



ALERT

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

35 INCIDENTS RECORDED BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER LOCAL ELECTIONS

Dili, 10 November 2016

While the majority of Local Elections on October 29th proceeded without issue, Belun's Early Warning, Early Response system¹ recorded 35 incidents of electoral violence before, during and after election day. Thirteen incidents involved physical violence, including four with rock throwing, while the remainder involved verbal violence, including arguing and shouting. Six incidents were recorded in Baucau and Vikéké, five in Aileu, four in Dili and Likisá, two in Ainaro, Bobonaru, Covalima and Ermera, and one in Lautein and Manufahi.

The majority of incidents occurred because of either a) misunderstandings about the election rules or process, b) poor organization (e.g. insufficient ballots), c) suspected malpractice or interference, and/or d) dissatisfaction with results. The incidents have been separated below into those that occurred before voting, during voting and after voting ended.

1. Nine incidents with the following characteristics were recorded **before voting took place**:
 - In multiple incidents, candidates for Aldeia (Hamlet) Chief and their supporters argued with and shouted at election committees when they were not included on the ballot paper despite fulfilling the criteria. In some cases, the candidates were then added to the ballot, while in at least one case they were not;
 - In one incident, supporters of a candidate for Aldeia Chief shouted and argued with the election committee upon seeing that their preferred candidate and delegates had no photos on the ballot paper;
 - In one incident at a meeting of candidates, two candidates shouted at each other after one candidate became angry that the other candidate was running for Village Chief despite being from a different ethnic/language group than the majority of the Village's residents;
 - In one incident, people became angry when a member of an election committee was changed at the last minute before voting was to begin;
 - In one incident, community members shouted and argued with the election committee when the committee refused to show that the locked ballot box was empty before voting began.
2. Twelve incidents with the following characteristics were recorded **during voting**:
 - In multiple incidents, insufficient voting booths led to long lines, which eventually led to pushing and physical confrontations;
 - In multiple incidents, people became angry after suspecting interference with the voting process, including from political party members;
 - In multiple incidents, intoxicated persons temporarily disrupted the voting process and provoked voters.
 - After one of the incidents in which intoxicated persons tried to disrupt voting, police and military personnel assaulted a journalist who was taking photos of their response to the disruption;
 - In one incident, voters became angry and shouted at the election committee after being told that there were insufficient ballot papers and that they could not vote;
 - In one incident, some voters became angry that their current Aldeia Chief (who they deemed to be ineffective) was on the ballot, and the Chief removed himself from the ballot;
 - In one incident, voters became angry when an election observer became involved in the work of the election committee.
3. Fourteen incidents with the following characteristics were recorded **after voting ended**:
 - In multiple incidents, supporters of losing candidates threw rocks at voting centers during vote counting (when it appeared that their candidate was losing) and/or after final results were announced;
 - In multiple incidents, groups of supporters of the winning candidates taunted and teased supporters of losing candidates, which resulted in fighting;

¹ The EWER system monitors 43 Administrative Posts (out of 65 total) in all 12 Municipalities and the Oekusi Autonomous Special Region.



- In multiple incidents, supporters of candidates who had won a plurality (but not a majority) of votes became angry after being told that, in line with the law, a second round would be held between the top two vote-getters to elect a winner.

Recommendations for the second round of the Local Elections:

Because the majority of candidates for Village Chief with a plurality of votes did not win over 50% of the vote, their villages will vote in a second round on 13 November. In anticipation of the second round, Belun makes the following recommendations:

1. Election committees should carry out their role in line with the law;
2. The National Election Commission (CNE) should strengthen its election monitoring and increase the number of election observers, especially in rural villages;
3. Current community leaders should support the electoral process and accept the results of the second round;
4. Political parties should not interfere with the voting process, which aims to elect candidates on an individual (not party) platform; and
5. Community members should be patient while waiting to vote, accept the results of the election without violence and make a formal complaint to the National Election Commission if they suspect interference or other malpractice during the second round.

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