carried out and how to take cases of human trafficking to be processed in accordance with formal justice.

“This training was aimed at helping the village administrative structure to understand about crimes of human trafficking, so that when cases like this occur, they can provide assistance and also bring these cases to formal justice. Also, JSMP chose these two villages for training because cases of human trafficking often affect people living along the border,” said Ms. Ana Paula Marçal, Executive Director of JSMP.

The Maudemo Village Chief, Ms. Maria Fátima, acknowledged that some cases have occurred in her village, such as the sexual exploitation of female youths with some people helping men to take advantage and make a profit for themselves. After hearing the explanation from JSMP, the aforementioned Village Chief asked JSMP to find time in the future to talk to female youths so that they avoid such behaviour because these circumstances damage female youths and they become pregnant and the fathers do not take responsibility for their children.

Also, the Cowa Village Chief, Mr. Zeferino de Araújo, during his speech said that he is very grateful to JSMP for choosing their village as a location for the training because he acknowledged that previously some community members in their village were victims of human trafficking by some people who tell lies and said they were looking for domestic workers in Atambua, Indonesia however the work does not exist. The Village Chief also said that their village is very close to the border and it only takes 30 minutes to get there,

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therefore it is very important for the communities to have knowledge so they can avoid these types of crimes.

This situation was also confirmed in the statement of Cowa Village OPS, Mr. Antonio Lopes, who said that for the last few years the youth in the village managed to go to Atambua, because they did not know that people had lied to them and said they would go there to work and in the end those people planned to take them and make them perform forced labour in another country, however these youths managed to flee and come back to Timor-Leste.

During the training the participants also asked about youths who with their own consent wanted to share their income with another person who helped find partners for them to have sexual intercourse, and also asked about what actions would be taken against illegal agencies who recruit people to work as domestic staff but then make them engage in other work.

In this session JSMP responded that the law does not prohibit those who have reached the age of consent from having sexual intercourse with a partner, however when another person is involved for the purpose of making a profit from this activity then it will be considered as a crime of sexual exploitation, even though they give consent. Also, regarding the actions that can be taken against illegal agencies that are involved in acts of human trafficking, Article 34 of Law No. 3/2017 on preventing and combatting human trafficking and the fourth amendment to the Penal Code with reference to human trafficking states that when it is proven that a person recruits, offers, submits, accepts, transports, transfer, sells with the final aim of committing sexual exploitation, by lying, threatening, stealing or abusing authority, then that person is liable to a punishment of 8 - 20 years in prison.

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