



The New Types of Organized Criminal Operations in Timor-Leste

Mahein's Voice Report No. 60, October 3, 2013



Funded by the American people via USAID, the Finland Embassy in Jakarta, and the Department's Activities in Peace Building and Social Cohesion from the UNDP Timor –Leste Office.



Website: www.fundasaunmahein.org

Introduction

Organized crime is defined by illegal activity conducted by individuals or groups involving systematically conducting illegal operations such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, money laundering, and terrorism. Organized crime can further be defined as the organization of illegal professional groups to commit illegal activities such as motorbike theft, assault, sexual violations, disturbing the public order, and murder.

Fundasaun Mahein (FM) publicized in 2010 its identification of some organized criminal groups involved with prostitution; drug trafficking, motorbike theft and money laundering. FM recommendations for responding to this problem included increased action by security forces in Timor-Leste against the criminal groups perpetrating these crimes.¹

In August 2013, FM provided a second warning regarding organized crime operations in Timor-Leste. FM reported that the organized groups were increasing recruitment of Timorese youth to carry out numerous illegal activities including theft of money and possessions, sexual assault, and violent acts. This increased recruitment led to increases of violent incidents, including the gang rape of a woman taking a taxi near the American Embassy and the capture of a young couple in Tasi Tolu who were forced to perform sexual acts on camera. These incidents were indicative of the greater pattern of violence occurring in Timor-Leste, in which both the perpetrators and victims were Timorese.²

This simple report did not catch the attention of security authorities. However, only a few weeks later there was a very serious incident in the Capital of Dili that caused wide-spread community panic and the implementation of night-time curfews. This incident occurred on September 24, 2013 and involved a Machete attacker who killed a youth in Marconi, and injured two other innocent bystanders in Kampung Alor and Fatuhada.

The methodology adopted in conducting report inquiries was to collect information regarding organized criminal operations in Timor-Leste utilizing FM's model of Security Sector Discussion (SSD), interviewing FM's informants, observing the occurrence of reported violations, and collecting information from national media publications. The evidence collected leads to findings analyzed in this report, namely that groups of organized criminals have formed in Dili and are undertaking various illegal activities including murder, assault, and the creation and distribution of unauthorized pornography.

Organized Crime Operations

FM has continued to closely monitor criminal organizations who are increasing recruitment of Timorese to conduct various forms of illegal activities. Those targeted for recruitment include

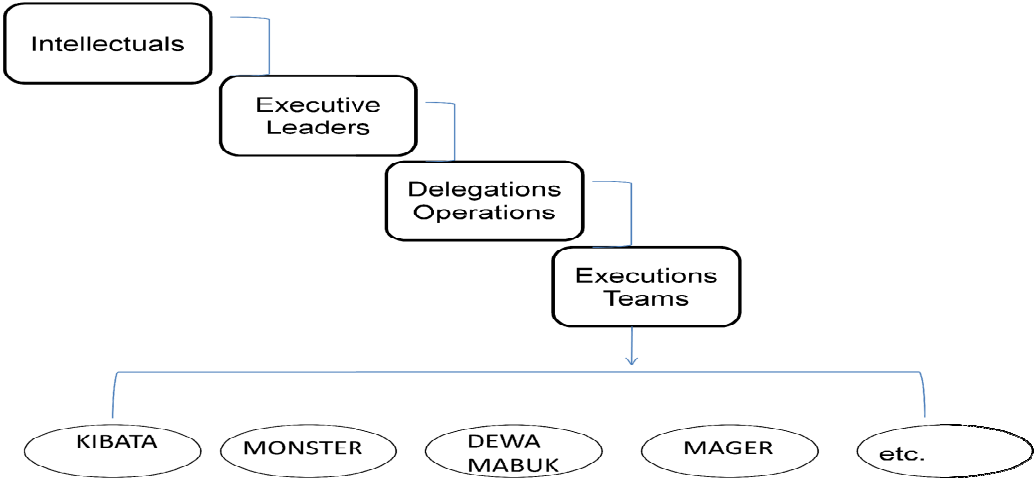
¹ Fundasaun Mahein – FM (2010). Mahein Nia Lian No. 14 Organized Criminal Operations in Timor – Leste. Dili

² Fundasaun Mahein (2013). Organized Crimes: Recruitments on Civilians in large Numbers. Dili <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2013/08/15/organized-crime-increases-civilian-recruitment/>

citizens of various backgrounds who are vulnerable because they live in impoverished circumstances will have little chance to improve their lives or search for a better career in an economy with few job prospects to offer them. These vulnerable populations include Government employees, taxi drivers, gang members, border patrol officers and airport security officers in Timor-Leste.³

Timor’s inflated economy has increased unemployment, decreased wages for public jobs, and decreased the government’s capacity to police illegal activity. As a result, as the economy falters it becomes increasingly easy for criminal organizations to recruit Timorese to work for them. If ordinary citizens face few options in this economy, what incentive do they have to make an honest living when organized crime offers them far better pay? If the government does not focus on combating the root causes of Timorese involvement in criminal activity then the influence of criminal organizations will continue to grow in Timor-Leste.⁴

Organized Crime Operation Network



Sources: Result of Fundasaun Mahein’s Research (2013)⁵

Please reference the chart above for the following; Inquiries conducted by FM revealed that the “Intellectual” group is at the highest level of organized criminal networks operating in Timor-Leste and is responsible for analyzing the economy, politics, laws and national security of Timor-Leste. This group commands and funds the criminal activities carried out by the criminal network beneath it. Many Timorese live in conditions of poverty with high unemployment and high inflation while Petroleum profits are high, as is evidenced by surplus seen in the State General Budget (OJE). Even more ironic is the vast funds in the OJE allocated loosely and in

³ Fundasaun Mahein (2013). Organized Crime Increases Civilian Recruitment. Dili <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2013/08/15/organized-crime-increases-civilian-recruitment/>
⁴ Fundasaun Mahein (2013). Organized Crime Increases Civilian Recruitment. Dili <http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2013/08/15/organized-crime-increases-civilian-recruitment/>
⁵ The Graphic of organized crime base on result of Fundasaun Mahein Research (FM). Dili, 01 October 2013.

large effect bolstering the resolve of criminal networks in Timor-Leste. The Timorese government's minimal emphasis on security allows organized crime to infiltrate Timor-Leste.

Immediately below the Intellectuals are the "Executive Leaders", who are responsible for executing the plans set forth by the Intellectuals. The executive leaders coordinate the main money-making operations of their criminal organization such as drug trafficking, transporting illegal commerce, stealing and re-selling motorbikes, and human-trafficking and sex-trafficking.

The Executive Leaders recruit and command their immediate subordinates, the "Operators". The Operators are directly responsible for seeing that operations designated by the "Executive Leaders" are carried out successfully. They are also responsible for identifying the areas of criminal operation, targeting victims, recruiting people, and deciphering when to conduct various operations.

Operators recruit and organize "Execution Teams", each of which is led by a designated "Executor". These teams are comprised of Timorese youth who are provided with drugs, transportation, weapons, and any other resources necessary to complete their assignments, which include theft, terrorizing the population, sexual assault, drug trafficking, and other violent acts. The Execution Teams currently operate mainly in the Dili area. FM has obtained the names of several Execution Teams: KIBATA, MONSTER, DEWA MABUK and MAGER.

The chain of command is structured so that each level is only in contact with and aware of the commander immediately above them (for example, "Operators" are in contact with the "Executive Leader" above them but have no knowledge of the existence of the "Intellectuals"). Additionally, different "Execution Teams" are not in contact with each other.

FM suspects that there are more Execution Teams active in the Dili area. Accordingly, FM urges the policing authority to conduct a thorough investigation to identify all of these groups and the criminal network they are each a part of.

1. Operations of KIBATA and MONSTER on September 24, 2013

A serious incident occurred on the 24th of September 2013 that traumatized the Dili community. The incident involved the fatal stabbing of a youth in Marconi as well as the non-fatal stabbing of 2 people in the Kampung Alor and Fatuhada areas. The perpetrators were two Timorese youth on a motorbike who targeted their victims at random.⁶

FM confirmed the order of events leading up to the attacks through interviews with informants. It is alleged that the suspects visited a friend's house on the night of September 24th in Lurumata-Comoro. The friend in question will be referred to as "J". A friend, referred to as "O" bought wine, which the suspects and their friends drank along with smoking marijuana. FM's informants report that "J" spiked the wine with other drugs as well. After drinking and smoking,

⁶ Suara Timor Lorosa'e (STL) – Online (2013). Marconi case, Killed a young boy and injured other 2. <http://suara-timor-lorosae.com/kazu-marconi-hamate-joven-1-no-hakanek-nain-2/>. Access on 30 September 2013

the suspects reportedly went out on motorbike with the intention of stabbing people in the Kampung Alor, Marconi, and Fatuhada areas.

In addition, FM has reason to believe that “J” is a known drug dealer in the Dili area who is married to a Timorese woman and is connected with a network of Indonesian drug dealers. “J” makes frequent trips to Indonesia under the pretense of distributing second hand clothes. FM’s informants, however, allege that “J” uses these trips to smuggle drugs into Dili. The family of one of the suspects claims that the suspect would not have committed his criminal acts if he had not been drinking and drugged unknowingly. They say that the suspect did not leave his home following the incident for fear of retribution.⁷

The PNTL is looking into these claims. They have stated however, that they doubt the two suspects were drunk and drugged unknowingly as they claim. The Commander of the PNTL Superintendent Chief Armando Monteiro stated to the national media that the PNTL are currently investigating the claims of drug use by testing the suspects’ urine.⁸

Monteiro also confirmed that the PNTL has identified groups responsible for mobilizing Timorese to commit crimes in Dili with the intention of weakening stability in the area. It is also believed that the suspects from the September 24th incident were affiliated with the groups KIBATA and MONSTER.⁹

The PNTL has identified the KIBATA and MONSTER groups as priority targets for PNTL enforcement operations. The groups are comprised of at least 200 members operating within the capital city of Dili. It is not currently clear what types of enforcement operations the PNTL plans to carry out. Furthermore, although the PNTL has identified the existence and organizational structures of KIBATA and MONSTER, some questions still remain. Who is responsible for organizing these groups? Who is funding these groups?

The PNTL first became aware of the formation and operation of new criminal groups in Dili in 2010. In addition, photographs first surfaced in 2010 depicting the members of these groups wielding swords in threatening poses. These criminal members were arrested for assaulting youth in the areas of Kristu Rei and Dolok Oan.¹⁰

In 2012 security forces secured the Kristu Rei area following the assault of a male and female couple who were sitting on a bench in the area. Following the assault, people visiting the area expressed a feeling of insecurity while sitting in public spaces with either a significant other or a friend.¹¹

⁷ A. C (2013, 26 Setembre). Personal interview

⁸ Jornal Diario Nasional. Monday, 30 September 2013.

⁹ Jornal Diario Nasional. Monday, 30 September 2013.

¹⁰ A. C (2010). Document A. C. Dili

¹¹ M. L (2013). Personal Interview. Dili

Another incident occurred in Garden Largo Lecidere in May 2013. Young couples were seated in the Garden area at night when a group of men attempted to assault them before evicting them from the area.¹²

In June 2013 an unidentified three-person group randomly assaulted and threatened a young couple seated at Garden Motael (area in front of Motael Church) at around 15:00 PM. The group falsely identified themselves as police officers before attempting to extort money from the couple.¹³

The national media reported that on the 24th of June 2013 a young couple was sitting near the American Embassy in the Pantai Kelapa area when a group of 4 men stepped out of a taxi and threatened the male until he ran off. They then captured the girl into the taxi where they sexually assaulted her.¹⁴

In August 2013, the national media also reported that a group of men abducted a young couple in the area of João Paulo-Tasi Tolu. The group forced the couple to perform sexual acts while being filmed. The National Investigative Service Commander confirmed that this was a case of forced sex for the purpose of recording a pornographic video.¹⁵ FM has noted that in this incident, as in other similar incidents, the criminals threatened the couple with machetes and were motivated primarily by the possibility of monetary gain from the sale of the pornographic video.

2. Publication of Pornographic Photographs and Films

In the middle of 2013 the Timorese government became concerned about the increase in filming and publication of pornographic films and photographs produced by both organizations and individuals. Many of these films and photographs were promoted inappropriately through social media sites such as Facebook through anonymous profiles. Fraudulent Facebook accounts promoting pornographic photos and videos are prevalent and are offensive to many Timorese who use social media.

Despite the public concern regarding the increase of pornographic publications in Timor-Leste, Parliament has yet to prioritize the creation of legislation to regulate any aspect of the pornography industry.¹⁶

Photos surfaced near the end of 2010 via social media documenting the assault by an organized group against a young couple that was attacked at Kristu Rei. The photographs showed the perpetrators wielding swords and confiscating the victims' motorbikes. One of the victims is also seen handing money over to the group of attackers. 2010 also saw the distribution of photographs of an attack by a group against a young couple at the beach of Dolok

¹² B. J (2013). Personal Interview. Dili

¹³ P. Z (2013). Personal Interview. Dili

¹⁴ Timor Post. Wednesday, 04 September 2013

¹⁵ Suara Timor Lorosa'e – STL. Tuesday, 06 August 2013

¹⁶ Timor Post. (2013). Prostitution activities increase, No specific law on pornography. Dili

Oan. These photos showed a perpetrator forcefully pulling a woman as well as threatening her boyfriend with a machete.¹⁷

In mid-2011 there were unauthorized leaks of private video to social media. The videos were private videos depicting sexual relations between consenting adults. In another instance, people engaged in sexual acts were unknowingly taped by others so that they could sell the video and photographs for profit.¹⁸

Yet another case in 2011 involved members of the PNTL making pornographic videos that were spread publically via social media sites such as facebook and other websites. Despite a public outcry against these actions by the Timorese public, political leaders, Church leaders, and community leaders, the perpetrators of these acts have yet to be identified or held accountable for their actions.

In 2012 a pornographic film involving two students who acted and shot the film was disseminated through social media.¹⁹ Finally, FM reported on an incident this year (2013) in which five suspects forced a young couple in the João Paulo Tasi-Tolu area to commit sexual acts on camera. The video was disseminated through Facebook.²⁰

Failure of Regulations

1. Security Operations

In analyzing the response to these incidents, FM has concluded that the PNTL Command has failed in its planning and implementation of operations regarding these crimes. Furthermore, instead of only intervening in response to the incidents in question, the PNTL should have implemented measures to prevent these crimes from taking place. These crimes had a detrimental effect on communities across the nation and should have received a much more aggressive response from the PNTL leadership.

By 2013 the violence and illegal activities conducted by martial arts groups in Timor-Leste had caught the attention of Timorese citizens, political leaders, the PNTL General Commander, and the F-FDTL. The incidents in question often involved youth martial arts groups committing violent or illegal acts in community villages while wearing their group's clothing. Despite the Council Minister's response of issuing a resolution to suspend the activities of martial arts gangs across the nation, the violence and killing has continued to occur.

The resolution was enforced the PNTL, who executed major operations across Timor-Leste. The PNTL conducted a door-to-door operation within villages and communities in each of the

¹⁷ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) monitoring on those networks exist in the community and in Social Media such as facebook posted by unidentified person from 2010-2013. Dili

¹⁸ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) with its monitoring in social medias and the preoccupations among the communities on the videos spread in 2011– Dili

¹⁹ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) with its monitoring in social medias and the preoccupations in the communities on the videos spread in 2012 , Dili.

²⁰ Fundasaun Mahein (FM) with its monitoring in social medias and the preoccupations among the communities on the videos spread 2013. Dili

districts across Timor-Leste, spreading word about the new resolution and seeking information from community members about gang members and activities.

While this effort has been largely successful in halting martial arts activity, it has done nothing to lower the overall rate of violence or illegal activity, seemingly displacing it instead of halting it. This points to an underlying cause to security sector unrest in Timor-Leste that is deeper than the existence of martial arts groups. If they are not in martial arts gangs, Timorese youth are still being recruited by organized crime and divided into various groups to commit violent and illegal acts. One of the most serious incidents resulting from the organized criminal groups is the previously stated event on the 24th of September that resulted in one death and two serious injuries.²¹

FM has observed that the PNTL conducted a major operation in the streets of Dili that was based off of information gained from rumors that had spread and caused panic in the community. The rumors spread regarding an alleged incident on the night of September 27th, 2013 in which a nun was reportedly stabbed in front of Timor Plaza. The reports were unconfirmed, however, and they now appear to be fabricated or incorrect. This event demonstrates the PNTL's lack of ability to maintain public order and prevent the flow of false information from spreading and causing panic in the community. Therefore, the security actors in Timor can be applauded for succeeding in informing the public when a credible security threat arises, but has much room for improvement when it comes to preventing the spread of false information.

Additionally, it seems as if the emergency 112 line was not functioning correctly and was misused by numerous people. FM was told by informants that some community members used this line for personal use, including contacting family members and friends. As a result, the emergency line was often occupied and largely inaccessible to people actually in an emergency, rendering the intended purpose of the line essentially useless.

From these observations it can be asserted that the PNTL is not acting effectively as a tool for the prevention of violence. The PNTL needs further support from the government to enable it to expand operations and prevent crime more successfully. The PNTL Command should also implement Community Policing by establishing a Council of Community Policing (KPK) and volunteer security (SV) force in the districts. These forces should involve collaboration between community leaders and the youth population. These initiatives cannot be successful, however, without political and monetary support from the government.

A story by the Timor Post Diary condemned the capacity and effectiveness of the PNTL's intelligence operations. The story referred to the incident on the 24th of September, and stated that if proper intelligence had been gathered regarding these criminal groups then there would not have been a death caused by this incident, as arrests would have been made before the suspects had gone out on their spree of violence. The Timor Post Diary goes on to highlight

²¹ Timor Post. Wednesday, 25 September 2013

that Dili is a relatively small city in a small nation where criminal activity should be easy to detect and prevent.²²

FM's research largely corroborates the Timor Post Diary's story, observing that Timor's intelligence services only collect minimal data without properly analysing it or authenticating it. As a result, police are given unsubstantiated and often incorrect information from which they then use to conduct anti-crime operations. As a result, police carry out operations that are usually unsuccessful and prove generally ineffective at lowering the rate of crime.

It is clear that the intelligence service needs to perform much better if it is going to serve as an effective law-enforcement and prevention tool. Progress can be started by coordination among the National Intelligence Service (SNI) departments of the both the police and the military. It has also been reported to FM that there are some intelligence personnel who make no secret of their profession and are widely known in the communities they work in to be working in the intelligence service. As a result, criminals can identify SNI members and work to either feed them false information or block information from getting to them at all. This is a failure in the SNI's operations that must be addressed.

2. There are no regulations yet to regulate the publication and circulation of pornography.

There is a concern in Timorese society regarding the distribution of pornographic photographs and videos over social media through anonymous profiles. Timorese deputy Mrs. Josefa Soares has stated that an anti-pornography law is important to Timor-Leste to protect women and safeguard against decreasing human dignity.²³

Timor needs an anti-pornography law in order to regulate the distribution of pornography, especially in cases where groups or individuals distribute pornographic materials that were taken without the knowledge or consent of the actors. An example of such a case is the Tasi-Tolu incident when a young couple was forced to perform sexual acts on camera, which was then distributed online. There is no justification for this behavior and it should be met with a heavy prison sentence by law.

In many other cases, however, people were not the victims of creating pornography but simply of its unauthorized distribution. In these cases, privately-created photos or videos which were intended for strictly personal use are taken from couples and publicized on social media websites. Therefore, it is necessary that new legislation regulate the sale of pornography to ensure that only purposefully-created and authorized publication of pornographic materials be allowable for publication and distribution.

Solutions: Reaction or Prevention?

Although police are often successful in tracking down and arresting suspects in various cases, arresting criminals after crimes have already been committed is only a band-aid response

²² Timor Post. Editorial. Friday, 27 September 2013

²³ The Dili Weekly Online. (2012) GMPTL did not make a law for any pornography. Dili <http://www.thediliweekly.com/tl/notisias/jender/772-gmptl-lakonsege-kria-lei-anti-pornografia>. Access on 30 September 2013

solution that will have little effect on the continuation of criminal activity. Considering that most of the crimes committed in Timor-Leste are perpetrated by youth, it may prove more beneficial to seriously study violent crimes and youth perpetrators to examine the root cause of this violence in the day-to-day life of Timorese youth.²⁴

FM has observed that the PNTL General Command has displayed a pattern of expressing public outcry in response to violent events along with conducting operations that are meant to suppress the violence. They are quick to acknowledge their own efforts and cite examples of their anti-crime operations through national media outlets. However, it seems as if these actions are rarely more than publicity stunts, as the operations rarely achieve strong results for the Timorese security sector. Even more ironic is the fact that PNTL interventions and operations always occur after violence and the number of victims to violent acts has steadily increased while the PNTL claims to be carrying out successful operations.

This is clear evidence that the reactive responses demonstrated by the PNTL must be replaced with a preventative framework that addresses the problems youth are facing both socially and economically. Despite Timor's large budget, no improvement has been made regarding education or the economic outlook for Timor's youth, as evidenced by the continually increasing unemployment numbers. This is an issue that the state must tackle aggressively if criminal activity, especially among Timor's youth, is to be curbed in the future.

Handling this problem will require an integrated effort involving multiple state entities and ministries. Because the problems leading to youth involvement in crime are so systematic and deep-rooted in Timor's society, it is not only the responsibility of the police to fight crime, but of all of Timor's leaders to fight the underlying causes of youth involvement in crime.

In light of all the obstacles facing Timor's youth, it is easy to see why youth are being so easily recruited into criminal networks and involving themselves in drug trafficking, assaults, sexual violence, and murder. This problem will continue to subsist unless steps can be taken to lower Timor's climbing unemployment rate and increasing economic inflation so that young Timorese are not facing dwindling opportunities to succeed in a legitimate profession.

Recommendation Summary

Fundasaun Mahein's Recommendations

1. Recommendation to numerous government institutions including the Ministry of Defense and Security, SEFOFE, Education Ministry and the Secretary of State Youth and Sports to work in a collaborative and integrated manner to find and implement a good resolution to combat organized crime.
2. Recommendation to the PNTL Command to implement patrols at areas known for high rates of conflict and organized criminal activity.

²⁴ Observations of Dr. Mari Alkatiri whom publicized the Dili stabbings on 24 September 2013 on Facebook.

3. Recommendation to the PNTL Command to strengthen its community based policing strategy to increase cooperation with community members and leaders. Cultivating better relationships with community sources will garner more accurate intelligence and lead to better detection of organized crime networks and activities, active members, and family members of criminals.
4. Recommendation to the PNTL Command to implement a better system to communicate security information and updates to the public to safeguard against false information and rumors spreading and causing widespread public panic.
5. Recommend that the government re-evaluate its state intelligence entity to create an organization better able to both collect and analyze credible data that will have a positive impact on state security.

Bibliography

Internet

Fundasaun Mahein (2013). Organized Crime: Recruitments of Civilians in Larger Numbers. Dili
<http://www.fundasaunmahein.org/2013/08/15/organized-crime-increases-civilian-recruitment/>

Mahein Nia Lian No. 14, (10 November 2010). Organized Criminal Operations of Timor-Leste. Dili

Radio Online Freedom (2013). Poor in Timor-Leste increase 49%. Dili.
<http://radioliberalidadedili.com/notisia/1103-kiak-iha-tl-sa-e-ba-49> Accessed on 28 September 2013

Suara Timor Lorosa'e (STL) – Online (2013). Marconi Case, Murdered 1 youth And injured 2.
<http://suara-timor-lorosae.com/kazu-marconi-hamate-joven-1-no-hakanek-nain-2/>.
Accessed on 30 September 2013

The Dili Weekly Online. (2012) GMPTL Unable to Create Anti-Pornography Laws. Dili
<http://www.thediliweekly.com/tl/notisias/jender/772-gmptl-lakonsege-kria-lei-anti-pornografia>. Accessed on 30 September 2013

Timor Post Online (2013). Government Not Reducing Unemployment. Dili.
<http://www.diariutimorpost.tl/berita-553-governu-la-redus-dezempregu.html> Accessed on 28 September 2013.

Interviews

A. C (2013, 26 September). Personal Interview

B. J (2013). Personal Interview. Dili

Network group graphics of organized crimes the result of inquiries by Fundasaun Mahein (FM). Dili, 1 October 2013.

Fundasaun Mahein's (FM's) monitoring on social media and community concerns regarding video distributions in 2011. Dili

Fundasaun Mahein's (FM's) monitoring on social media and community concerns regarding video distributions in 2012. Dili

Fundasaun Mahein's (FM's) monitoring of false Facebook accounts publicizing personal information. 2010, 2013. Dili

M. L (2013). Personal Interview. Dili

Observations of Dr. Mari Alkatiri whom publicized the Dili stabbings on 24 September 2013 on Facebook.

Observations of Fundasaun Mahein (FM). Friday, 27 September 2013

P. Z (2013). Personal Interview. Dili

News Papers

Diariu Nasional. Wednesday, 25 September 2013.

Jornal Diario Nasional. Monday, 30 September 2013.

Suara Timor Lorosa'e – STL. Tuesday, 06 August 2013

Timor Post. Thursday, 21 March 2011.

Timor Post. Wednesday, 04 September 2013

Timor Post. Tuesday, 06 August 2013

Timor Post. Wednesday, 25 September 2013

Timor Post. Editorial. Friday, 27 September 2013

Timor Post. Monday, 30 September 2013