

# SITUATION REVIEW

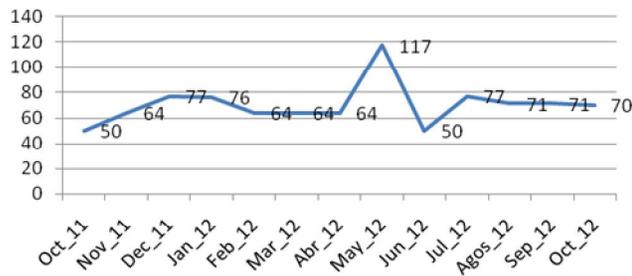
## OCTOBER 2012

### FOCUS ISSUES THIS MONTH:

- ▶ Poisoning of school students
- ▶ The supposed 'ninja' attacks by unknown persons

### ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION

#### Total Incidents Reported



For full details on incidents, visit [www.belun.crowdmap.com](http://www.belun.crowdmap.com)



Substance allegedly used to poison students (supplied by PNTL)

#### Assaults by unidentified persons with covered faces

Disturbingly, one of the five incidents of assaults by unknown persons in October resulted in six deaths in Bobonaro (Sub-district Atabae, Suku Aidaba-Leten, Aldeia Tasi-Mean). Among the victims were a 4 month old baby and a young child; four more were wounded, two adults and two children. Reports indicate that inheritance may have been the motive behind the attack, but many question whether this is sufficient motive for such a horrific attack. Police have captured five suspects and handed them over to the Covalima Public Prosecutor. The Covalima Tribunal has already passed a judgement to remand four of the suspects in custody, with one being released. This incident came as a tragic shock to many, with the murders directly violating the Timorese Constitution's Article 29 which upholds the right to life. Belun has recommended that as soon as such cases are reported, police should increase border patrols to prevent any perpetrators from fleeing across the border to Indonesia.

This was the worst multiple homicide since EWER monitoring began in January 2009. It features amongst a new trend of incidents detected involving violent assaults by unknown persons, often dressed in black with faces obscured- August (4), September (8), October (5). September monitoring included one murder among the assaults by unidentified persons in Dom Aleixo (Dili).

### ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION

#### Students Poisoned

In October in Lautem District, tension rose among a number of communities in relation to the use of lethal poisons (ai kulit/bark used for black magic). These suspicions relate to an incident at Iralafae Primary school, Aldeia Iralafae, Suku Bauro, subdistrict Lospalos (Lautem). It was suspected that some adults were involved in distributing the poison to two students. The suspects allegedly disguised the poison as a food flavouring, which the two students then took to the school. At afternoon tea, the two students invited others to use the flavouring. Six students quickly fainted and began bleeding from the nose, and were taken immediately for treatment to Hospitals in Baucau and Lautem, which saved their lives. Police have identified the two students who delivered the poison and have them in custody, under house arrest, while they await prosecution. The investigation is still

being given high priority as police search for those who planned the attack.

### TENSION ON THE BORDER

#### Community Concerns on the Border Continue

Tension and conflict on the border has continued from August to October (7-2-2). In September, community concern existed in relation to an incident where Indonesian police arrested four Timorese citizens in Timor Leste, and are still holding them in Indonesia, as they wait to go before an Indonesian court, having allegedly broken Indonesian law.

Incidents in October also provided concern for border communities. EWER monitors noted an imbalance in the joint border patrols between Indonesian and Timor Leste forces, with only one PNTL Border Patrol Unit member joining 20 Indonesian Army soldiers near Naktuka. At the end of the patrol, TNI officers were observed re-entering Timor Leste with unknown motives. If this situation continues into the future, it will exacerbate tensions.

Despite this, conflict on the border can be prevented by strengthening cross-border community relations until diplomatic resolution on border deliniation is reached. Belun recently reached out to communities using traditional dialogue, facilitated by local community and religious leaders. Outcomes of the discussions will be countersigned by traditional leaders from all communities involved, and then presented to the Indonesian and Timor Leste

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Government for reference when they are negotiating the final location of land borders.

*Traditional dialogue between communities from both side of the Oecusse border*



### ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION

#### Other Incidents

Other incidents from October: youth-related violence (16- Dili (8), Liquica (3), Manufahi (2), Bobonaro (1), Manatutu (1), no Lautem (1); land disputes (14); alcohol-related violence (13- Dili (5), Manufahi (3), Liquica (2), Bobonaro (1), Covalima (1) no Lautem (1); Intra-family conflict (6); violence between students (2); related to veterans' pensions (1); violence between livestock owners and farmers (1); other incidents and crimes (10). This information is given to community leaders and police for referral and resolution.

### RESPONDING TO CONFLICT

#### Community Conflict Prevention facilitated by Belun:

- Local authorities in Oecusse held meetings between the District Administrator and his counterpart in Indonesia, so they could discuss arranging traditional dialogue between their respective communities.
- These community meetings were able to take place during October.

- Belun, through the Land Mediation Dispute Resolution Program, facilitated the successful mediation of three land disputes.
- Belun conducted Conflict Transformation Training through the CPRN (Conflict Prevention and Response Network) in Viqueque.



Meeting between the Oecusse District Administrator (TL) and the Administrator of Kupang (NTT - Indonesia)

### POSITIVE RESULTS FROM TARA BANDU

The Government and civil society have continued to cooperate to support *Tara Bandu* processes as a way of dealing with conflict, with some local districts' customs and rules established through *Tara Bandu* given legal standing.

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It was observed that some districts demonstrated positive results from these *tara bandu* rulings:

- In Ermera District, people known as *Kablehan* (civil security monitors) help to monitor and enforce *Tara Bandu* rulings on behalf of the community. Similarly, also in Ermera, communities have reduced the cultural practice known as *Koremotan* (taking off the black clothes), to every five years rather than every year. This is hoped to have a positive economic impact and support some of the local children's education costs. Other problems have been resolved by local traditional leaders through the use of cultural dialogue *Nahe Biti Bo'ot* (stretching the big mat), to come together to discuss an issue.
- In Aileu District, the community of Suku Selo Kraik, Subdistritu Aileu, Distritu Aileu, have begun generating income since an agreement was made to only fish locally on Saturdays, to provide a sustainable food source into the future.
- Manufahi District, Suku Uma Berloik, Subdistritu Alas, the community employed *Tara Bandu* to keep animals in their enclosures, protecting neighbouring crops. Cooperative Cafe Timor (CCT) gave assistance in the form of gasoline for a tractor so that they could plow the land and plant seeds.

Belun is also cooperating with The Asia Foundation to research effective approaches to facilitating *Tara Bandu* with communities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### National Police of Timor Leste

- More police are needed to patrol the border, which is currently easy for illegal immigrants and suspects of criminal activity to cross; for example suspects from the Atabae multiple homicide are thought to have escaped across the border.
- Continue to investigate the incidents of poisoning and collect evidence to prosecute.



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Please share your feedback on this Situation Review to [sarah.belun@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.belun@gmail.com) or [bylah.belun@gmail.com](mailto:bylah.belun@gmail.com)

### ABOUT BELUN'S SITUATION REVIEWS

This document has been produced with the support of the European Union through the Instrument of Stability and GIZ/BMZ in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The contents and opinions in this document are the sole responsibility of Belun and CICR and do not reflect the positions of donors. This document reports on key issues related to violent incidents and trends emerging from data collected through Timor-Leste's Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) system during October 2012. We welcome further information which may clarify or update data acquired through EWER. Please email EWER Program Manager Bylah Da Costa: [bylah.belun@gmail.com](mailto:bylah.belun@gmail.com). Images © Arnol Suni, October 2012.