



## PRESS RELEASE

# Evictions in Dili: Implications for the Community's Livelihood and Security

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## Introduction

Forced evictions in Dili have already raised significant concerns regarding the well-being, security, and stability of the affected communities. Urban development, land disputes, and infrastructure projects have led to displacement, resulting in vulnerable populations facing economic hardship, social instability, and severe security risks. HABADA is closely monitoring these developments to advocate for just resettlement policies and long-term solutions that minimize the adverse effects on subsistence livelihoods and community security.

## Background on Evictions in Dili

Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste, has seen an increase in evictions due to various factors, including urban planning led by the government, private development projects, and legal disputes regarding land ownership. Many residents, particularly those living in informal settlements without formal land titles, are vulnerable to forced displacement. Numerous evictions occur without adequate consultation, compensation, or provision of alternative housing, which exacerbates the vulnerability of those affected, especially those with low income.

## Impact on Livelihoods

The economic consequences of forced evictions are particularly severe for families that depend on local markets, informal businesses, or subsistence activities. Displacement disrupts these income-generating activities, forcing many individuals into unstable work conditions or uncertain employment. For small businesses, street vendors, and fishermen, displacement results in the loss of customers and operational space, leading

to financial instability and an increase in vulnerability. Additionally, relocation to areas with limited infrastructure and economic opportunities further marginalizes the affected populations.

## **Social and Psychological Consequences**

In addition to the economic hardship, forced evictions have significant social and psychological impacts. Displacement disrupts community networks, weakens social cohesion, and strains support systems. Many families experience stress, trauma, and uncertainty about their future, leading to increased mental health challenges. Children suffer from interrupted education due to relocation, while elderly and disabled individuals face additional difficulties in adapting to new environments without sufficient support structures.

## **Implications for Security**

Evictions contribute to growing security concerns in Dili, leading to social disturbances, crime, and tensions between communities and authorities. Individuals who lose their rights and struggle to meet basic needs become vulnerable to illegal activities or exploitation. Additionally, the forced relocation process, which lacks proper legal procedures and undermines trust in the government and law enforcement, may lead to protests or resistance movements. To ensure security, it is crucial to address the root causes of eviction-related grievances through inclusive policies and community involvement.

## **Legal and Political Challenges**

The legal framework governing land rights and eviction procedures in Timor-Leste remain contentious issues. Many residents lack official documentation to prove land ownership, while land laws and administrative processes are complex and often inaccessible to marginalized groups. The absence of clear resettlement policies exacerbates this issue, leaving those evicted without viable alternatives for housing. Strengthening the legal right to protest and ensuring transparent land governance are essential to prevent future forced evictions.

## **Recommendations and Solutions**

To address the negative implications of forced evictions, a comprehensive approach is required, focusing on the following aspects:

1. **Strengthening Legal Protections** - The government must implement clear land policies to ensure that vulnerable populations have legal recognition and protection against arbitrary displacement.

2. Community-centered Urban Planning - Development projects should incorporate participatory planning, allowing affected communities to voice their concerns and contribute to resettlement solutions.
3. Adequate Compensation and Resettlement - Authorities must ensure fair compensation and provide alternative housing options that meet basic living standards, while maintaining access to employment, education, and social services.
4. Establish Support Mechanisms - Psychological support, financial assistance, and community programs should be made available to help displaced families rebuild their lives.
5. Dialogue and Mediation - Establishing open communication between government entities, developers, and communities can help prevent conflicts and develop long-term solutions.

## Conclusion

Evictions in Dili pose a serious threat to the livelihoods and security of local communities, highlighting the need for a sustainable approach based on urban development rights. To resolve this issue, a concerted effort is needed from government agencies, society, and international partners to ensure that economic growth does not come at the expense of human rights and social stability. By prioritizing inclusive policies and social protection, Timor-Leste can build a future that is both equitable and secure for all its citizens.

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