

Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER)

**Report 1: 28
May-12 June 2007**

Release Date: 22 June 2007

The EVER reports are published regularly by BELUN with the support of IFES. The information in the reports is compiled from a network of 35 trained monitors throughout the country who monitor incidents of election violence, potential violence, tension levels, and peaceful activities surrounding the parliamentary elections. The EVER reports are intended for use by local and national stakeholders such as political parties, election and security officials, the public, etc., to help prevent and reduce election violence and tensions in Timor-Leste.

The First Report on Electoral Violence issued by the EVER Program covers the period from 28 May through 12 June 2007. A total of 34 incidents of election-related violence were captured and verified by EVER monitors during this period.

ALERT: Violence and Increased Tensions in Ermera

Atsabe and Hatolia, Ermera: Several incidents of house burnings and physical attacks occurred in the Atsabe and Hatolia sub-districts in Ermera during the reporting period. The arson and subsequent displacement of over 60 households within Ermera as well as to Liquica and Dili need to be monitored closely. In incidents reported by monitors, supporters of the CNRT, Fretilin, and PD political parties have been affected by the arson and other acts of physical harm. Tensions remain high and ongoing incidents continue to take place in the district.

Recommendations: National and district level authorities should investigate all incidents of arson and follow-up with the affected families to ensure their displacement does not compromise their ability to vote on Election Day. Political party leaders in Ermera should collaborate to express opposition against violence by their supporters. PNTL, UNPol, and other relevant security actors should provide increased security for the remainder of campaign activities in Ermera, and extend the time for monitoring communities following campaign activities. Suco councils and community groups should hold a meeting with party representatives and youth supporters to reinforce the Code of Conduct agreed upon by all parties.

Key Findings

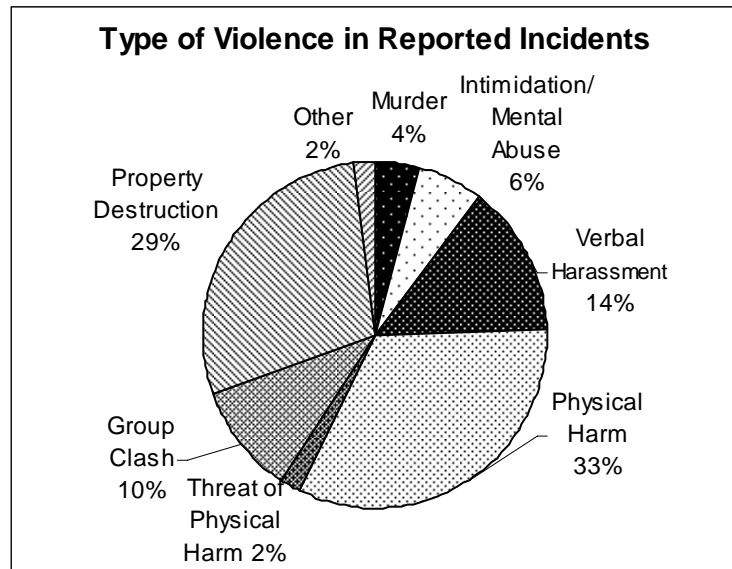
- Over half of the 34 reported incidents of violence took place in the first week following the start of the campaign period and signing of the Code of Conduct on May 28th.
- The highest number of election-related incidents was reported in Baucau, with 11. Between 4 and 5 incidents were reported in Oe-cusse, Ermera, Viqueque and Bobonaro. In total, incidents were reported in 9 of the 13 districts as reflected in the table to the right.
- It should be noted that other incidents of violence continue to occur alongside those covered in the EVER report, and incidents reported do not reflect overall levels of violence per district.
- The current report shows that political party supporters (and in a few cases, party candidates) were perpetrators of election violence in over half (23) of the incidents recorded. Of the 16 political parties, the following 8 parties

Number of Incidents by District	
Aileu	0
Ainaro	0
Baucau	11
Bobonaro	4
Cova Lima	0
Dili	1
Ermera	4
Lautem	2
Liquica	2
Manatuto	0
Manufahi	1
Oecussi	5
Viqueque	4
Total	34

were mentioned in incidents reported: ASDT/PSD Coalition, CNRT, Fretilin, PD, PDRT, PMD, and PUN.

- Victims of election violence incidents were most often political party supporters and their property. The parties identified as victims were: ASDT/PSD, CNRT, Fretilin, KOTA/PPT Democratic Alliance, PD, PMD, and UNDERTIM.
- Most incidents of violence took place on the day of or immediately following campaign activities in the district. Half of the incidents reported took place after dark and most occurred in public areas. These patterns will be important to consider in security measures taken for the remainder of the campaign.

- Across the country, 2 people were killed and 37 people were injured in the reported incidents. At the same time, property damage occurred in 15 of the incidents. The chart to the right shows the breakdown of incidents by type of violence¹.



- The most common weapons used were stones or sharp objects (16 incidents) although guns and knives were also seen during the reporting period.

- Analysis of incidents shows that adequate presence of security forces at campaign events and on the streets where convoys are traveling can prevent verbal harassment from leading into physical violence, and controlled the environment in which political rallies took place. A few activities were noted by monitors where community leaders called upon their constituents to maintain peace. Such initiatives are valuable in reinforcing non-violence and can be organized by both civil society groups and political parties.

Conclusions

BELUN believes that while incidents of violence were limited in number this reporting period, tensions and fear of violence have increased in the communities affected and need to be addressed to maximize voter confidence and participation in the upcoming election. The first EVER report highlights that incidents of election-related violence occurred almost every day during the reporting period, with a particularly high level at the start of the campaign activities. Similarly, the end of the campaign period on June 27th could see another spike in the violence. Most incidents reported occurred at a localized level and drew upon existing tensions within the communities. However, the recent violence and subsequent displacement from Ermera to other districts as well as the shootings of 2 people in Viqueque have both drawn great attention at the national level. It is important that efforts are made both within the affected community and nationally to share information on the responses taken to address incidents of violence.

Analysis of the incidents shows that campaign activities where masses of people are gathered are potential opportunities for verbal harassment and physical violence to take place. Monitors reported verbal harassment and to a lesser extent, intimidation taking place in many incidents prior to acts of physical violence. The link between these types of violence as well as existing conflict factors within communities should be taken into consideration by party organizers. Political parties need to be sensitive to the impact of campaign messages on community relationships and tensions. It will be particularly critical for all stakeholders to promote a peaceful environment

¹ It should be noted that multiple types of violence may occur in one incident (for example, when physical harm and property damage take place at the same time).

during the last week of elections to foster non-violence on Election Day and in the counting process thereafter.

Recommendations

- Given the high number of incidents in Baucau, severity of violence in Viqueque, and heightened tensions in Ermera, district authorities and security forces should pay particular attention to these areas in the coming weeks to mitigate and reduce the potential for retaliatory acts of violence following the incidents that occurred in this reporting period.
- Civil society organizations (CSOs) and community leaders should continue to approach political party representatives to reinforce the Code of Conduct locally, and to make public statements to reduce tensions between party supporters and promote non-violence in the community. CSOs could organize a public oath by parties and/or community members at the suco or sub-district level committing to non-violence and collaboration.
- The incidents show that post-campaign gatherings and convoys are sites for many incidents of violence. Important steps that can help reduce and prevent these activities from leading to violence include:
 - Increased police and security presence around convoys, especially on the last day of the campaign period in Dili on June 27th;
 - Increased police and security presence in communities before and after the actual campaign activities;
 - Multi-party dialogues with other parties to demonstrate cooperation and effectively share party platforms with communities;
 - Adherence by political parties and supporters to the Electoral Campaign Regulations approved by CNE to end campaign activities by 6:30 pm.
- The patterns of violence identified indicate the need for local leaders and security officials (both national and international) to work together more closely to address and prevent incidents of violence. Regular weekly meetings should be organized between local government, community leaders, and security officials to follow-up on violence that has occurred and prevent tensions from escalating into violence. This could take place at the village or sub-district level.
- The various monitoring and security bodies (including government, civil society, and UN agencies) recording incidents of violence should collaborate and share information regularly to improve the quality and breadth of information gathered. This will increase the effectiveness of reports and may contribute to a peaceful Election Day and counting process.
- All stakeholders, and in particular, organizations specializing in conflict prevention or mitigation during the elections should make use of data relevant to their communities and feel free to offer feedback and recommendations to monitors or to BELUN about the EVER project.

About the EVER Project

EVER is a program to monitor and report on election violence with the goal of preventing and reducing violence. EVER was developed by IFES and has been implemented with civil society partners in 8 countries such as Guyana, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. In Timor-Leste, the EVER project is a collaboration between BELUN and IFES.

Within the EVER framework, "election-related violence" or "election violence" refers to any violence (harm) or threat of violence (harm) that is aimed at any person or property involved in the election process, or at disrupting any part of the electoral or political process during the election period. Election violence generally involves political parties, their supporters, journalists, agents of the government, election administrators and the general population. It includes threats, assault, murder, destruction of property, and physical or psychological harm. An "incident" of election violence refers to any act that 1) has a specific victim(s) and perpetrator(s) and occurs within a

limited timeframe and location; 2) meets the definition of election-related violence; and 3) has been verified by monitors using at least two different sources of information.

The objectives of EVER are to:

- Identify, document, and monitor violence which happens during the election period and has an impact on the election process (election violence)
- Increase capacity of civil society in Timor-Leste to prevent and reduce conflict
- Share information about election violence and responses with all stakeholders and the public through 6 (six) EVER reports to be published before and after the elections (between 22 June and 15 September 2007)

BELUN manages a network of thirty-five monitors across the country who have been trained in the EVER methodology to gather and verify information from the media, election officials, security officials, government officials, political parties, civil society organizations, community leaders, voters, and eyewitnesses to violence, and from attendance at campaign and peace events. Monitors will work from 28 May to 31 August 2007. It should be noted that monitors will not be able to record every incident of violence in the country. EVER reports list incidents verified by at least two sources. This improves the reliability of information that stakeholders have on the patterns of violence - that is, the major types of violence that are happening and who is involved.

About EVER partners

BELUN was established in 2004 with the mandate to serve communities, develop the organizational capacity of partners, reduce tensions and prevent conflict in Timor-Leste. BELUN works with 130 CBO/NGO partners across all districts and has five teams strategically sited throughout the country- in Ainaro, Baucau, Dili, Maliana, and Oe-cusse.

IFES is an international nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports the building of democratic societies. IFES is headquartered in Washington, DC, and currently has field offices in more than 20 countries. Since 1987, IFES has provided technical assistance to over 100 countries in transition in the areas of election administration, civil society building, human rights, rule of law and good governance.