

Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) Report 6: August 10 – August 31

Release Date: 11 September 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 sixth and final periodic report on electoral violence issued by the EVER Program covers the period from August 10 to August 31, 2007. A total of 20 incidents of election-related violence were identified and verified by EVER monitors during this period. This is a decrease from the 31 incidents reported during the fifth period (July 27 to August 9).

Advisories¹

- While the volatile situation previously reported in Viqueque has stabilized, monitors have reported continued tension in the region, specifically in Viqueque (Watolari, Viqueque town), Lautem (Los Palos), and Baucau (Quelica). These areas, among others previously highlighted in past reporting periods, should continue to be monitored for sudden escalations in tensions, particularly around major political announcements or decisions.

Key Findings

- The 20 incidents of election violence reported this period represent a 35% decrease from the 31 incidents of violence in the fifth EVER report. The incidents occurred between August 10 and 26, with 75% of incidents (15) reported within the first week of the monitoring period (August 10 to 15) in the aftermath of the formation of the new government. Since mid-August, reports of election-related violence have decreased and by the end of the month, monitors noted generally lower levels of tensions.

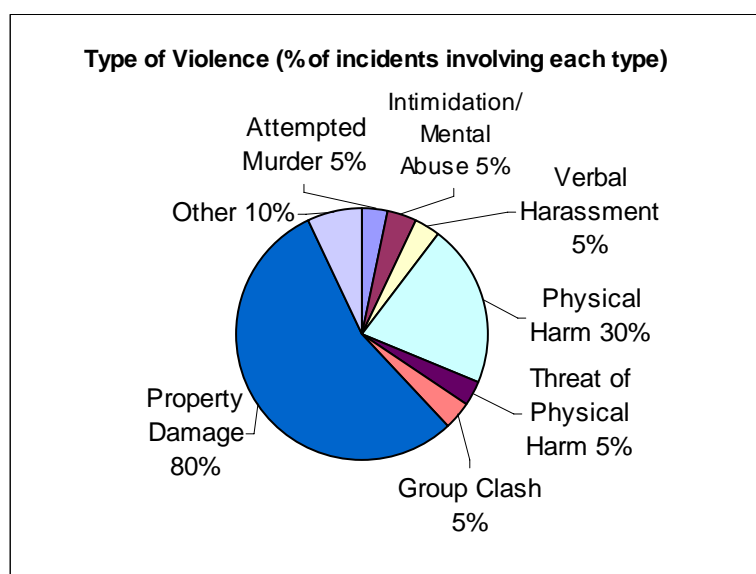
Number of Incidents by District	
District	Report 6 August 10-31
Baucau	6
Lautem	4
Cova Lima	3
Viqueque	3
Bobonaro	2
Oecussi	1
Manufahi	1
Total	20

- Almost half of the reported incidents (9) took place on private property and 12 incidents (60%) occurred during the night, between 8 pm and 6 am.
- The reported incidents were spread across 7 districts, with the greatest number in Baucau (6), Lautem (4), Cova Lima and Viqueque (3 each). The district breakdown for this reporting period is shown in the table to the left.
- The incidents reported this period resulted in 7 injuries, 2 houses burned, 2 houses and 1 car destroyed. Monitors noted one incident in which the victims were displaced. No deaths were reported during the period.

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.

- As a reminder, EVER reports document only verified incidents of election violence. While other incidents of violence continue to occur, those reported by EVER do not represent overall levels of violence per district.
- Political party supporters or affiliates were reported as perpetrators in 45% of incidents (9), a significant drop from the 29 incidents involving political parties in the fifth report.² The parties and alliances reported as perpetrators were AMP, CNRT, and Fretilin. Perpetrators of violence were unknown in 35% of incidents (7), more than in past reporting periods.
- In 15% of incidents reported (3), political party supporters or affiliates were identified as the victims of violence. The parties reported as victims in the incidents included Fretilin, PD and PSD. Private property was damaged in half of the incidents (10). Government property was damaged in 10% of incidents (2), a decrease from the past reporting period.

- Damage to property was reported in 80% of incidents (16) this period, consistently occurring more often than other types of violence. The types of violence reported are shown in the chart to the right.³



- Fists and hands were used as weapons of violence in 45% of incidents (9). The second most common weapons were arson and rocks, used in 40% or 8 incidents each. Similar to past reporting periods, one incident involved a gun.

- While the number of incidents of election violence has decreased, other violence continues to take place regularly in Dili, with isolated incidents in various locales across the country.
- Communities where election violence has occurred are particularly vulnerable to opportunistic violence in the near future, and ongoing monitoring is needed to prevent and mitigate escalation in tensions in those areas. Future monitoring by security actors should include the following sub-districts, among others: Ermera town, Gleno, Hatolia (Ermera); Maliana (Bobonaro); Baucau district; Los Palos (Lautem); Watolari, Viqueque town (Viqueque); Comoro, Cristo Rei (Dili); Same (Manufahi); and Pante Makassar, Passabe (Oecussi).
- Between August 10 and August 31, monitors reported 16 peace activities across the country. The activities took place in 9 districts as follows: Ainaro, Dili (3 each); Ermera, Lautem, Oecussi (2 each); and Cova Lima, Bobonaro, Manufahi, and Viqueque with one activity per district. The activities were organized by a variety of actors, including civil society organizations and government representatives. Four activities were supported by EVER's Small Grant Fund. See Annex 1 of this report for details on activities.

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.

Updates

- Verification of incidents is an ongoing process. EVER monitors have verified 11 additional incidents occurring over the past six reporting periods (May 28 to August 31). These will be included in the final EVER report.

Conclusions

The reduction in incidents of election violence and general decrease in tension levels during the final reporting period of the EVER Program offer an opportunity for all actors to take measures to prevent future spikes in violence. As noted in past reports, the patterns of election violence documented highlight the potential for rapid changes in tension levels and warrant ongoing monitoring as well as increased security for at-risk communities. Continued efforts to address security issues, escalation in tensions, and existing conflict factors by all actors could contribute to improved stability and more effective responses to violence.

In the coming months, as the new government structure and practices are established, the potential for sudden localized spikes in violence remain high. It is critical that political party leaders and representatives continue to reinforce non-violent and constructive methods for party supporters and citizens generally to express their views. Improving access to information, especially regarding changes in government policies, will be important for reducing rumors and manipulation of information. Communities are fragile and increased levels of fear following incidents of election violence continue to challenge a return to stability. Moving beyond the current conflict dynamics will require consistent and collaborative efforts by political, security, state and civil society actors alike.

Recommendations

To government actors:

- Local government leaders and representatives should continue to engage in public meetings and dialogues to address tensions in their respective areas. Such activities will encourage non-violence and improve government-community relations at the district level.

To security actors:

- UNPol, PNTL and other security actors should organize community meetings to share information on the roles of security actors and increase trust between communities and security bodies. This will improve the effectiveness and sustainability of security measures implemented in response to violence in communities.

To political parties:

- Political party leaders and representatives should continue to participate in multi-party meetings and discussions, at both the national and local level. Parties should be sensitive to the impact of their messages on supporters and encourage opportunities for supporters to engage constructively in community and national development processes.

To civil society/ communities:

- Civil society organizations should engage their network of partners at the community level to stimulate discussion and citizen understanding of issues of concern and facilitate meetings with relevant government actors to improve information exchange between state and non-state actors.
- Organizations with experience in promoting non-violence, conflict prevention and mitigation should establish community peace teams to support community leaders and other actors to address tensions and conflicts before they turn violent.

General:

- All actors are encouraged to promote non-violence and tolerance in their actions and messages. With long-term commitment and efforts to support peaceful development and strengthened relationships, all actors can contribute to sustaining stability in communities and reducing the potential for violence nation-wide.
- Media outlets, especially radio and television reaching larger segments of the population, should develop ongoing and long-term programs engaging community and government actors in discussion on critical issues. This will provide an opportunity for citizens to voice their concerns and increase community access to information about government programs and policies.
- 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	Implementer	Total Activities	District
1.	Dialogue to promote peace (14 Aug)	District Administration, Village Chiefs, Youth, and PNTL	3	Ainaro
2.	Parochial Church in Maubisse organized the Youth Cross in Aitutu (during August) to discourage people from participating in violence	Parochial Church in Maubisse		
3.	Parochial Church in Maubisse preparing for the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Nain Feto on Oct 7 (Hatubulico and Maubisse)	Parochial Church in Maubisse		
4.	Public meeting on security sector and government reform (21 Aug)	UNMIT and Human Rights Unit	1	Cova Lima
5.	National Youth Congress (16-18 Aug)	National East Timorese Youth Congress	3	Dili
6.	Peace Meeting between party leaders, youth, and community members (25 Aug)*	Organizing Commission Hametin Unidade Balibar		
7.	Workshop "Youth Path to Peace" (25-26 Aug)*	Feto Hadomi Familia Becora		
8.	Basketball and volleyball competition for community in Gleno (17 Aug - 27 Sept)	Ministry of Health	2	Ermera
9.	Padre Domingos Maubere went from Dili to Fatubessi to pray and ask for peace within the government to contribute to reduction of violence (20-22 Aug)	Cathedral Church, Vila Verde		
10.	Meeting between political party coordinators and government in the District Administration office to prevent parties from participating in violence and provoking each other and to encourage parties to listen to each other (16 Aug)	St Paulo Church in Los Palos	2	Lautem
11.	Meeting between all parties and Church in Los Palos discussing how parties should monitor the situation to prevent future violence in Los Palos (19 Aug)	St Paulo Church in Los Palos		
12.	Soccer competition between secondary schools to commemorate the Popular Consultation Day	Maliana Youth Information Center	1	Maliana
13.	Bishop Dom Alberto Ricardo made a pastoral visit to calm the situation in Same (14-16 August)	Bishop Dom Alberto Ricardo	1	Manufahi
14.	Public meeting with political parties on September 5, 2007	District Administration	1	Viqueque
15.	Socializing Civic Education through Music (21 Aug)*	Enclave Group (Pante Makasar)	2	Oecussi
16.	Workshop "Capacity-Building Leadership in the Suco Council to Resolve Conflicts" (24 Aug)*	OMT Tua-Mepat Group		

* Peace activity supported by EVER Small Grant Fund