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The Challenges in Placements of Official Police Villages Mahein's Voice No. 101, 30 July 2015



Photo:PNTL

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Introduction

Community policing is the official philosophy of the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL). Outlined in law decree No. 09 (18 February, 2009) of the PNTL organic law, Article 1.2 states that according to organizational strategy and philosophy, the PNTL will possess characteristics of a community police. Though its organizational construct, discipline, instruction, and private statutes are still based in a military nature, PNTL will not constitute a natural military force.¹

The PNTL strategic plan approved for 2014-2018 adopts a community policing philosophy called HAKUAK (“Hug”) and incorporates the *VIP* (*Vizibilidade*, *Involvimentu*, and *Profesionalizmu*) doctrine.²

Vizibilidade (“Visibility”) requires police’s overt presence and availability in the field; *Involvimentu* (“Involvement”) requires the police to involve the community in the security process by educating residents on community security; and *Profesionalizmu* (“Professionalism”) requires the police to take a disciplined and diligent approach to working within the community and to respect the hierarchy of command in order secure the integrity, credibility, and prestige of the institutions.³

As the body responsible for strategies and activities of community policing in Timor-Leste, the OPS is an important element of the PNTL strategic plan. The OPS increases PNTL visibility, works to strengthen relationships with partners, local leaders, and other community authorities, and attempts to nurture residents’ trust in the PNTL.⁴

The PNTL general command began instituting official police villages (OPS) in local areas in 2013,⁵ and by the end of 2015 expects to have placed OPS in 442 villages across the territory of Timor-Leste.⁶ However, residents have recently expressed concerns that community police are still not well represented in their own areas and villages.⁷

This report will describe the placements and performance of the OPS in villages and general activities, as well as the current conditions and challenges within the community police.

Methodology

The primary sources of research for this report are reviews of independent literature on community policing in Timor-Leste along with previous FM reports. This includes documents such as the organic law of the PNTL, the PNTL strategic plan for 2014-2018, and reports on

¹ Decree law No. 09/2009, on February 18. ORGANIC LAW OF THE NATIONAL POLICE OF TIMOR-LESTE (PNTL).

² PNTL Strategic Plan of 2014 – 2018.

³ As described on footnote 2.

⁴ PNTL. Pattern of the community Policing of Timor-Leste: *Vizibilidade, Involvimentu no Profesionalizmu* (VIP). 2015.

⁵ Report of *the Asia Foundation* (TAF), of 2014.

⁶ Placement of OPS. Available at: <http://www.pntl.tl/2014/09/24/komisariu-longuinhos-optimista-2015-polisia-prezensa-ih-suku-442/>. Accessed on 15 June 2015.

⁷ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) meeting with local leaders, PNTL of municipalities and OPS on a program Community Management Meeting (CMM) in Aileu, Bobonaro, Covalima, Manatuto and Oecusse region in 2014 and 2015.



patterns of community policing in Timor-Leste from national and international organizations like The Asia Foundation (TAF).

Interviews and meetings were also conducted with municipal authorities and national leaders, community leaders, representatives of the OPS, the PNTL, and the Department of National Community Policing. Fundasaun Mahein further incorporated reports and performance reviews on national progress of community policing.

Finally, Fundasaun Mahein (FM) utilized Security Sector Discussions (SSD) involving the FM research team.

Importance of OPS in Villages

The community policing philosophies and VIP doctrine adopted by the PNTL have been crucial for OPS operations in villages across the country, as they have facilitated community involvement in the security process and education of residents on their roles as effective partners in local security.⁸

After the crisis in 2006, local citizens lost faith in the PNTL's capacity to uphold its responsibilities as a security institution. In 2013 a survey by The Asia Foundation (TAF) showed that residents retained concerns of insecurity in their local areas, though the number of concerned citizens was reportedly lower than in 2008, two years after the conflict.⁹

The 2013 TAF report also indicated that a majority of citizens' access security sector information and developments via media (television) instead of from PNTL sources, and often receive information on national, rather than local, security updates. Therefore, it is difficult for residents to properly understand security developments and track crime in their own areas.¹⁰

Responsibility for local security is divided between the PNTL OPS and other local actors. The PNTL's reach and concomitant responsibilities are greater than those of the local leaders, village chiefs, and hamlets.¹¹

Following the 2006 crisis, the PNTL consolidated its capacity to assume responsibility for national internal security. Though there is now established trust in the PNTL as an operational security force, limited contact between officers and citizens remains a serious challenge to operational vitality. The PNTL considers local communities the police's partners in combating crime. The majority of PNTL officers claim they have received proper training in community policing and have begun to perform their duties under the auspices of community policing guidelines, but results have yet to be shown on the PNTL's expansion of community policing programs.¹²

For its surveys, FM organizes meetings and workshops with village chiefs, youths, PNTL, and other relevant local authorities within the municipality or villages to discuss concerns of crimes and conflict occurring in the local area. High numbers of the incidents reported and discussed are domestic violence and land dispute cases. Follow-up is pursued in such assault cases

⁸ PNTL Strategic Plan of 2014 – 2018.

⁹ *The Asia Foundation* (TAF). Survey 2013 in Timor-Leste on security and defense political issues.

¹⁰ As described in footnote 9.

¹¹ As described in footnote 9.

¹² As described in footnote 9.



between the respective groups or individuals.

The frequency of these incidents raises local leaders' concerns of PNTL presence in villages. Because the police are often understaffed and underequipped to be a guiding authority in conflict resolution, many people still resort to violence in smaller, local disputes.¹³

Placement and Performance of OPS

An OPS member is a PNTL officer who has received basic, advanced, and specific certified training by the Department of National Community Policing.¹⁴ OPS officers are nominated for village placements by the PNTL municipality commander. OPS minimum and maximum rank requirements for placement are chief agent and first sergeant, respectively. However, FM monitoring notes that a majority of OPS placements are filled by ranks of agent and principal agent.

OPS placement does not factor in gender or age;¹⁵ 200 PNTL members have been recruited, some older or retired, under the OPS retirement and social security laws.¹⁶

1. Where the OPS have been placed?

To increase police visibility for residents in local communities, the PNTL through 2015 has placed OPS in 410 of its target total of 442 villages across 12 municipalities and the Oecusse region. 32 villages await OPS placement. The following map provides OPS placement figures for each of the 12 municipalities and the Oecusse region.

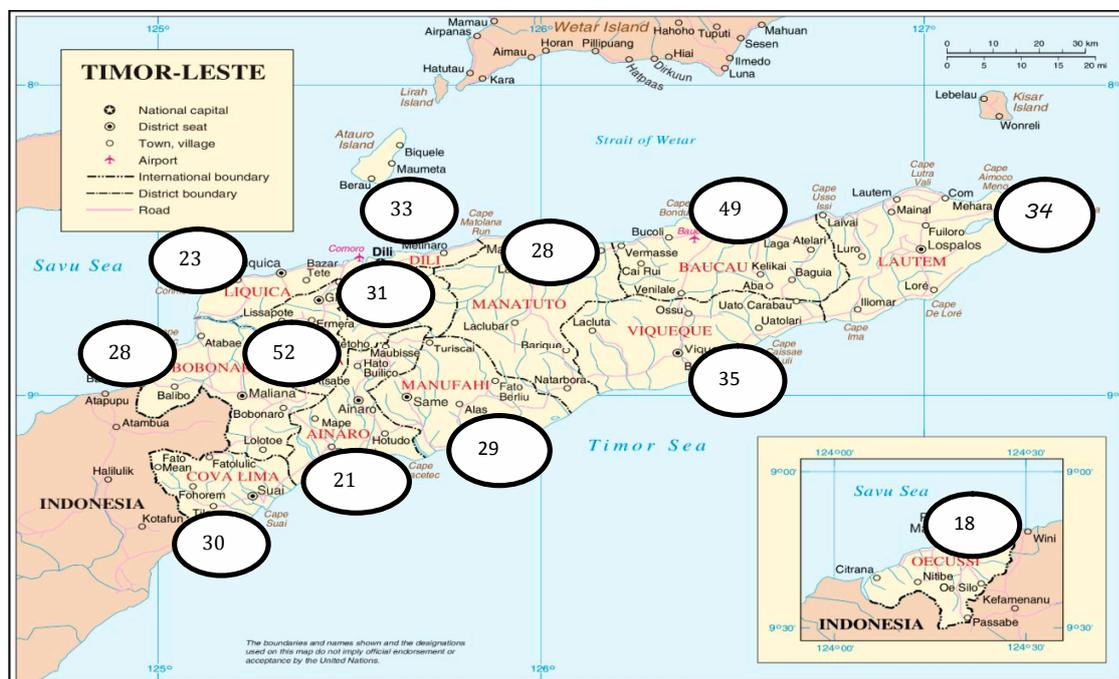
¹³ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) meeting with local leaders, PNTL of municipalities and OPS on a program Community Management Meeting (CMM) in Aileu, Bobonaro, Covalima, Manatuto and Oe-cusse region in 2014 and 2015.

¹⁴ PNTL. Pattern of the community Policing of Timor-Leste: *Vizibilidade, Involvimentu no Profesionalismu* (VIP). 2015.

¹⁵ As described in footnote 14.

¹⁶ Reforms for member of PNTL. Available at: <http://www.pntl.tl/wp-content/uploads/kalins-pdf/singles/reforma-membru-pntl.pdf>. Accessed on 15 July 2015.

Map 01. Placement of OPS in Timor-Leste



Source: Department of National Community Policing, May 2015.

The map shows general figures for OPS placement in municipalities and Oecusse, including the 32 village placements awaiting placement. According to figures and schematics from the PNTL general command, all 442 OPS will be placed in villages by the end of 2015.¹⁷

The following table provides a complete breakdown of current OPS placement progress.

Table 01. OPS in Villages across Timor-Leste

Municipality	Total of Village	OPS that have been placed	Villages that have not placed yet OPS
Aileu	31	31	-
Ainaro	21	21	-
Baucau	59	49	10
Bobonaro	50	28	22
Covalima	30	30	-
Dili	31	31	-
Ermera	52	52	-
Lautem	34	34	-
Likisa	23	23	-
Manatuto	28	28	-

¹⁷ Timor Post, 03 July 2015.



Manufahi	29	29	-
Oe-cusse	18	18	-
Viqueque	35	35	-
Total	442	410	32

Source: Department of the National Community Policing, May 2015.

OPS officers engage in the following activities in their communities:

- a. Visit from house to house
- b. Organize meetings with community leaders
- c. Provide education to communities in crime prevention processes.
- d. Respond to problems and disputes
- e. Visit with vulnerable groups (e.g., those with physical disabilities, orphans)
- f. Meet with KPK members
- g. Organize visits to schools as well (No OPS existence)
- h. Collect all census data of the villages (geography; demographics; existing organizations in villages, such as martial arts groups and political organizations; influential leaders; social and economy conditions)¹⁸

2. Training and Formation

In early 2015, OPS officers for 442 villages participated in advanced training on procedures for conducting house visits to socialize laws of domestic violence; on education on drugs and alcohol; and on how to perform basic assessments of any issues that arise in the field. This training was done in collaboration with the NEW Zealand Police through its *Timor-Leste Community Police Program (TLCPP)*, Asia Foundation's program HAKOHAK, and NGO PRADET.¹⁹

Training was held over four months from September 2014 to January 2015. At least forty members from three municipalities of the 442 OPS participated in training each week. This retraining is designed on the results of basic training in 2013, with the intent to improve OPS skills and improve the quality of the OPS as an operational police system.²⁰

In addition to internal training, OPS officers underwent "comparative study" training abroad. In 2014, 30 OPS officers performed a comparative study in Bekasi, Indonesia. After 6 days of training in Bekasi, the OPS group then returned to Bali for an introduction to tourism policing programs. Those capacity-building programs were realized through cooperation between the PNTL and the national police of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency

¹⁸ PNTL. Pattern of the Community Policing of Timor-Leste: *Vizibilidade, Involvimentu no Profissionalismu (VIP)*. 2015.

¹⁹ PNTL. Available at: <http://www.pntl.tl/2014/09/15/membru-ops-442-tuir-treinementu-avansadu/>. Accessed on 30 June 2015.

²⁰ As described in footnote 19.



(JICA) in Timor-Leste. Improving these skills in police development is a primary tenet of the cooperation program between the PNTL and POLRI.²¹

In 2012, five community police officers engaged in a comparative study in Ickikawa Prefecture in Japan. The group of five was composed of the community police commander of the Viqueque municipality; the chief of community policing for Lautem and Bobonaro; a member of the national community policing force; and the assistant chief of the national community policing force.²²

The community police also held a comparative study in New Zealand from 2013 to 2014, coordinated through the cooperative agreement between the governments of Timor-Leste and New Zealand through the program TLCPP, an initiative to develop Timorese community policing. The study entailed education on New Zealand community policing including monitoring and evaluation, media training, driver coding, intelligence, policing responses to Maori, human resources development planning, strategic policing plans, information and technology, and domestic violence peace programs.²³

3. Facility and Equipment

FM's meetings with OPS in village and with all PNTL municipality commanders raised the same concerns about transport, radio communications, and residency deficiencies that affect the overall performance of the OPS.

a. Number of OPS and Residence

By mid-2015, OPS had been placed in villages around Timor-Leste as shown in Table 1. Some OPS officers however, stay in their own villages and work in other villages outside their immediate areas.

Many OPS officers work in placements far from where they live, leading many citizens to question the performance of the OPS—cases have occurred in which OPS officers arrive too late to resolve and handle conflicts or disputes.

Many OPS officers are handling two or even three villages within their patrols due to the understaffing. Officers have reported difficulties in attending to requests from residents and community leaders because of the sheer size of their patrols and placements. OPS officers have also reported doubling down in the role of POS to respond to issues because of low police

²¹ PNTL. Available at: <http://www.pntl.tl/2014/09/15/membru-ops-442-tuir-treinentu-avansadu/>. Accessed on 30 June 2015.

²² The Dili Weekly. Available at: <http://www.thediliweekly.com/45-notisia/news/1854-five-community-police-officers-on-an-exchange-program-in-japan>. Accessed on 20 June 2015.

²³ PNTL – Department of National Community Policing. Report of the comparative study in New Zealand of 2013 and 2014.



numbers, and often work overtime to address all issues that have arisen within their placement areas.²⁴

b. *Transport and Communication*

The government and PNTL recently began to provide motorbikes to OPS officers for operations in their placements across Timor-Leste. Until the PNTL has fully distributed motorbikes for operational use, OPS officers will rely on personal motorbikes for operations.

The following table shows the distribution of motorbikes OPS operations across 12 municipalities and the Oecusse region.

Table 02. Distribution Motorbikes for OPS

Municipality	Total of Village	Total of OPS	OPS who has used motorbike assistance	OPS have no motorbike assistance
Aileu	31	31	8	23
Ainaro	21	21	21	-
Baucau	59	49	12	37
Bobonaro	50	28	8	20
Covalima	30	30	8	22
Dili	31	31	9	22
Ermera	52	52	8	44
Lautem	34	34	9	25
Likisa	23	23	8	15
Manatuto	28	28	8	20
Manufahi	29	29	9	20
Oecusse	18	18	6	12
Viqueque	35	35	8	27
Total	442	410	123	287

Source: Department of the National Community Policing, May 2015.

Out of a target goal of 442 placements, OPS officers have been placed in 410 villages, and of those 410 placements just 123 OPS officers have been provided motorbikes, and with disproportionate distribution. All 23 of Ainaro's placements have received a motorbike, but Bacau has received only 12 motorbikes for its 49 completed village placements, and Ermera has received just 8 bikes for its total of 52 villages.

FM's monitoring noted that those OPS officers who have not received motorbikes are forced to use their personal motorbikes and cover all according expenses. The PNTL command does not subsidize the costs of officers' personal motorbike use.²⁵

²⁴ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) meeting with local leaders, PNTL of municipalities and OPS on a program Community Management Meeting (CMM) in Aileu, Bobonaro, Covalima, Manatuto and the Oecusse region in 2014 and 2015.



Another concern is the lack of radio communication equipment for the OPS. Many officers utilize their personal phones for communications—not because the PNTL hasn't provided radio equipment, but because most of the radio equipment is currently broken or unusable.²⁶

These concerns challenge OPS officers on duty: working far from their residences and placements, pulling double-duty to adequately handle their placement's coverage, and operating without proper radio and communications equipment make it difficult for officers to coordinate with local leaders and to attend to any incidents that arise among local residents.²⁷

Progress and Concerns

1. Progress or Success

The PNTL has attained high levels of trust, good relations, and strengthened partnerships with residents of local communities. This progress has been shown through increased crime reporting to PNTL officers, a reduction in domestic violence, and land dispute and general crime prevention and reduction.²⁸

These indications of progress stem from enhanced PNTL visibility and enhanced community participation in the security process, with positive progress reported even from residents still concerned with the PNTL's current levels of availability in their communities.²⁹

Community issues and concerns are identified through regular meetings between the OPS, local leaders, residents, and members of the community policing council (KPK). Identification of these issues is done through the PARA method (Pesquisa, Analiza, Responde no Avalisaun, or 'Research, Analysis, Response and Evaluation'), a mechanism for the prevention and resolution of local civil cases according to local and cultural practices.³⁰

There is no public tolerance for personal crimes such as domestic violence, and the identification of such a case must result in further processing and investigation, as according to the law.³¹

2. Concerns

As expressed in the previous sections of this report, the placement of OPS officers must fulfill the recently expressed ambitions of residents and local leaders of "Police for every village." As of now, the force is still short on officers. For example, the Cailaco station in Bobonaro has only eight (8) officers, including the station commander. The station has noted that they are too

²⁵ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) meeting with local leaders, PNTL of municipalities and OPS on a program Community Management Meeting (CMM) in Aileu, Bobonaro, Covalima, Manatuto and the Oecusse region in 2014 and 2015.

²⁶ As described in footnote 25.

²⁷ As described in footnote 25.

²⁸ Intervention of Chief department of the national community policing, Superintendent Assistant, Boavida Ribeiro in a meeting of Konsellu Jestaun Programa Polisiamentu Komunitaria, at the PNTL general quarter 2015.

²⁹ As described in footnote 28.

³⁰ As described in footnote 28.

³¹ As described in footnote 28.



understaffed to properly assign officers in OPS roles in the area while maintaining a presence at the station.³²

Other issues have arisen, including concerns about *Fundu Izoladu* (Isolated Funds) being prescribed to PNTL units such as the UPF (Border Patrol). OPS placed in more isolated areas must have proportionate funding to city posts such as Mota-an, Batugade, and the Nicola Lobato Airport in Dili.³³

Recommendations

Though police visibility is increasing daily with OPS placed in 410 villages by mid-2015, the PNTL still has not finished its placements of officers and OPS stations around the country lack proper training, preparation, and operational equipment (including motorbikes and radio communications).

FM Recommends:

1. The National Parliament support new policies for OPS services in villages to address concerns of OPS performance deficiencies and officers' necessities, such as radio communication and transport.
2. The government define orientation structure and implementation procedures for community policing, and particularly for OPS implementation, in the annual action and budget plans, in order to achieve the visions of the National Development Strategic Plan (PEDN) 2030 and the Internal Strategic Plan of 2030.
3. The PNTL fully engage in efforts to uphold its own PNTL strategic plan for 2014-2018, and take action toward the principal components on the PNTL strategic plan as according to the community policing philosophies and VIP doctrine.

³² Assistant commander of Cailaco station introduced at the Community Management Meeting (CMM), in Bobonaro municipality. On 20 February 2015.

³³ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) meeting with local leaders, PNTL of municipalities and OPS on a program Community Management Meeting (CMM) in Aileu, Bobonaro, Covalima, Manatuto and Oe-cusse region in 2014 and 2015.



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Media Timor Post, 03 July 2015.