

Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER)

Report 5: July 27 – August 9

Release Date: 22 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 Fifth Report on Electoral Violence issued by the EVER Program covers the period from July 27 to August 9, 2007. A total of 31 incidents of election-related violence were identified and verified by EVER monitors during this period. This is a sharp increase from the 4 incidents reported during the fourth period (July 13 to July 26) and confirms the increased violence during government formation anticipated in previous EVER reports.

Advisories¹

- The EVER team commends the efforts of the F-FDTL and other security actors to respond to the communities in Viqueque and Baucau affected by the escalation in violence during the reporting period. The situation in the region continues to be a serious concern, as the violence caused a large wave of internal displacement away from village and city centers to remote locations, and it heightened tensions across communities. While reported incidents of violence following the fifth period have decreased, insecurity and the potential for resurgence in violence remain high. Limited mobility and access to information reinforces the need for a collaborative and ongoing response by all actors to stabilize and support the affected population to prevent prolonged instability in those districts.
- In recent weeks, certain areas have shown signs of instability although they have not been affected by high levels of violence. Increasing tensions in some parts of Manufahi, Lautem, and Bobonaro suggest that these areas may be at risk for violence and need to be monitored closely in the upcoming weeks.
- In preparation for the government inaugural ceremony on August 30th, security actors should meet with local and national government officials to plan appropriate security and response strategies to anticipate and contain any sudden escalations in violence. This could prevent the rapid spread of incidents seen in Dili, Baucau and Viqueque following the president's August 6th decision on government formation.

Key Findings

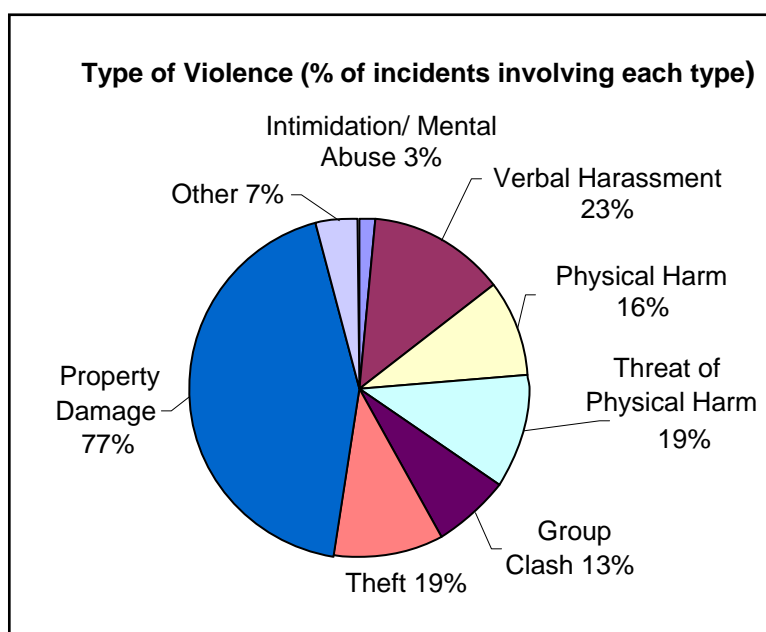
- The 31 reported incidents of election violence this period show a spike from the 4 incidents of violence in the fourth EVER report. The incidents occurred between July 30 and August 9, with the greatest number of incidents (9) reported on August 7th, following the president's announcement asking AMP to form the new government.

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.

- More than in past reporting periods, 81% of incidents (25) took place during the day, between 6 am and 6 pm.

Number of Incidents by District	
District	Report 5 July 27-August 9
Viqueque	9
Dili	7
Baucau	6
Oecussi	5
Ermera	2
Liquica	1
Manufahi	1
Total	31

- 22 of the reported incidents of violence (71%) were concentrated in Viqueque, Baucau and Dili, although monitors also verified incidents in Oecussi, Ermera, Liquica, and Manufahi. The district breakdown for this reporting period is shown in the table to the left.
- While the full impact of the reported incidents is difficult to determine given the ongoing insecurity in the most-affected areas, monitors identified the following results from the incidents: 9 injuries; 25 houses damaged; and 165 houses, 2 cars and 1 motorbike burned. Monitors noted that communities were displaced in 4 incidents, although the exact number is not known. No deaths were reported during the period.
- It is important to note that EVER monitors continue to follow up on incidents of electoral violence occurring throughout the monitoring period, but they are not in a position to undertake wide scale impact assessments of the recent violence. As such, EVER figures do not reflect the total impact of violence across the districts.
- 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 94% of incidents (29).² The parties reported as perpetrators were CNRT, Fretilin and PD.
- In 65% of incidents reported (20), political party leaders, supporters or affiliates were identified as the victims of violence, including 14 incidents involving the property of a political party affiliate or leader. The parties or alliances reported as victims in the incidents included AMP, CNRT, Fretilin, PD and PSD. Private property was damaged in 45% of incidents (14) and government property was damaged in 19% of incidents (6).
- Damage to property was reported in 77% of incidents (24) this period, significantly higher than the other violence documented. The various types of violence reported are shown in the chart to the right.³
- Rocks or fists and hands were used as weapons of violence in 77% of incidents (24). Arson was the second most common weapon, used in 45% or 14 incidents, which is also higher than any past reporting period. One incident involved a gun.



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 sudden increase in election violence outside of Dili following the president's decision for AMP to establish the government demonstrates a critical pattern that may repeat in the coming weeks. In particular, the inauguration of the remaining ministry positions and secretaries of state on August 30th has the potential to catalyze another round of violence in Dili and in specific districts. Based on existing tension levels and recent incidents of both election and other types of violence, areas outside Dili to monitor closely include Viqueque, Baucau, Bobonaro, Ermera, Lautem, Manufahi, and Oecussi.
- Between July 27 and August 9, monitors reported 5 peace activities across the country. The activities took place in Ermera (2), Ainaro, Manatuto, Liquica, and Dili (1 each). Three of the activities were organized by the church or affiliated groups. See Annex 1 of this report for details on activities.

Updates

- Given the violence in Watolari, it is unlikely that the dialogue planned for August between political party and community leaders will take place. Such activities in the region will be contingent on a stabilized security situation and will need to be modified to incorporate the factors surrounding the recent surge of violence.
- Verification of incidents is an ongoing process. EVER monitors have verified 7 additional incidents occurring over the past five reporting periods (May 28 to August 9). These will be included in the final EVER report.

Conclusions

The impact from the 31 incidents of violence in this 2-week reporting period is by far the greatest documented since EVER monitoring started on May 28th. The current report highlights the fragile stability existing in many communities across Timor-Leste and the potential for a sudden escalation in tensions and violence with little warning. The patterns of violence show that decreases in incidents do **not** suggest a return to stability, and security actors should consider tension levels in communities when planning measures to minimize repeated outbreaks of violence. As the government formation process continues and remains contested, it is important to reinforce security efforts in areas both affected and at risk for violence. The EVER team recommends ongoing security presence and increased monitoring for high-risk areas including: Viqueque (Watolari, Viqueque), Baucau (Baguia, Baucau town, Venilale, Quelicai), Dili (Comoro, Cristo Rei), Manufahi (Same), Ermera (Hatolia, Ermera town, Gleno), Bobonaro (Maliana) and Oecussi (Pante Makassar, Passabe).

The political divisions over government formation are likely to continue beyond the August 30th inauguration of the remaining ministers and secretaries of state. Security actors alone cannot stabilize communities. They need the commitment of political leaders at the national and local level to encourage their supporters to use non-violent methods to express their beliefs. More than ever, leaders need to encourage tolerance of differing political views, communicate the need for non-violence, and openly collaborate to find a solution to the current instability. Without such a commitment, all other efforts to address the fractures across communities will have limited success.

Recommendations

To government actors:

- Government officials should communicate their responsibility and commitment to constituents in non-partisan terms to shift the public focus toward positive developments across sectors and reduce the impact of political divisions within the new government.

To security actors:

- UNPol and PNTL should develop community and district prevention and response strategies in the event of a renewed wave of violence in the upcoming weeks. This should be developed alongside ongoing presence and support to the sub-districts most recently affected by increased violence and tensions listed in this report.
- Security actors placed throughout the country should enable conditions for ongoing dialogue activities to be established between the president or other government officials and communities in areas of heightened tensions and violence. This could be piloted in the areas where Fretilin supporters requested such a visit by the president.

To political parties:

- Political party leaders should continue to condemn any acts of violence and send joint messages to communities. Party representatives must reinforce these public messages with actions that demonstrate a commitment to non-violence and tolerance of differing political beliefs.

To civil society/ communities:

- Civil society organizations should collaborate with others at the village and sub-district level to share information about the situation in their respective communities and develop strategies for addressing existing tensions before they lead to violence. Through local support networks, these organizations can have an impact on containing the level of violence and increase accurate information exchange between communities.
- Civil society organizations could develop local compacts to unite community members, especially youth, against violence. These compacts can be established within communities or across villages where possible, and could reduce the number of people engaged in violence.

General:

- All actors are encouraged to strengthen community dispute resolution efforts, as they can provide local responses to addressing tensions before they escalate into violence. These mechanisms have the potential to play a critical role in community conflict management and should be supported toward this end.
- Media outlets are once again encouraged to share accurate information and seek ways to reach more isolated communities. Institutions with the capacity to organize community information meetings in isolated areas should collaborate with local leaders, civil society organizations, and media such as community radio to reduce reliance on rumors and their negative 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.

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.	Church-organized soccer competition between 9 sucos in Maubisse to strengthen unity between sucos and reduce conflict and violence	Parochia Coracao Imaculada de Maria Maubisse	1	Ainaro
2.	Church-organized volleyball and soccer competition on 6 August	Protestant Church in Biqueli, Atauro	1	Dili
3.	Church-organized sporting competition, and youth group dialogues with community in Estado, Poetete, Gleno, and Ponilala sucos	Catholic Church in Gleno/ Youth Group CJPEDE	2	Ermera
4.	Music concert	Australian Forces	1	Liquica
5.	Youth-organized music concert on 27-29 July	Youth in Manatuto	1	Manatuto