



## Timor-Leste's 3rd VPU child-friendly room opens in Baucau

A new child-friendly interviewing room, where trained police officers can provide a safe and welcoming environment for women and youngsters, opened in Baucau on 28 October. It is the third such room to be opened in Timor-Leste by the Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU), a team of specialist officers from the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL) and UNPol who have been trained in children's rights and child-friendly investigation techniques.

UNMIT's Senior Gender Advisor, Rita Reddy, who represented the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste at the opening, said the effort was a very good example of the collaboration and coordination between UN Agencies, UNPol, and PNTL under the integrated UN mission. "It signifies a joint effort to provide assistance and support to women and children who are victims of gender based violence such as domestic violence and sexual assault," she said.



UNPol Photo/Morag McGowan

*Police officers from PNTL and UNPol stand in front of the new child-friendly interviewing room in Baucau. The VPU staff aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment for women and children.*

The rights of children and women and gender-based violence continue to be a high priority for the UN mission in Timor-Leste. Together with the Vulnerable Persons Unit, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA are helping the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Health to strengthen services for victims of abuse and gender-based violence. UNMIT's Administration of Justice Support Section is advising the mission and the Government on reforms of the judicial and legal system and services. In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is supporting the Interagency Counter-Trafficking Working Group, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

The VPU is dedicated to providing victim-focused investigation and support to victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and child abuse, involving both adults and children. It provides support and assistance to victims and their families and works in partnership with local victim support services and NGOs. VPU rooms have now been opened in three of Timor-Leste's 13 districts: Dili, Liquiça, and Baucau.



UNMIT Photo/Mateus Goncalves

*Owners of fighting cocks, such as this man in the Hale-Laran Market, make up one of the key groups handling or living in close proximity to animals.*

## Workshop aims to develop national communication strategy for avian flu

Changing the behaviour of people who live with and handle animals is essential in preventing the spread of avian influenza. In Timor-Leste, the people most at risk are backyard farmers, poultry and egg consumers, poultry traders, poultry slaughterers, and owners of fighting cocks.

In an effort to develop a nationwide communications strategy to advocate for behavioural change in these key groups, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) held a 3-day meeting from 27-29 October at Memorial Hall in Dili. The meeting brought together more than 30 representatives of the media, Government health and livestock services, and communications experts from UN agencies, NGOs, and donors, among others.

Participants reviewed research and communication activities to date and devised a strategic framework and action plan for conducting communication activities. They identified key behaviours, audiences, messages, and the means of disseminating information in Timor-Leste, and established a means to enhance collaboration and cooperation among organizations involved in communicating about the pandemic.

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# UN Peacebuilding Fund, Peacebuilding Commission look for opportunities to work with Timor-Leste

A representative of the UN's Peacebuilding Support Office, Susanne Frueh, came to Timor-Leste last week at the invitation of the Foreign Minister to explore possibilities for Timor-Leste to engage with the UN's Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission. This is an extract from an interview that Ms. Frueh gave to UNMIT Radio's Ana Teresa Sequeira.



UNMIT Photo/Martine Perret

**Q: During your visit, what possibilities did you find for the Peacebuilding Fund and Peacebuilding Commission to work together with Timor-Leste?**

**A:** I think there's ample scope. Certainly Timor-Leste is in a post-conflict, peace building situation where peacebuilding is a critical element for moving forward on an agenda for peace and for lasting peace. The Fund itself could be a very strategic, catalytic instrument to fund certain activities that are currently not fully addressed or are under funded or simply not on the radar screen of actors here. So the Fund is an opportunity for the country to address some urgent peacebuilding issues and priorities. In turn the Peacebuilding Commission could certainly provide an opportunity for a broader engagement of the international community with the country.

**Q: Could you give some specific examples?**

**A:** For the Fund, it could be useful to fund youth employment, youth empowerment. It could be useful to look at the reintegration of IDPs - not just what it means to bring them back home but also what it means to support them through what is probably a very difficult period. So those are two examples for the Fund. In terms of the Commission's possible engagement, this really would be premised upon the priorities as they are set by the national actors and then the Commission would support the country in its endeavours to implement a peacebuilding strategy.

**Q: What is the difference between peacebuilding and UN peace architecture?**

**A:** Peacebuilding is something that has always happened. It is quite important to reflect the root causes of conflict to address the potential conflict triggers in a post-conflict situation. So peacebuilding is nothing new. It's that we are now aware of the fact that peacebuilding is not just sustainable development. It's also addressing security issues, it is addressing political issues, and it is addressing good governance and socio-economic development. So it's a broad spectrum but not just focusing on one area. We have to make sure that all the critical factors relevant for avoiding a relapse into conflict are being addressed.

The new peacebuilding architecture was created ... because we realized there was a real gap in the international assistance or work on post-conflict peacebuilding. There were studies that showed that about 50% of peace agreements fall apart within 10 years. And the reason is ... certainly related to the fact that more often than not, following a peace agreement major international attention drops away, the major donors and the UN start winding down. There is a lack of necessary resources, attention, and support given to post-conflict societies. So the peacebuilding architecture is supposed to address that. It is supposed to garner international support in support of the country, in support of activities taking place at the national level, supporting strategies developed by government, civil society, and the international community and to also provide the necessary resources to follow through with them. The difference is that the architecture now provides us with the tools and the necessary instruments to do peacebuilding, as it needs to be done.

**Q: How can the new UN peace architecture provide support to Timor-Leste?**

**A:** On various levels. The first one was already mentioned – the Peacebuilding Fund, a catalytic small fund that could fund gap areas, could fund initiatives currently not being funded by the government or by major donors. In addition to that, the Peacebuilding Commission could provide advice on experiences and lessons learned in other peace building situations. For example, what are the right policies to be put into place in order to encourage private sector investment? This is additional advice to really build on the experience elsewhere.

**Q: What is the significance of your visit to the people of Timor-Leste?**

**A:** Hopefully it's a signal that the international community is paying attention to what's happening in Timor-Leste, that the international community is offering support, and there's a lot of interest in helping Timor-Leste. So I do think the people of Timor-Leste can count on having sustained international assistance and support for the time being. And the significance of this visit is simply to demonstrate that interest and to offer any support that could be needed and provided.