

Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) Report 4: July 13 – July 26

Release Date: 9 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 Fourth Report on Electoral Violence issued by the EVER Program covers the period from July 13 to July 26, 2007. A total of 4 incidents of election-related violence were captured and verified by EVER monitors during this period. This is a further decrease from the 15 incidents reported during the third reporting period (July 2 to July 12).

The EVER team reinforces the importance of party representatives demonstrating their commitment to non-violence and cooperation in the transition period following formation of the new government. While election-related incidents have decreased during this reporting period, tension levels and the potential for spikes in violence following the government formation remain high as demonstrated by the escalation of violence in Dili and in specific communities nationwide throughout July.

Alert¹

- Beyond this reporting period, we note that in response to the August 6 announcement of the new prime minister, there has been an escalation of tension and incidents of violence reported in Same, Baucau and Viqueque towns. Immediate action by security actors should be taken to calm communities and stabilize the situation in those areas.
- Despite the decrease in incidents of electoral violence, monitors have reported higher tension levels in Dili (Bairo Pite, Comoro, Lecidere, Vila Verde), Ermera (Gleno, Hatolia), and Oecussi (Pante Makassar and Passabe). These areas are likely to be at risk for increase in violence following the government formation.

Key Findings

- Four incidents of election violence were reported in this period, a dramatic decrease from the 15 incidents in the last period and the lowest number reported during the EVER monitoring period from May 28 to July 26.

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.

- Three incidents of election violence reported took place in Oecussi and 1 took place in Dili. Including this report, a total of 98 incidents of electoral violence have been reported throughout the four EVER reports, with district totals shown in the table below.
- During the fourth reporting period, the incidents of violence resulted in 1 house burning and one car damaged by rocks. There were no injuries or deaths from the reported incidents.

Number of Incidents by District	
District	Reports 1-4 May 28-July 26
Baucau	20
Ermera	14
Oecussi	13
Viqueque	11
Bobonaro	8
Lautem	8
Dili	7
Manatuto	6
Liquica	4
Covalima	3
Aileiu	2
Ainaro	1
Manufahi	1
Total	98

- As a reminder, EVER reports document only verified incidents of election violence. While other incidents of violence have increased, the incidents reported by EVER do not represent overall levels of violence per district.
- Political party supporters or affiliates were reported as perpetrators in 2 incidents.² The parties reported as perpetrators were CNRT and Fretilin.
- Victims of violence were identified political party supporters or affiliates in 3 incidents, including one incident involving a political party leader. The property of a political party representative and leader were damaged in 2 incidents. In 1 incident, the victim was a citizen without an identified political party. As in the last reporting period, the victim without an identified party affiliation was perceived as being a supporter of an opposition party (based on the former government). The parties reported as victims in the incidents were ASDT/PSD, Fretilin and PD.
- Two incidents involved perpetrators asserting their party's right to form and control the new government. This follows the previously established pattern in that supporters of parties with seats in the Parliament are more often reported in incidents of violence than parties who do not have seats in Parliament.
- During the reporting period, the two types of violence that occurred were property damage (2 incidents) and intimidation (2 incidents).³ There were no incidents involving physical harm or threats of physical harm, which were present in over 50% of the incidents during the last reporting period.
- Weapons of violence used in the incidents included rocks and a home-made bomb (1 incident) and fire (1 incident). The other 2 incidents did not involve weapons, although perpetrators used provocative language and their party's position to intimidate the victims. There was a significant decrease in the use of weapons from the last period, where perpetrators used their fists or hands in over half of incidents (53%). In relation to incidents of violence not clearly linked with the elections, there has been a noticeable increase in Dili in the use of homemade weapons such as throwing bottles filled with gasoline.
- While election violence has reduced significantly from past periods, other violence continues to grow. In particular, the contested interpretation of the Constitution and subsequent delay in announcing the government structure have enabled individuals and groups with pre-existing conflicts to use the debate over government formation

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.

as a front for expressing their grievances through violence. This pattern of violence around political announcements and changes in existing government structures and policies is likely to continue over the coming months. As noted in the first EVER report, areas with pre-existing and heightened tensions such as Baucau, Bobonaro, Dili, Ermera and Viqueque are more likely to be impacted by this opportunistic violence.

- Identifying peace activities is critical to understand and reinforce community conflict prevention strategies. From July 13-26, monitors reported 8 peace activities across four districts. As in the past reporting period, Dili had the most with 4 activities. Oecussi had 2 activities and Aileu and Ainaro had 1 activity each. See Annex 1 of this report for details on activities.

Updates

- The situation in Watolari, Viqueque has stabilized since the last reporting period (July 2-12). The dialogue between political party and community leaders remains planned for August, but no date has been finalized.
- Verification of incidents is an ongoing process. EVER monitors have verified 7 additional incidents occurring over the past four reporting periods (May 28 to July 26). These will be included in the final EVER report.

Conclusions

The current reporting period had the lowest number of incidents reported, although the potential for increased violence remains high. Continued monitoring is recommended for areas with higher tension and past reports of election violence. Areas with increased potential for future violence include: Dili (Bairo Pite, Comoro, Lecidere, Vila Verde), Baucau (Baucau town, Vemasse, Venilale), Ermera (Hatolia, Gleno), Viqueque (Watolari, Viqueque) and Oecussi (Pante Makassar, Passabe).

The current reporting period shows a continuation of the patterns of violence noted in the third EVER report. While ongoing debate over the government formation continued across the reporting period, incidents of violence not clearly related to the election results became more consistent in Dili and in several communities nationwide. Given the spike in post-election day violence, it is likely that the period surrounding the government formation process will include higher levels of violence in the areas noted above as well as heightened tensions more generally. As in the past periods, it is foreseeable that violence will remain localized. However, the long-term impact of such incidents on community stability is significant and strategies to minimize such incidents are necessary. Reinforced security measures, commitment to using peaceful processes to address grievances by political and community actors, and improved community access to information is critical to mitigate tensions from escalating into violence during this fragile period.

Recommendations

To security actors:

- UNPol and PNTL should continue their presence and increase patrols in communities with higher potential for violence. For example, monitors noted the ISF and URP (Rapid Police Unit) presence in Hatolia, Ermera helped calm community fears about insecurity in the area. The locales highlighted in this report should be considered for augmented security presence.

- Security actors should develop activities that build trust between themselves and community members, which can contribute to improved information exchange and may prevent tensions from escalating into violence. These activities should be organized in collaboration with community leaders across all districts, beginning with the areas highlighted in the EVER reports.

To political parties:

- Political party leaders should commit to using existing legal institutions and peaceful political processes to address any disagreement regarding the government formation. Throughout the government formation period, leaders should reinforce non-violent messages to supporters. National leaders from all parties represented in the Parliament should collaborate with district and community leaders to explain their party's role in the new government to supporters and community members. Activities organized across party lines can encourage community unity and reduce the significance of political differences.

To civil society / communities:

- Civil society organizations, especially those involved in civic education and advocacy, should develop sub-district, and where possible, suco-level forums to facilitate open communication among citizens and share information about the recent government formation. Organizations should engage state actors, political party and other civil society bodies at both national and local levels to help clarify any issues that might be raised. Activities could be organized in targeted communities over several months to follow the transition period of the new government. The discussions could provide a unique opportunity to reinforce messages of non-violence while providing critical information to communities with a higher potential for violence.

General:

- To sustain reduction of violence across communities, local capacities for conflict prevention and mitigation need to be reinforced. The existing suco councils have the potential to play an important and lasting role in their communities. BELUN encourages all actors to engage and involve the relevant suco council when planning and implementing community activities. Empowering the role of community leaders can support the suco council to emerge as a local conflict management resource and reduce the potential for tensions to turn into violence.
- Media outlets, particularly national and community radio, will be critical in the coming weeks to update communities on the formation of the government. Mobile radio teams should be supported throughout this period to expand reach to isolated areas and community radio should consider airing targeted programs and interviews with relevant actors to address specific concerns about the government formation process and its impact.
- All stakeholders, particularly organizations focused on 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 will be received by BELUN until 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 Oecussi.

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

No	Types of Activities Promoting Peace	Implementor	Total Activities	District
1.	Soccer games to encourage friendships across two clubs.	Clubu Nazaret ho Sarlala	1	Aileu
2.	Village chief, aldeia and youth expressing peace messages through sport activities.	Local Authorities	1	Ainaro
3.	Soccer game at an indoor soccer field to promote peace.	BURADU – Perumnas, Bairo Pite	4	Dili
4.	Basketball competition between Primary Schools across Dili.	----		
5.	Peace Building Network meeting to develop coordination and communication around activities that promote peace.	OXFAM		
6.	Music for Peace Concert	5 de Oriente band, Australian Forces and Vialma X band		
7.	Cultural activity to build peace (traditional singing, dancing, drumming, and cooking competition).	Forum Pemuda Wanita Oecussi (FPWO)	2	Oecussi
8.	Discussion on conflict prevention with political parties--Fretilin, ASDT/PSD, PNT and CNRT.	BIFANO		