

# ALERT

## Belun's Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) System

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### **Belun Condemns Recent Grave Incidents Perpetrated Against Girls and Young Women, Including Possible Cases of Human Trafficking** Dili, 27 July 2016

In recent months, Belun's Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) system has recorded a series of grave violent incidents perpetrated against girls and young women, including at least one murder in the past two weeks and multiple possible cases of human trafficking.

On 16 July, in Suai Administrative Post, Covalima Municipality, a young woman was beaten to death by her boyfriend after an argument. Then, in a separate incident on 18 July, the body of a young woman was found without clothing by fishermen in the sea in Hera, Dili Municipality. The cause of death has not yet been confirmed, and Belun is currently verifying the details of the incident.

EWER monitoring has also recorded four incidents since March in which young men offered or sold their female friends or girlfriends to other men for sex. In the most serious such incident, on 27 June in Pante Makassar Administrative Post, Oekusi Special Administrative Region, a young male student brought his girlfriend on a motorbike to a secluded area, where he was met by seven friends who allegedly paid him to sexually assault her. Two days later, on the morning of 29 June, the girl was found in grave condition, without clothing and with her hands bound. She sustained serious head injuries and a broken jaw, among other injuries, and was immediately referred to the National Hospital in Dili. The alleged perpetrators were apprehended by the police.

In another incident, on 29 March, a male student from Hera, Dili Municipality, tricked a 16-year-old female student into going with him to Manatuto, where she was sexually assaulted by another man. That case is currently before the court. On 10 May in Camea, Dili, a male student sold his female friend to an older man for sex. Finally, in June in Bairo Pite, Dili, a man lied to four female students that he had secured them work in a restaurant, when in fact they were to be sold to older men for sex. They managed to contact the police before they were victimized.

#### **Recommendations for Immediate Action:**

1. The Polísia Nasionál Timor-Leste (PNTL) should continue to comprehensively investigate the cases of serious sexual and physical violence against young women and girls in Covalima, Dili and Oekusi;
2. The Public Prosecutor should swiftly process these cases as a strong deterrent;
3. The Ministry of Education should strengthen its gender sensitization policy and improve its pre-school, primary school, secondary school and university curricula to include gender sensitivity teaching at all levels;
4. Civil society organizations and the Timor-Leste Education Network should actively advocate for the inclusion of gender sensitization teaching in school curricula;
5. Parents should educate their sons to respect their female friends and colleagues and remind their daughters to exercise caution when offered rides or employment by untrusted sources.

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