

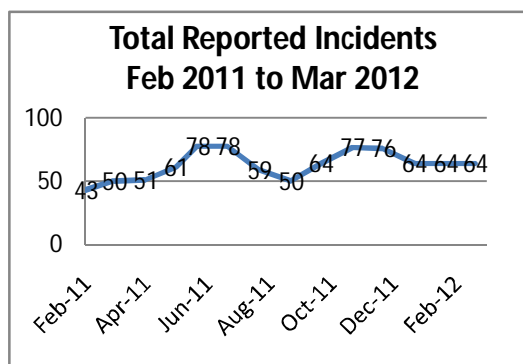
SITUATION REVIEW

MARCH 2012

ISSUES TO WATCH THIS MONTH:

- Election-related violence
- Land disputes
- Alcohol-related conflict

GENERAL TREND



Data analysis across the 13 districts shows reported incidents month on month remained the same. A positive indication of behavior in the lead up to the Presidential Election, however, 34 of reported incidents were found to be electoral-related.

Data shows that from the 13 districts Baucau (11), Viqueque (7) and Dili (5) were at higher risk for community conflict comparative to other districts during Round 1 of the Presidential Election.

Details of all incidents reported for the month can be found at: www.belun.crowdmap.com

ROUND 1 ELECTION

The lead up to the 2012 Presidential Election proved largely peaceful, enabling the majority of voters to exercise their democratic right to vote.

Those electoral-related incidents that did occur in the lead-up to the Round 1 Preidential Election were largely borne from inter-party tension, with reported incidents of stone throwing, verbal threats, property damage and physical assault occurring between party supporters.

Multiple incidents were reported of campaign materials being damaged or destroyed. This included a number of posters and banners from presidential candidate Sr. Taur Matan Ruak which were damaged in sucos across Baucau Vila and Vemasse sub-districts. Incidents of damage of campaign materials also affected other candidates including Sr. Abilio Araujo in Ossu (Viqueque) and Sr. Fernando La Sama in Maliana Vila (Bobonaro).



On March 26, the Supreme Court aproved the Round 1 election results which saw Sr. Francisco Guterres "Lú-Olo" with the majority at 133.635 (29%) votes, followed by Sr. Taur Matan Ruak with 119.462 (26%) votes. As neither candidate reached 50% of the vote the Supreme Court took the decision to run a second round election for these two highest polling candidates for April 16.

Despite a relatively smooth Round 1, the 34 reported incidents of electoral intimidation and violence indicated limitations in understanding of the electoral law and the democratic process. Voters without access to suitable transportation were also disdvantaged by the electoral law that required voting in districts or sucos of origin, causing many to lose their opportunity to vote.



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ROUND 1 ELECTION DAY

Seven incidents were reported on Round 1 Election Day on March 17, with the majority being electoral-related. In the polling station at presecondary school '30 de Agosto', in Comoro suco, Dom Aleixo sub-district, one male voter fought with polling staff as he was refused permission to vote due to using a photocopied electoral ID. The incident was responded to directly by the director of STAE and the decision made that he would be able to vote.

In Vila Verde suco, Vera Cruz sub-district, two men fought over a difference of opinion in candidate support. One of the men was injured before the incident was responded to by police and local leaders who resolved the issue.

In Suai Vila sub-district, Covalima district supporters of Fernando La Sama and Taur Matan Ruak threatened each other over predictions of candidates who would run for second round election. The campaign team of Taur Matan Ruak directly telephoned Mr. Ruak to inform him. The police were

summoned to the scene and intervened between the two parties. They took statements from the two parties who promised to come before the police again to resolve the issue after the official election results were released.

POST ROUND 1 ELECTION

In the final weeks of March, nine incidents were also reported post Round 1 election, with a continuation of verbal threats, stone throwing, and physical assaults. At the STAE offices in Baucau Vila sub-district, Baucau district, three more boxes of votes were delivered post ballot clearance. The incident was reported to the Baucau District police by an observer from the Fretilin party for follow-up.



Based on suspicion of tampering, on March 22 CNE received a letter of authorization from the Supreme Court to open 21 ballot boxes from across nine sucos. After checking each box, they were deemed to be clear of interference.

One example of electoral intimidation occurred in Baucau Vila sub-district (Bahu suco, Anaulo aldeia) when a man stopped his car to threaten and insult the Xefe Suco of Triloca in the street. The man asked her why the presidential candidate Sr. Taur Matan Ruak (TMR) did not have the majority of votes in her suco. She responded by saying that she did not know as voting is the right of every person to vote according to their conscience.

The man continued to threaten the Xefe Suco, saying that if presidential candidate TMR did not win the second round of the elections, people from her suco should not come to Baucau as he would beat them because they supported candidate Francisco 'Lú-Olo' Guterres and not TMR. When the



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incident occurred the Xefe directly telephoned the Baucau Vila Police Squadron to ask for protection, but they responded saying this incident was not a crime but a political issue, but that she could submit a report to their office.

The victim then contacted a member of the police force in Dili who returned the contact to the Baucau Vila Squadron who then deployed the Task Force. When they arrived, the suspect had left the scene. In response to this incident, the Baucau Regional Fretilin Committee has supported the victim to find a lawyer to support the victim to pursue the case through formal channels.

An example of transportation difficulties to voting stations occurred on March 20, 2012, in Pante Makasar sub-district, Oe-cusse district (Sanane aldeia, Costa suco). Students who had returned to his home district to vote were beaten by the maritime police on their return to Dili for failure to purchase a ticket. Ferry tickets were unavailable and the students, needing to return to school, were forced to depart to Dili without tickets and were subsequently beaten.

From the incidents that occurred pre-, during and post- the Round 1 election, the majority of incidents were responded to by police and placed under the process of investigation. These incidents were then documented prior to being sent to the Public Ministry for record.

NON-ELECTORAL CONFLICT

Alcohol-Related Incidents

Reported incidents related to alcohol consumption decreased dramatically in the month of March, falling to two after recording nine the month prior. On March 12 in Suai sub-district (Legol Aldeia, Julo Suco), a group of youth fought and threw stones at one another after an earlier drinking session, damaging a number of houses within the community. The Xefe Suco intervened and instructed the youth to provide compensation for the broken glass windows.

Martial Art Groups

The period post the suspension of martial art group activities has shown positive improvement with just one incident reported compared to three the month prior. This incident involved a senior martial arts leader using force to instruct his members not to drink alcohol together. There has been no significant escalation of such minor incidents.

Land Disputes

On March 30 in Laulara sub-district, Aileu district, two men in competition for land, stabbed the elderly female landowner with a machete. The woman later died in Guido Valdares National Hospital in Dili. Local district police arrested and detained the suspects. In Maubara sub-district, Liquica district, two family members entered into a dispute over their land border, but no injury was reported. The problem stemmed from confusion surrounding the changes to the national land law which was sent back to the National Parliament by the President for amendment, on the grounds that a number of provisions of the law would not benefit the people of Timor-Leste.

Solar Theft

In Fatuberlihu sub-district, Manufahi district, unknown persons stole the solar energy operator for the Suco office in Fatukahi. The Xefe Suco submitted the case to the police. As a result the

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community cannot access information through the television that used to be powered at the Suco office.

Student Conflict

Incidents of conflict between teachers and students have reduced from five in February to two incidents reported in March.

In Baucau Vila sub-district, Bahu suco, a male student threw stones and broke the window of the school and also argued with the principal of Baucau Catholic Secondary School.

The student had been absent three days, the school principal requested to see his parents. When they arrived at the school they waited more than three hours and it was claimed the principal hadn't take care of his parents during this time. After the incident the student ran away.

Physical Assaults

Four assaults were reported in March, including one in Dili District (Comoro suco, 30 de Agostu aldeia) in which a married woman stabbed another woman, considered to be the 'second wife' of her husband. After the husband spent the night in the second woman's house, the wife was angry and put petrol on his motorbike to burn it, but the

husband took a knife and threatened to stab his wife. His wife then took a pair of scissors and stabbed the second wife. The case was not taken to the police.

CONFLICT RESPONSE



National Event on Peace Building

In Dili, NGO forum FONGTIL facilitated an open dialogue between civil society and presidential candidates Francisco 'Lú-Olo' Guterres and Taur Matan Ruak with the objective of outlining their visions for Timor-Leste. The opportunity was also used to highlight their messages of peace and security during the second round of election.

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 February 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. Images © Jennifer Hill, Belun