



ALERT

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

DETAILS OF SLINGSHOT ARROW ATTACKS RECORDED IN DILI IN 2016 Dili, 23 August 2016

This year, Belun's Early Warning, Early Response (EWER) system has recorded 19 Rama Ambon (slingshot arrow) attacks in Dili. These incidents have resulted in 2 deaths and 15 serious injuries. The most attacks were recorded in February (7), followed by June (5), July (3), April (2) and January and March (1 each). There were no attacks in May. The majority of attacks – 14 of them – occurred between 7pm and 3am, while 5 were recorded between 4pm and 5pm.

Twelve attacks were perpetrated on public roads or streets, six took place in private homes (primarily with victims being shot from the street while sitting on their verandas) and one occurred at the Aimutin Church. Comoro Suku (village) and Bairo Pite Suku recorded the most attacks, with eight and six respectively. In Comoro Suku, attacks were recorded in the following Aldeias (hamlets): Bairuleste, Bebonuk Metin II, Delta Aimetilaran, Fomentu, Quatro de Setembru, Sao Jose (2 attacks) and Zero Quatro. In Bairo Pite Suku, attacks occurred in Aldeias Frekat, Hudilaran, Lanud, Lisbutak, Manemesak-Ramelau and Teki-Teki. Other attacks were recorded in Bidau Suku (Lecidere), Fatuhada Suku (one in Zero-Dois and one in Lurumata), Santa Cruz Suku (Beheda) and Vila-Verde Suku (Ponte Maloa).

The majority of attacks were perpetrated by unknown actors who shot from unlit areas and fled before they could be identified. Known perpetrators include one young student, one neighbor and two suspected members of banned Martial Arts Groups (MAGs). However, Belun suspects that many of the 15 unknown actors were also members of banned MAGs, as the targets of the attacks were mostly young men with direct or indirect connections to MAGs. In total, 18 victims or would-be victims were young men and one was a boy, who was shot by accident.

Thirteen of the attacks were perpetrated from motorcycles, with one person driving and the shooter sitting in the rear passenger seat and firing at the victim from 5-7 meters away. In nine of these attacks, the perpetrators drove a Yamaha V-Ixion motorcycle, whereas the type of motorcycle in the other four incidents is unknown. The six incidents that did not involve motorcycles included one-on-one and group fights in which Rama Ambon were used, and one incident in which a young student playing with Rama Ambon ended up seriously injuring his friend by accident (in Lisbutak, Bairo Pite).

While Martial Arts Group-related rivalries are suspected to have factored into some attacks, the motivations of most attackers are unknown. The PNTL has captured some suspects, and the Dili District Court authorized the preventative detention of nine suspects in July. Still, Dili residents remain fearful when they are outdoors in high-risk areas at night, as the competent authorities have not yet presented an effective strategy to prevent such attacks.

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

1. The PNTL should continue to investigate the Rama Ambon attacks as a top priority;
2. The PNTL should continue to increase their regular night-patrols in Dili, when most Rama Ambon attacks and other types of violence are recorded;
3. Village Councils and community members should strengthen their coordination with PNTL Village Police Officers and provide information about suspected perpetrators of Rama Ambon attacks;
4. The Public Prosecutor should quickly process cases of suspected Rama Ambon attackers to serve as a deterrent;
5. The Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications should mount CCTV cameras in high-risk areas to deter, and assist in the investigation of, Rama Ambon attacks;
6. The Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications should increase the number of bright street lights throughout Dili to prevent perpetrators from carrying out violent attacks in anonymity.

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