



**Fundasaun Mahein, 27 August 2021**

## **Press Release**

### **PNTL and Human Security in Timor-Leste**

On 10 September 2012, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 66/290 on human security, which indicated the growing consensus that human security is an approach which can aid member states to identify and address challenges to the basic survival, livelihoods and dignity of their people. The concept of human security focuses on people's lives, rights, freedoms and dignity, including freedom from poverty, fear, and equal opportunity to enjoy their rights. In other words, human security refers to the comprehensive needs of the human being within their specific context and the responses required to strengthen protection and empowerment for individuals and whole communities.

Timor-Leste as a UN member state took part in the Resolution on human security. To respond to the complex challenges discussed above requires integrated actions from various institutions, including the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL). This report focuses on the role of PNTL in advancing human security, with reference to the challenges and lessons emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, and particularly examining policing practices deployed by PNTL with reference to its philosophy and strategy of community policing.

Community policing is an organizational philosophy and strategy which encourages partnerships between the police and communities. Under the framework of human security which focuses on people's livelihoods, freedoms, security and rights, PNTL adopted a new strategy which drew from its policing philosophy and doctrine to involve the community in security activities and organise community security through the Community Policing Council (KPK) structure.

KPK is a forum in which police and community members can sit together to identify, discuss and address problems which arise within the community, particularly socio-economic problems and other issues which bring risks to the community's life, such as criminality. Community problems are identified and resolved through regular KPK meetings and discussions. FM's monitoring noted that several key points emerged from KPK meetings, including lack of access to clean water, reduced food, land disputes between community members, public health issues, insufficient teachers and school facilities, as well as other social and economic problems which directly impact community lives. Also identified were communal problems which pose a risk of violent conflict, including youth, martial arts groups and violence against vulnerable groups. When KPK identifies problems, its members immediately search for solutions, such as mediating in disputes over land, plantations and animals, as well as cases of semi-public crimes. However, in cases of public crimes such as domestic violence, sexual violence and others, KPK together with OPS take action to refer the case to the relevant authorities according to the formal justice process.

There are several important lessons to take from the Covid-19 from the human security perspective. PNTL was given responsibility to ensure the implementation of Covid-19 prevention measures. Despite suffering from several limitations, including lacking a clear

policy and adequate support measures, PNTL's actions during Covid-19 have shown that PNTL can adapt its policing to the new reality according to human security principles.

### **Recommendation**

PNTL is already oriented by its philosophy and doctrine towards human security, especially policing strategies which are oriented towards communities' security and can identify problems and solutions related to people's lives, freedom, security and rights.

Thus, to examine and respond more deeply to the question of human security, Timor-Leste requires a National Security Policy to comprehensively address this issue, including incorporating human security into the National Security Policy and responsibilities of the security sector relating to human security. Covid-19 has provided important lessons for the security sector, particularly PNTL as a 'frontline' actor in human security issues.

To learn more about this issue, please contact:

### **João Almeida**

Director

Email: [almeidamahein@gmail.com](mailto:almeidamahein@gmail.com)

Telephone: (+670) 7756 1184

Website: [www.fundasaunmahein.org](http://www.fundasaunmahein.org)