

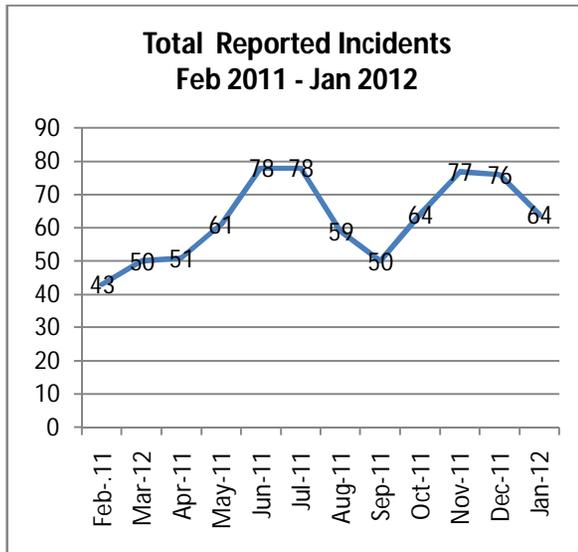
# SITUATION REVIEW: January 2012

## ISSUES TO WATCH THIS MONTH:

- Youth Violence
- Alcohol-related Group Conflict
- Incidents involving Indonesian TNI and Community Members (Oe-cusse)
- Conflict over Religious Identity

## ISSUES TO WATCH

### Total Reported Incidents



Conflict analysis across 42 sub-districts monitored by the EWER system shows that conflict during January has fallen in comparison to levels of November and December and remains close to the annual average.

## CONFLICT TRENDS

### Youth-related Violence

**Youth-related incidents (14):** Violence among youth remains a serious security concern this month, despite a reduction in the number of incidents from December 2011 (25) January (14). Two of these incidents involved men as the perpetrators and women as the victims and took place at parties with disputes as a result of dance partner negotiations (in Ainaro Vila and Remexio sub-districts). The remaining incidents involved only men and often occurred in order to settle previously unresolved disputes or personal problems which frequently escalated to become disputes between groups or villages (aldeias). The incidents mainly occurred in public places (on the roads), and were prevalent in 5 districts: Viqueque (4), Dili (4), Manufahi (3), Bobonaro (1) and Ainaro (2). During the 12 incidents, 4 people were wounded. PNTL responded to 9 cases, local leaders (2), family members (1) and one was by resolved by the instigators themselves.

### Alcohol-related Group Conflict

**Alcohol-related incidents (13):** The majority of the incidents fuelled by excessive alcohol consumption began with issues between individual youth which quickly escalated to involve their friends. In some cases incidents occurred in an effort to redress previous conflicts that had not been settled or taken to the authorities. Of these 13 alcohol-fuelled conflicts, 2 occurred between individuals while the rest involved groups, across many districts: Covalima (1), Dili (1), Viqueque (2), Aileu (2), Ainaro (1), Manufahi (2), Liquiça (3) and Bobonaro (1).

### Martial Arts

**Martial Arts related incidents (2):** The involvement of Martial Arts groups in conflict has returned to a low level this month after reaching 6 reported incidents in December, possibly due to the decision from the Council of Ministers to suspend activities of those Martial Arts groups who had been recently involved in violent incidents. This decision has been positively received by many community members who feel safer to walk in their communities after dark. Monitoring also showed that despite this suspension some groups continue their activities at night, raising community concerns, as has been the case in Maliana Vila and Balibo sub-districts in Bobonaro.

However, while violence in suco Comoro, Dom Aleixo sub-district has subdued, conflicts appear to be continuing below the surface in some aldeias. On the nights of January 7-8, in aldeia 'Mate La Hotu', two groups threw stones at one another. A second Martial Arts incident occurred in Maliana Vila sub-district on January 1. The incident involved fighting between two groups which saw a youth, uninvolved in either of the two groups, wounded during the encounter. The two incidents are currently under Police investigation.



Generously supported by the  
Irish Department of Foreign Affairs,  
Conflict Resolution Unit.



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### ISSUES TO WATCH

#### Border confrontation: TNI & Community

Conflict occurred on the Oe-cusse/ Indonesia border on January 1 at the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia)-Police Special Force Unit BRIMOB post at the crossing point in aldeia Usapikolen, suco Bobometo, sub-distritu Oesilo. A Timorese community member challenged the on-duty TNI-BRIMOB officer with verbal threats for not permitting him to cross the border to meet his family, despite having the relevant legal papers because the Indonesian border post was closed for the New Year holiday - even though the crossing point on the Timor side remained open. The man proceeded nonetheless without TNI authorization and was stopped and assaulted by one TNI officer and one BRIMOB officer, who beat the man and cut his hair. Members of TNI, BRIMOB and United Police Front (UPF) stepped in to respond to the incident, but the victim left the scene and returned to Oe-cusse.

#### Excessive use of force by PNTL members

The consistent appearance of security forces members in incidents where excessive force is employed, remains a concern for community members. This month, a youth on a motorbike was beaten by a PNTL member until he fell to the ground with a broken nose. While the maintenance of law and order is a priority, this should be done through the appropriate legal channels not with violence.

#### Incidents between family members

Incidents of conflict between family members are a dynamic that continues across the country: Lautem (1), Viqueque (2), Ermera (2), Manufahi (1) and Liquiça (1). The Police responded to two cases, community leaders (1), family members (1), and one case was registered in the Baucau Tribunal.

### CONFLICT TRENDS

#### Conflict over Religious Identity

Religious identity again became an issue of conflict on January 7, in Balibo sub-district, Maliana district. The incident occurred when two teachers met in the market and greeted each other, and then one proceeded to taunt the other for changing his religion, and subsequently beat him in the stomach. Fighting between the two commenced and quickly escalated as two groups of compatriots began fighting to defend each of the men. The Police have started the investigation process.



Based on conflicts related to religious identity occurring in 2011, some religious groups have been stopped from conducting their regular activities. In Pante-Makassar (Oe-cusse) and Ainaro Vila, the church of the group 'Christian Vision' has been locked and the group prevented from conducting any activities in the sub-district. The same has occurred for the Seventh Day Adventist church in Same Vila. In Baucau Vila, all groups remain free to hold mass in their churches but door-to-door evangelism has been minimized.

Belun, through the EWER program continues to monitor these trends since holding a seminar in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice on 27 June 2011, at which the Ministry and Commission A of the National Parliament confirmed the need for a more developed legal framework for managing the registration of religious groups. Development of new legislation is in progress.

#### Conflict over payments processes for Veterans

Two incidents arose in relation to the payments of Veterans' compensation. In Ainaro Vila sub-district (Ainaro) and Zumalai sub-district (Covalima), family disputes arose over who should receive the payments for a deceased Veteran relation. In Pante Makasar sub-district (Oe-cusse) a veteran and his superior officer had a disagreement resulting in physical and verbal threats over the validity of the data collected for the Veterans verification process. Of these three incidents, only the Zumalai case has been resolved (by the xefe suco). Such concerns over the payments processes for Veterans and the elderly are being explored by Belun's EWER program through more in depth research for the program's next policy brief.

#### Land disputes

Land disputes continued to occur in a number of districts this month: Ermera (1), Manufahi (3), Aileu (1) and Dili (1). The incident in Dili was a continuation of an ongoing conflict between a community and a landowner, in aldeia Golgota, suku Comoro. This incident occurred when the landowner blocked the access road that the community living behind previously used on a daily basis. A resulting confrontation resulted in one injured person. The community have recommended to the National Directorate for Land, Property and Cadastral Services and the Ministry of Infrastructure to provide a public road that the community can access. This incident has not had a response and poses a risk of continued conflict.

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### ISSUES TO WATCH

#### Natural Disasters:

Natural disasters have continued to affect community life due to unpredicted changes in the rain cycle in certain districts. In Covalima, Ermera, Ainaro, Oe-cusse and Aileu, excessive rain flooded rivers and destroyed adjacent fields. Rice distribution by the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry (MTCI) that is sold at \$12 per 25kg sack, has been distributed to the district level, and quickly bought and resold for \$15-18. Even at this price MTCI rice rarely leaves district centres, leaving rural populations with only commercial rice at around \$19-20 which remains beyond the reach of many families, particularly those who have lost their crops to floods. Secondary risks of swollen rivers include danger to those trying to cross them. On January 16 in Vera Cruz sub-district (Dili), a mother and her child were swept away by the river as they attempted to return home.

Risks to people, caused by natural disasters are often exacerbated by flawed agricultural practices such as chopping down trees and burning land, but also poor quality infrastructure such as roads and bridges which, when broken such as in Hatudu sub-district (Manufahi), make it very difficult for regular travel to affected areas.

#### Other crimes:

On January 29 in Cristu Rei sub-district of Dili, a man beat a driver and damaged his vehicle. On January 11 in Aileu Vila, an unknown assailant threw rocks at four youth who were walking on the road, one of whom was injured. The police have responded to these incidents. On January 6 in Viqueque Vila, a fight between two men over suspected use of black magic resulted in one serious injury. The case has been registered in the Baucau Tribunal.

### CONFLICT RESPONSE

#### Community Conflict Prevention



Belun, through EWER, continued to support community-led Conflict Prevention and Response Network (CPRN) activities in a number of sub-districts. The CPRN in Alas and Same sub-districts (Manufahi) conducted seminars on community conflict prevention mechanisms particularly during the electoral period. The Viqueque Vila CPRN also conducted a seminar regarding conflict prevention during the electoral periods. The Vemasse CPRN (Baucau) held a seminar and reflection about Martial Arts activities and the Vera Cruz (Dili) CPRN held a Tara Bandu ceremony to reinforce traditional laws, with the support of Belun and the Ministry of Social Solidarity's (MSS) Department for Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion (DPBSC).

#### National Peacebuilding Events

The Justice and Peace Commission of Dili Diocese (through the "Laletek" (bridge) program in partnership with CRS, and with support from USAID) held a discourse with local Martial Arts leaders in Comoro. This was followed by discussions with each of their families to learn more about their concerns in relation to the activities of these men in order to look for alternative peaceful solutions to the issues faced. NGO

Belun, through its project 'Land Mediation and Dispute Resolution' facilitated the mediation of four land disputes which were resolved.

The National Commission of UNESCO within the Ministry of Education held a seminar on January 27, on various research findings supporting the design of a pilot project to review the new government policy on Mother Tongue teaching for the first cycle of primary education. This seminar has sparked wide national debate on the language policy in education. The Prime Minister presented various research findings to the National Parliament on February 8 to clarify this policy and its role in assisting the learning and literacy of children from classes 1 – 4 (it would not be used in older classes).

### ABOUT THIS SITUATION REVIEW

This document has been produced with the support of the European Union through the Instrument of Stability, GIZ and the Government of Ireland, Conflict Resolution Unit. The contents and opinions in this document are the sole responsibility of NGO Belun and CICR and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union, the Irish Government or GIZ. This situation review 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 January 2012. Belun endeavors to share information that is both up-to-date and accurate. Given situations evolve rapidly, 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 © Jennifer Hill, Belun 2012.