

Timor-Leste



COUNTRY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING GBV

Legal framework

- The first National Women's Congress in 2000 identified domestic violence as a priority issue and, as a result, the drafting of new legislation on domestic violence began. The government of Timor-Leste has identified the Law Against Domestic Violence as a priority in the National Development Plan (2002), the Sectoral Investment Programme for Rights, Equality and Justice, and as part of its achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Timor-Leste, as a member of the United Nations system, has ratified the main human rights treaties and acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2003.
- The draft law against Domestic Violence classifies domestic violence as a public crime and provides the legal mandate for forensic and medical services to assist in bringing perpetrators to justice. The law will also form the basic framework of the national strategy on gender-based violence in Timor-Leste. Once the law is passed, the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender Equality (SEPI) will be responsible for coordinating the formulation of a National Action Plan on Domestic Violence which will further specify the roles of each of the ministries and government agencies.
- By signing on the Say NO to Violence campaign, the Timorese government and the people are supporting the UN Secretary-General's multi-year campaign to end violence against women.

Policies, plans, strategies and programmes

- Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Timor-Leste Joint Programme 2008-2011.
- The Joint Programme "Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Timor-Leste" is a three-year programme (2008-2011) supported by the MDG (Spanish Fund) which will be implemented by five UN agencies - UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNDP, IOM and UNICEF and in partnership with government agencies and structures at national and district levels and in collaboration with relevant civil society organizations and individuals to build institutional capacity to eliminate gender-based violence and human trafficking, and to improve resources using gender-responsive budgeting.
- The 2nd national women's conference in July 2004 adopted a detailed Plan of Action for 2004-2008. The plan among other things addresses issues on GBV.

Guidelines/protocols/training manuals

- A Guideline for Public Prosecutor to Prosecute Domestic Violence Cases is in place.

- Draft Medical Forensic Protocol for Examination of Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Child Abuse: Psychosocial Recovery and Development East Timor (PRADET Timor Lorosa'e), the NGO operating the Fatin Hakmatek programme, has developed a forensic protocol specifically for Timor-Leste. This protocol is comprehensive and can be used to document injuries not only from sexual assault but also from domestic violence and child abuse.
- A training manual on domestic violence was developed by the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender Equality (SEPI), with the support of UNFPA, and was first implemented in 2005 for training officers at the Police Academy as part of their work with the Timor-Leste Police Development Programme (TLPDP). It served as a comprehensive manual to serve as a standard operating procedure and best practice manual in response to domestic violence for National Police of East Timor (PNTL) especially the VPU (Police Vulnerable Persons Unit).

COUNTRY SITUATION OF GBV

The Reproductive Health Response in Conflict (RHRC) and Centre for Disease Control (CDC) collaborated with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and its local partners to undertake the country's first prevalence study of GBV in 2002. Women 18-49 years of age from one urban (Dili) and one rural (Alieu) district of Timor-Leste were chosen for the study. From the 390 households with eligible women, 288 achieved completed interviews (74% response rate).¹

Salient findings:

- Physical violence by an intimate partner was reported by 24.8% of the women.¹
- Sexual coercion by an intimate partner was reported by 15.7% of the women.¹
- Verbal abuse by an intimate partner was reported by 30.5% of the women.¹
- Partner intimidation and control was reported by 14.4% of the women.¹

¹ Michelle Hynes et al. *A Determination of the Prevalence of Gender-based Violence among Conflict-affected Populations in East Timor. Disasters, 2004, 28(3): 294-321*

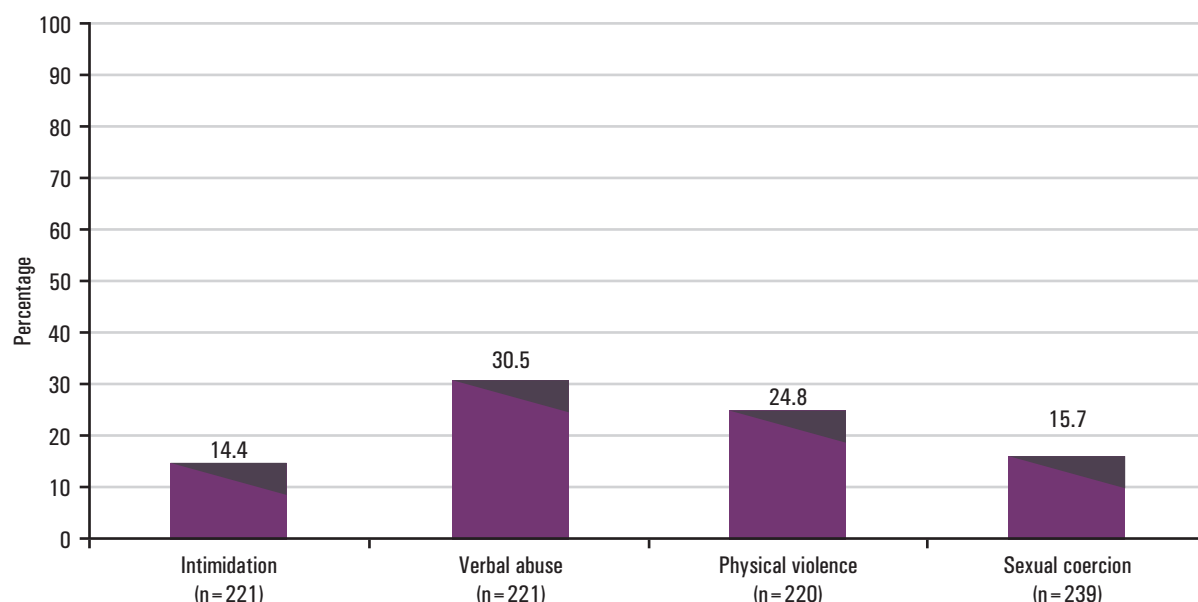


Figure 1: GBV by intimate partners for the year before the study (Aug 2001-Aug 2002), Timor-Leste, 2002

Specific types of intimate partner violence were grouped into four categories for association analysis:

Physical violence was defined as at least one of the following : “pulled hair”, “slapped/twisted arm”, “hit with fist or something else”, “pushed down/kicked” and “choked”.

Sexual coercion was defined as partner using “threats of physical harm or forced to obtain sex” and forcing you to have sex with other people”

Verbal abuse was defined as “insulted or swore at you”, “threatened to hurt you”, and “threatened with weapon”.

Intimidation and control was defined as “forbidden to see friends or family”, “kept away

from medical care” and “refused money for food”.

Source: Michelle Hynes et al. A Determination of the Prevalence of Gender-based Violence among Conflict-affected Populations in East Timor. *Disasters*, 2004, 28(3): 294-321.

- Among women reporting violence by an intimate partner, the most common types of intimate partner violence were insults and swearing (62.7%), being slapped or having an arm twisted (43.1%) being forced or threatened with harm to have sex with the intimate partner (38.2%)¹. (Figure 2)

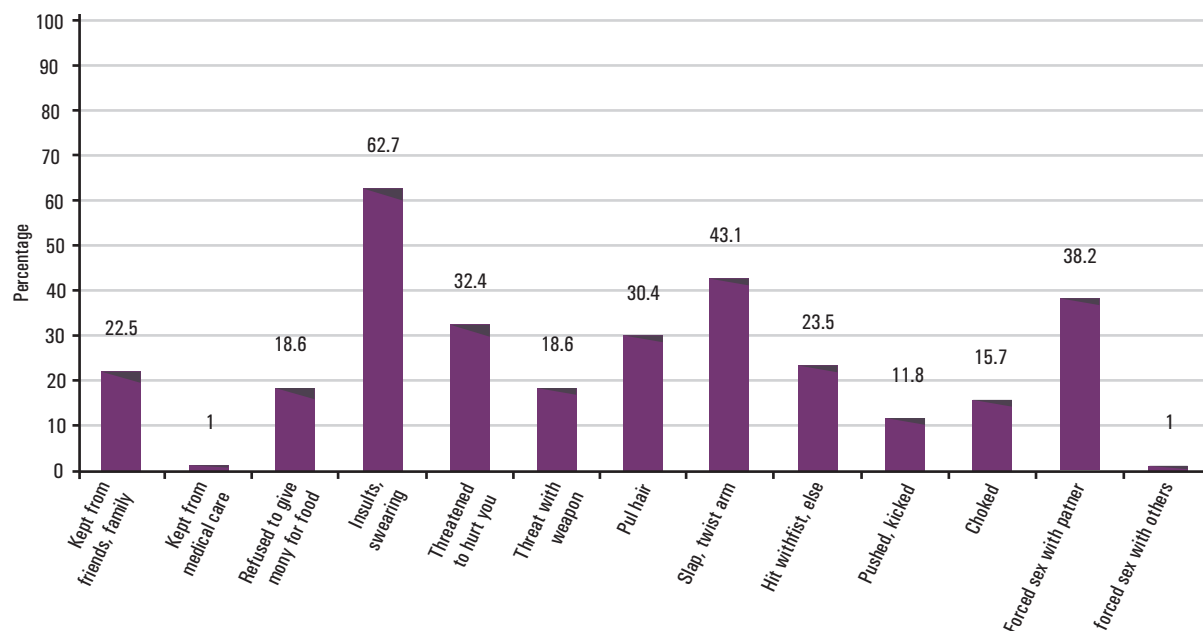


Figure 2: Proportion of ever-married women who experienced intimate partner violence by specific types of intimate partner violence [n =102], Timor-Leste, 2002

Source: Michelle Hynes et al. A Determination of the Prevalence of Gender-based Violence among Conflict-affected Populations in East Timor. Disasters, 2004, 28(3): 294-321

cited friends, 18.5% cited mothers and 32.3% cited other female relatives as those most commonly told about the abuse (multiple responses were allowed).¹

- Nearly half (48%) of the women reporting violence had sought help from someone. 50%

COUNTRY ACTIVITIES IN COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GWH-SEARO conducted a survey in October 2009 among the gender focal points in the WHO Country Offices of Member States using a

questionnaire containing 23 questions under four clusters. The findings of the survey for Timor-Leste are listed below.

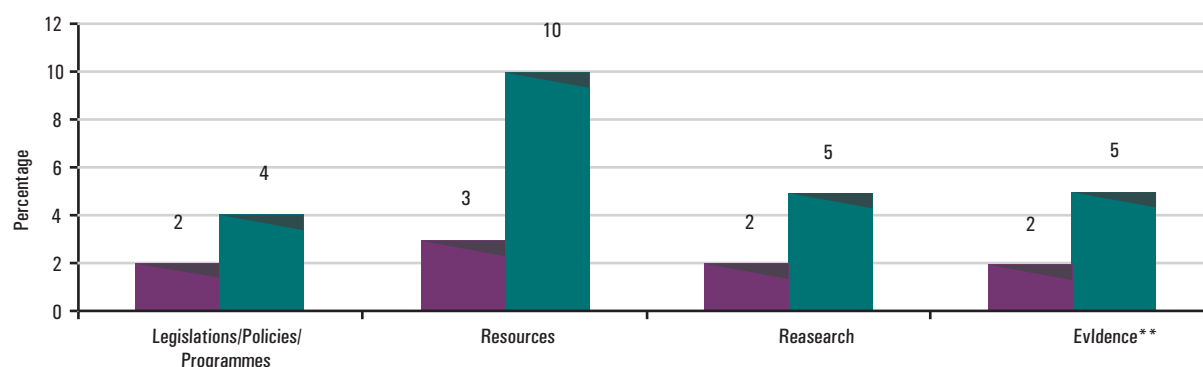


Figure 3: Country activities in combating gender-based violence in Timor-Leste, 2009

* The scale represents the country-specific situation plotted against the maximum rating for four clusters of indicators:

- (1) Legislation/ policies/ programmes
- (2) resources
- (3) research and
- (4) evidence

** A lower score reflects lower evidence of GBV

Additional Information

Causes of GBV

- Joblessness, customs and patriarchal family systems have been found to be the causes of GBV.

Findings related to women's health after GBV

- Mental disturbances, attempts at suicide and disability have been found to be related to women's health after GBV.
- Violence during pregnancy
- Violence during pregnancy is present in economic forms.

Age of GBV victims

- GBV in more than or equal to 15 year olds exists in psychological, sexual, emotional and economic forms.

PARTNERSHIP IN COMBATING GBV

- The main government body working on this issue is the Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE), supported by UNFPA since 2001.
- The Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender Equality (SEPI), Department of Social Services and the Department of Health are working for combating GBV in partnership with NGOs, INGOs, civil society organizations and several UN agencies.
- A national campaign on "Men as Partners to End Violence Against Women" was undertaken in 2007 with the support of the President, the Prime Minister and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

NGO initiatives

- Timor-Leste has established a referral network of services for victims of gender-based violence. Over the past three years, UNFPA has supported various local NGOs to

provide key services, such as Pradet Timor Lorosae (psycho-social treatment including trauma counselling), FOKUPERS (shelter and accompaniment), Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP) victim support service (legal advice), and the Vulnerable Persons Unit of Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste or the National Police of East Timor (PNTL).

- Services for victims include counselling (both at the crisis and its follow-up), a safe house, specialized medical treatment and forensic examination through the Fatin Hakmatek ("safe place") programme, legal assistance, a limited amount of material assistance and follow-up support groups.
- PRADET Timor Lorosa'e, the NGO operating the Fatin Hakmatek programme, has developed a forensic protocol specifically for Timor-Leste. This protocol is comprehensive and can be used to document injuries from sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse.

- The Association of Men against Violence [Asosiação Mane Kontra Violencia, (AMKV)] established in June 2002 is involved in public education and national media campaigns on GBV issues including gender education in the national school curriculum.
- Uma mahon (shelter) run by FOKUPERS receive victims of gender-based violence and provide accommodation, psycho-social counselling and advocate for clients through relevant referrals to further protection, legal, health or psycho-social support. It was established to provide a safe and comfortable place for victims from experience or threats of gender-based violence.
- PNTL training on GBV investigations: The gender-based violence investigations “Train the Trainer” Pilot Programme took place from February 25 to March 11, 2008.
- Asia Pacific Support Collective-Timor-Leste (APSCTL) conducted a livelihood programme mapping in some districts to ascertain needs and provide support to victims and skills training in the management of livelihood activities.
- The Catholic Church, an important institution in Timor-Leste, has also been involved in work on gender-based violence.

INGOs and UN agencies initiatives

- UNFPA has been working on gender-based violence through its ongoing support to the government’s Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE).
- The United Nations Integrated Mission In Timor-Leste (UNMIT) Gender Affairs Unit, the Human Rights Unit, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have been involved in several activities related to gender-based violence work.
- With support from UNIFEM a training manual on domestic violence (translated into Tetun) intended for suco (administrative divisions) and aldeia chiefs was finalized in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Administrations (INAP) and was piloted in Baucau and Lautem.
- International NGOs have been involved primarily in public education and awareness-building activities. Oxfam, Caritas Australia and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have all undertaken education on gender-based violence and gender issues at the local level. The Asia Foundation and Avocats sans Frontiers (Advocates without Borders) have become involved in legal issues, including providing training to lawyers on how to respond to cases of gender-based violence.



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