

SITUATION REVIEW – FEBRUARY 2016

Issues to watch

- ▶ **Seven Rama Ambon (slingshot arrow) attacks in Dili**
- ▶ **Nine incidents involving members of banned martial arts groups**
- ▶ **Ten incidents perpetrated by students**
- ▶ **Accusations of witchcraft contribute to high incident total in Manatutu**

Seven Rama Ambon (slingshot arrow) attacks in Dili

In February, Belun's Early Warning, Early Response system recorded 112 violent incidents. Of those incidents, ten were initiated by unknown perpetrators, including seven incidents in Dili that involved evening or nighttime *Rama Ambon* (slingshot arrow) attacks. For example, in Comoro Suku (village) on 15 January at 7:30pm, a family was sitting on their veranda, when a motorbike stopped in front of their house. The family expected a visitor had arrived, but, instead, a passenger on the motorbike shot an arrow fired from a slingshot at a youth sitting on the veranda, before the motorbike sped off. The youth was hit in the shoulder and immediately taken to hospital.

In four of the *Rama Ambon* attacks, the victims were sitting on verandas in front of their homes when they were shot, while in the other three the victims were walking in the street or driving. Six of the seven unknown perpetrators shot the arrows from the passenger seats of motorbikes. Three incidents occurred in Comoro Suku, three in Bairo Pite Suku, and one in Santa Cruz Suku.

Nine incidents involving members of banned martial arts groups

In February, the EWER system recorded nine incidents perpetrated by members of banned martial arts groups (MAGs), though the actual total was likely much higher, as many of the victims in the above-mentioned *Rama Ambon* attacks were also MAG members. During an average month in the past year, only 3.2 MAG-related incidents were recorded.

Total number of violent incidents by municipality in February 2016	
Municipality	Incidents
Aileu	6
Ainaru	5
Baukau	10
Bobonaru	5
Covalima	3
Dili	32
Ermera	10
Lautein	2
Likisá	9
Manatutu	10
Manufahi	6
Oekusi	3
Vikeké	11
Totál	112

Of the confirmed MAG-related incidents, two occurred in Likisá. In the most serious incident, at midday on 13 February in Leotela Suku, two groups fought with machetes in the market. One person was killed, one was seriously injured and one was slightly injured. Ten houses were also torched in the incident and one small tractor was destroyed. The police captured four suspects, but the others involved fled.

Four MAG-related incidents also occurred in Dili, the most serious of which was in Bairo Pite Suku on 26 February in the afternoon. One youth with an axe attacked another youth, who was seriously injured in the head, shoulder and hand. Also, a series of three MAG-related incidents in Baukau was sparked after a minor parking dispute between members of opposing groups.

Ten incidents perpetrated by students

In February, the EWER system recorded ten incidents that involved secondary and pre-secondary students – a slightly higher total than the average month over the past year (7.1 such incidents). Three incidents occurred in Baukau Vila between students of two schools on 12, 19 and 22 February, the final of which resulted in one student being seriously injured and taken to hospital. In Aileu, Covalima and Vikeké, male students fought over girls. Other student-perpetrated incidents were recorded in Ermera, Lautein, Manufahi, and Oekusi.

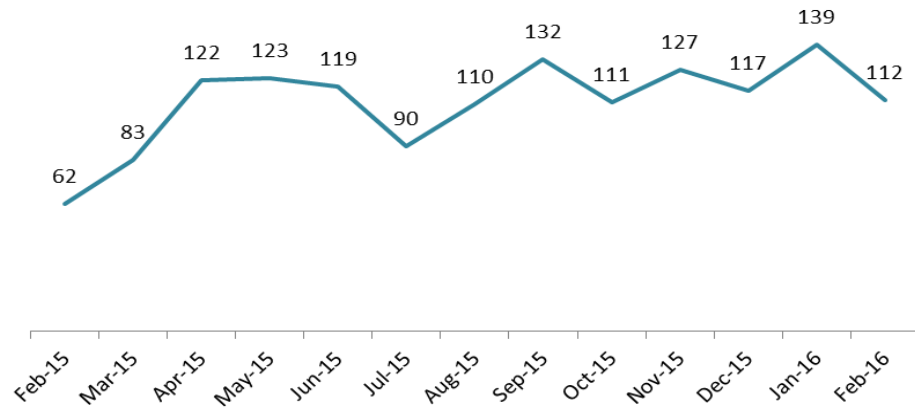
Accusations of witchcraft contribute to high incident total in Manatutu

The EWER system recorded 10 violent incidents in Manatutu, a municipality with a monthly average of only 3.4 incidents. Five of those incidents resulted from accusations of witchcraft. In the most serious incident, on 5 February in Aiteas Suku, Manatutu, a woman was killed by her husband with a machete, after she accused him of witchcraft. Their daughter was also killed and their two sons were seriously injured as they tried to protect their mother. After the killing, the wife's family and community members arrived on the scene and killed the husband.

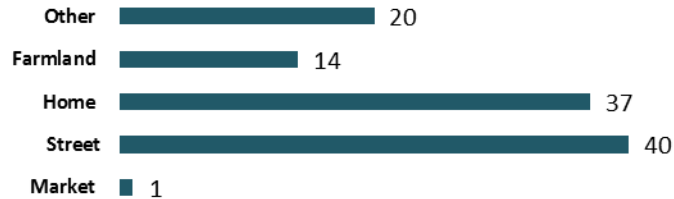
Of the five other incidents recorded in Manatutu, two were related to disputes about an irrigation construction in Laleia-Vemassee, one involved adultery, one was a land dispute, and one resulted from excessive alcohol consumption.

INCIDENT CHARACTERISTICS

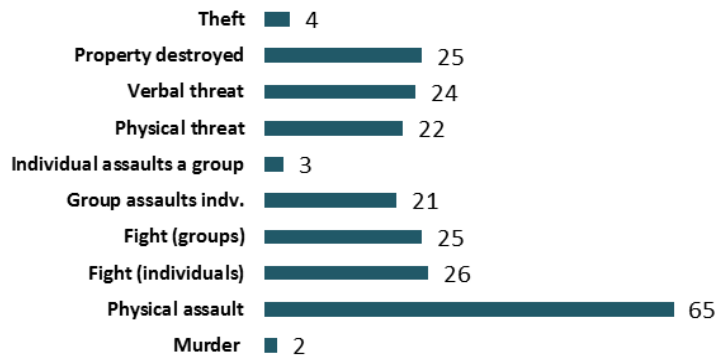
Monthly incident totals: Feb 2015-Feb 2016



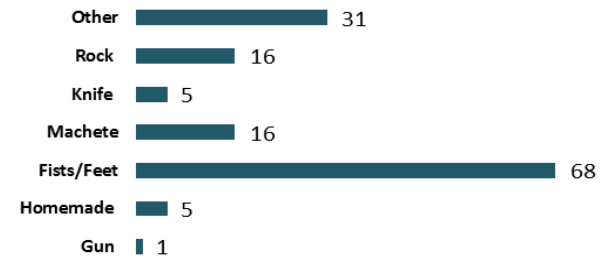
Incident location



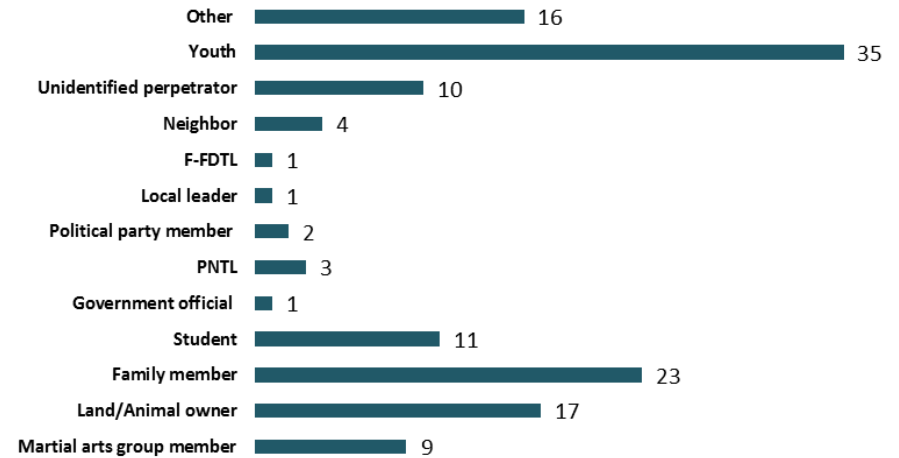
Incident Type



Weapon Used



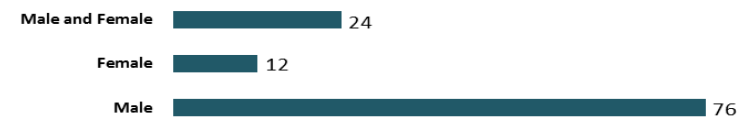
Who Initiated the Incident?



Gender of Initiator(s)



Gender of Victim(s)



CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED

By the Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) team:

- ▶ On 19 February, the EWER team met with the General Secretary of the g7+ grouping of fragile and conflict-affected states to explore opportunities for collaboration between Belun and the Secretariat in the future.
- ▶ On 25 February, with Belun support, the Conflict Prevention and Response Network of Lospalos held a Tara Bandu (traditional law-making ceremony) to minimize conflict between community members in the 9 Aldeias (sub-villages) of Fuiloro Suku. The event also included a peacemaking ceremony between community members from Asalainu and Motolori, the two communities which had been involved in a serious violent incident that featured in a EWER Alert in January.
- ▶ On 26 February, the EWER team and Fundasaun Mahein met with the PNTL General Commander, 2nd Commander, Operational Commander and the Advisor to the General Commander at PNTL headquarters in Dili. The purpose of the meeting was to improve communication and coordination in the future.

By the Community Policing Support Program team:

- ▶ On 10 February, to develop a sustainable model for community policing in Timor-Leste, Belun and The Asia Foundation met to discuss strategies to further transfer leadership of the program's community policing activities to the PNTL and local leaders.

By the Land Mediation and Dispute Resolution team:

- ▶ On 18 February, the team mediated a dispute about abandoned land in Tirilolo Suku, Baukau. As a result of the mediation, the land was judged to be government property by the Department of Land, Property and Cadastral Services.

ABOUT THIS SITUATION REVIEW

This situation review reports on violent incidents and trends in Timor-Leste that were identified by Belun's Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) monitoring system in 43 of Timor-Leste's 65 Administrative Posts in February 2016. Descriptions of all incidents recorded by the EWER system can be found at: www.belun.crowdmap.com. Belun strives to share up-to-date and verified information. Considering that situations change rapidly, we appreciate receiving information to clarify or update our EWER monitoring data.

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