Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER)
Report 3: July 2 – July 12

Release Date: 1 August 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 Third Report on Electoral Violence issued by the EVER Program covers the period from July 2 to July 12, 2007. A total of 15 incidents of election-related violence were captured and verified by EVER monitors during this period. This is a dramatic decrease from the 45 incidents during the second reporting period (June 13 to July 1).

The EVER team commends party leaders, party supporters, security forces, election officials and communities for their commitment to a peaceful vote counting and results process. The period after the results was much calmer overall than the pre-election period, although we are concerned about the new tensions in specific communities as noted below and later in the report.

Advisories[1]

- The situation in Watolari in Viqueque is currently very tense as a series of incidents of property damage and intimidation occurred in the beginning of July. We believe that four of these are election-related, but insecurity in the region has impeded monitors from traveling and gathering information easily. There are UIR forces (rapid intervention unit of the PNTL) and a variety of security actors keeping watch, and BELUN calls on all actors to take measures to reduce tensions. It appears that there are several causes of the unrest: 1) frustration between Fretilin and the Majority Parliamentary Alliance (CNRT, ASDT, PSD, PD) supporters on the uncertainty surrounding the formation of the government; 2) lack of understanding about how government formation and power distribution will impact communities; 3) existing inter-personal disputes and other latent conflicts within communities. BELUN recommends immediate public information campaigns and dialogue activities to address the first and second causes. Longer-term strategies to address the third cause for tension are also strongly urged. Such activities can be initiated by both government and civil society actors, and would be more effective as a collaboration between state and non-state entities given the current tension levels. A dialogue between all parties, security services, government, and civil society representatives in Watolari is planned for August. BELUN encourages all actors to support complementary actions to calm the situation and support a successful dialogue process.

- Monitors report that the potential for violence is likely to be high in many areas (particularly Dili, Ermera, Baucau, and Viqueque districts) following the formation of the new government. Party and community leaders are urged to immediately engage local communities in dialogue and education about party representation and roles in the Parliament. It is especially important to explain that all parties represented in the Parliament will have a voice in the assembly and in the work of the government, even if not represented in the government cabinet. Security patrols are encouraged to increase their presence or patrols in communities at risk.

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[1] The EVER project will at times note 'Alerts' and 'Advisories' at the beginning of its reports. 'Alerts' are intended to be areas of serious ongoing violence in need of intervention. 'Advisories' are intended to call attention to areas at risk for escalation of conflict; that is, communities with ongoing low-level violence or with high potential for violence.
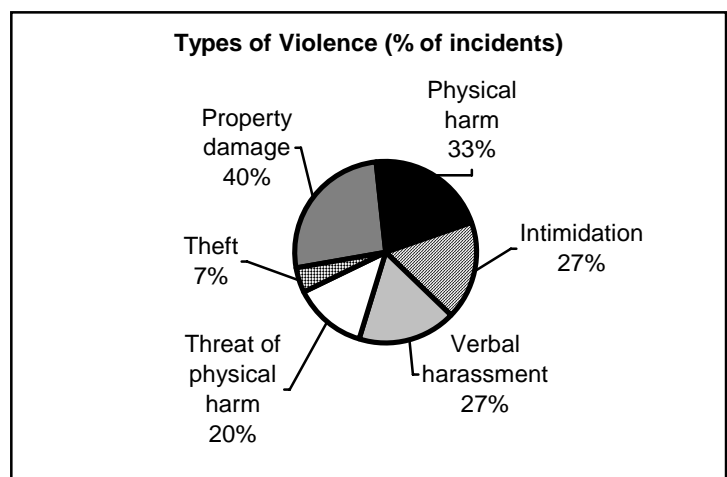
Key Findings

- Fifteen incidents were reported in this period, down from 45 in the last period. One incident took place during vote counting. Six occurred the day of or the day after the CNE announced provisional results for 100% of districts (July 5 and 6). Other incidents were spread throughout the period.

Number of Incidents by District			
	Report 1 (May 28 – June 12)	*Report 2 (June 13 – July 1)*	**Report 3 (July 2 – 12)**
Viqueque	*4*	*3*	**4**
Ermera	*4*	*7*	**3**
Bobonaro	*4*	*1*	**3**
Baucau	*11*	*7*	**2**
Oecussi	*5*	*3*	**2**
Liquica	*2*	*1*	**1**
Lautem	*2*	*6*	**0**
Manatuto	*0*	*6*	**0**
Dili	*1*	*5*	**0**
Covalima	*0*	*3*	**0**
Aileu	*0*	*2*	**0**
Ainaro	*0*	*1*	**0**
Manufahi	*1*	*0*	**0**
Total	*34*	*45*	**15**

- Viqueque had the most incidents with 4. Six of the 13 districts reported incidents. Previous reporting periods are shown for comparison in italics in the chart to the left.

- Eight people were wounded in 5 incidents (1 person was wounded in Bobonaro, 1 in Ermera, 1 in Oecussi, 3 in 1 incident in Liquica, and 2 in 1 incident in Viqueque). No one was killed during this reporting period.

- As a reminder, EVER reports document only verified incidents of election violence. Other incidents of violence continue to occur, and the incidents reported by EVER do not represent overall levels of violence per district.

- Political party supporters or affiliates were involved as perpetrators in 14 incidents (93%); 1 of these incidents involved political party observers.[2] The parties reported in the incidents as perpetrators were ASDT/PSD Coalition, CNRT, Fretilin, and PDRT.

- Victims of violence were political party supporters in 80% of incidents (12). Four incidents also involved the property of political party supporters (27%), and 1 incident included damage to ballots and interference with the counting process. In 2 incidents, the victims were citizens without identified party affiliation. However the citizens that were targeted were generally perceived as opposition party supporters. The parties involved as victims in the incidents were CNRT, Fretilin, PD, PR, PSD, and UNDERTIM.

- All but 2 of the parties concerned in violent incidents won seats in the Parliament. Ten of the 15 incidents (67%) involved conflict between Fretilin supporters and supporters or perceived supporters of various opposition parties, all of which involved, either explicitly or indirectly, disputing or asserting who would control the government.

Types of Violence (% of incidents)

Physical harm 33%
Intimidation 27%
Verbal harassment 27%
Threat of physical harm 20%
Theft 7%
Property damage 40%

- Property damage (40%) and physical harm (33%) were the most common types of violence (see chart at right).[3] The percentage of incidents involving physical harm has fallen from 53% of incidents in the last reporting period. Property damage occurred at roughly the same percentage as last period and was observed in half of the incidents.

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[2] Please note that more than one perpetrator or victim may be present in one incident; and in some incidents, both people and property are victims. For example, supporters of one party may attack supporters of another party and a government official in a car (that would be one perpetrator, two victims, and property damage).
[3] Please note that multiple types of violence may occur in one incident, and multiple methods of violence may be used. For example, physical harm and property damage may take place in the same incident. Or, perpetrators may throw stones as well as beat a victim.

- The most common method (weapon) of violence was fists or using hands (53%). This method has increased from 27% in the last period. This is very different fom the first two reports, in which stones were used in over half the incidents. This period, only 1 incident (7%) involved stone throwing.

- While election violence has dropped dramatically, other violence continues. Though not directly linked to the elections, we mention these patterns as they both affect and are affected by the election/political issues that EVER monitors. We note that the uncertainty about the future government may cause such violence to increase. There are two areas of frequent disturbances or violence: 1) clashing martial arts groups mainly in Dili, Ermera and Liquica and 2) angry supporters of Alfredo Reinaldo damaging property by stone throwing.

- As election violence decreases, but tensions build, peace initiatives are crucial. Monitors reported 12 peace activities across the country during this period. Dili had the most peace activities with 3. Ainaro, Ermera, and Lautem each had 2. Of the 6 districts which had incidents during this period, all except Oecussi also had peace activities. See Annex 1 of this report for details on activities.

Updates

- Verification of incidents is an ongoing process. EVER monitors have verified 4 additional incidents that occurred during the first two reporting periods (May 28 to July 1). These will be included in the final EVER report.

Conclusions

Election violence has decreased dramatically following the election, but as noted above, tensions remain high and the potential for further violence is high. Preventative action now could have a large impact. Attention should be paid to the areas which experienced violence during the first weeks of July. Beyond this, communities at particular risk include (but are not limited to) Watolari in Viqueque, Hatolia in Ermera, Baguia in Baucau, and Bairo Pite, Vila Verde, Kampo Alor and Bebonuk in Dili.

The CNE began announcing provisional results of the election beginning July 2, and declared the final results on July 9. The Court of Appeals pronounced the results official on July 12. Therefore, for the bulk of this reporting period it has been evident which parties would serve in Parliament. As noted above, 93% of the violent incidents reported in this period involved the 7 parties or coalitions that won seats in the Parliament. Prior to the election, nearly all competing parties were involved in violence. This suggests that supporters of parties who are not involved in determining the post-election government may not be motivated to act aggressively, nor are they generally seen as a threat by the parties who were elected to Parliament. These changes in the incidents confirm that election violence generally involves actors who have something at stake – something to gain or lose. At this point in the process, the actors directly involved in government formation seem to feel they have the most at stake.

Recommendations

To security actors:

- UNPol and PNTL should meet with community leaders in the areas identified as at risk in this report: Watolari in Viqueque, Hatolia in Ermera, Baguia in Baucau, and Bairo Pite, Vila Verde, Kampo Alor and Bebonuk in Dili in order to investigate the level of tension and establish strategies for preventing conflict.

To political parties:

- Political party leaders should seek to quickly resolve the formation of government and work with the president in a collaborative and fair manner. Leaders should communicate their actions to supporters, particularly in communities identified as higher risk, and stress that supporters and others in the community should be patient while the process is underway.

- Party leaders should encourage supporters who want to speak out about the process, or any political or social issue, to express their opinions in non-violent and non-provocative ways. A longer-term investment should be made in training parties and communities in how to use government institutions, public information campaigns, and other kinds of non-violent advocacy strategies. Support for party development and civic education should take place on an ongoing basis and not just around election periods to ensure good practices are sustained.

To civil society / communities:

- Civil society organizations and political parties should work with key community actors to educate the public on the meaning of the election results and the government formation. Terms such as 'majority', 'opposition', and 'coalition' could be defined. Basic concepts about how parliament makes decisions and laws could be clarified and discussed. Citizens are generally not clear on the process of government formation, the composition of Parliament, and how Parliament will function. Citizens need to understand that the party or coalition 'in power' does not have absolute power and that all parties in Parliament have a role to play in determining the direction of the country. The public needs to have confidence that all parties with seats will have a voice in Parliament.

- Local government offcials, suco councils, and local leaders in communities which are experiencing high levels of tension and violence could call meetings with political parties, security officials, and others to discuss the problems and work together to find solutions.

General:

- BELUN believes that there is a lack of public awareness about the electoral system and democratic processes in general. Civic education programs could be improved and expanded to empower citizens to make better decisions and participate more constructively in democratic processes. This could help reduce the tendency to rely on violence to resolve political conflicts and address individual sentiments of exclusion from political processes.

- The media should seek out and provide accurate and comprehensive information on the process of government formation to support public awareness and understanding of the process. The media should report information responsibly, write in a manner that is sensitive to existing tensions within communities and avoid inflamatory language.

- All stakeholders, particularly 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.

Announcing Call for Proposals for Small Grants to Support Peace Activities

BELUN and IFES invite community organizations to apply for grants up to $1,000 each to conduct peace activities in their communities. Proposals are due to BELUN by August 15, 2007. Please contact BELUN for more information.

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 including Guyana, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. In Timor-Leste, this first implementation of 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 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 120 CBO/NGO partners across all districts and has five teams strategically placed 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.

Annex 1: Activities to Promote Peace

Types of Activities Promoting Peace	Implementor	Total Activities	District
Dialogue led by Minister Antoninho Bianco (Minister of the Council of Ministers) and Fransisco De Sa Benevides (Minister of Agriculture) on the election process. Other political parties also participated in this dialogue.	Council of Ministers and Ministry of Agriculture	2	Ainaro
12 Aldeias hold meetings with Council of Elders as an action to promote peace in the community.	--		
Sports activity between two clubs aimed at creating unity and peace in the community.	--	1	Aileu
Meeting between political parties CNRT, PSD/ASDT and PD.	--	1	Bobonaro
Fretilin holds a festival to call for peace in Atauro community. Other political leaders also participated.	Fretilin	3	Dili
Open Dialogue between all political parties to discuss women's issues, challenges, expectations and solutions.	UNTL, Cabinet of the PM, Rede Feto and UNIFEM		
Meeting between Suco Chief in Becora and youth on Simu Malu with IDPs from Hospital Guido Valadares and Cannosian Sisters to UNITAL house.	Community leaders of Becora and Youth		
Dialogue between leaders of political party and community leaders to reduce violence in the community.	UNMIT and MTRC	2	Ermera
Sports activities and expo for youth.	Church		
All political party appeal to supporters to create peace, not to provoke each other and avoid violence.	All political parties	1	Lautem
Music Concert to promote peace and development	National NGO CCF	1	Liquica
Local authorities and security actors hold mediation in Babulu to create a more peaceful situation.	Local authorities and security officials in Viqueque	1	Viqueque