



BAIRO PITE CLINIC

Bairo Pite Clinic
Dili, East Timor

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News from the Clinic

August 2006

It's been a while

We apologize for the delay in updating the website's newsletter section. There have been a few things happening outside our control, at times gunfire surrounding the Clinic, neighbouring houses being burnt down, a gang of 100 armed men burning motorbikes in front of us and others trying to enter the Clinic to attack the refugees.

Changes have brought new challenges, and extra work for everyone. The situation as it developed in late May has had a serious impact on staff. Most staff have been affected in some way but balanced caring for their families and maintaining services at Bairo Pite. The commitment under pressure, of staff and volunteers to caring for patients has been inspiring.

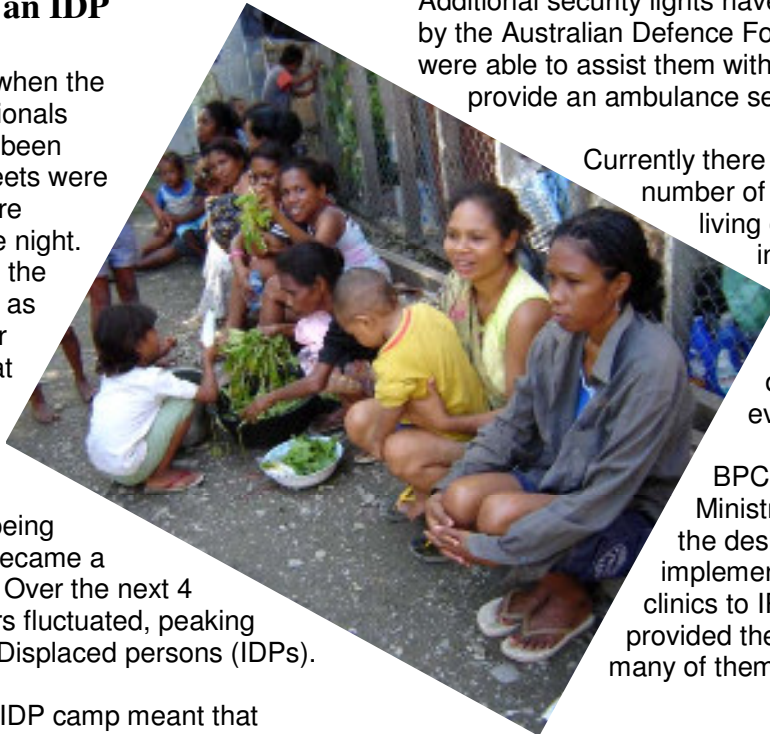
..... but the Clinic has been open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

Clinic becomes an IDP Camp

At the end of May when the majority of internationals working in Dili had been evacuated, the streets were deserted and gunfire echoed through the night. Patient numbers at the Clinic had dropped as families fled to their villages or stayed at home.

Then, as the violence increased and houses were being burned the Clinic became a refuge for families. Over the next 4 weeks, the numbers fluctuated, peaking at 1,000 Internally Displaced persons (IDPs).

Registration as an IDP camp meant that Oxfam improved some areas that needed maintenance, eg drainage, septic tank covers, broken plumbing. Care International, UNHCR and Plan provided food in the midst of the violence and support was received from the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity.



Additional security lights have been installed by the Australian Defence Forces and we were able to assist them with translation and provide an ambulance service.

Currently there are a small number of families still living on site. This includes the four staff, who have had their houses burnt down and lost everything.

BPC assisted the Ministry of Health in the design and implementation of mobile clinics to IDP camps and provided the service to many of them.

Mobile Clinics and AUSAID

A grant of \$200,000 from AUSAID has enabled us to conduct mobile clinics to IDP camps, increase clinic security and purchase additional medicines.

USAID continues

This provided 3 vehicles on loan and the provision of 2 new computers.

Patients on the Move

Most of you will be aware of the success of Baby Maria. Thank you everyone who donated to the campaign and for the continuing support for her and her mother in Sydney. Maria needs another operation for a small hole in her heart.

Despite the rising tension there were also a steady stream of other patients. These included –

Bonifacio – after a wait of 1 year, 6 year old Bonifacio flew to Sydney with his mother on Mothers Day for heart surgery. This was successful and he is now back in Timor facing his next challenge – how to get the 14 cavities in his teeth filled.

Cipriano – 25 year Cipriano was treated in the Clinic over 3 months for chronic heart failure which had caused him to abandon his studies.

Despite our efforts to get him to Sydney, his condition worsened and he died before the operation. We were able to support his family and bring him back to Timor Leste but the loss of this engaging young man has touched us all.

Maria Goamez – 12 year old Maria travelled to Melbourne with her father for open heart surgery for.. She is now back in Dili and appears to be fully recovered. More patients are on our list waiting for opportunities to have procedures, which we would normally regard as standard surgery. For example, as I write this, a team has gone to Baccau to bring **Luciano** back to Dili to fly to Melbourne for a pericardiectomy operation.

Mercy Ship – where the surgeons come to the patients. This is due in Dili at the end of the month and we are identifying patients for assessment for a wide range of problems.

New Staff

Fatima who trained in Indonesia has joined us and is now developing health education programmes as part of the Mobile Clinics she is co-ordinating. With

Aida, the other Timorese doctor they are also focussing on Women's Health services.

International Volunteers

A number of volunteers have been forced to withdraw by their medical schools, but we have been lucky to maintain a core of doctors, students and others.

Virginia from New Zealand has been here throughout "The Situation". She has used her wide network of contacts to keep the Clinic operational, while supporting staff and coordinating the IDP camp on site.

Liz and Sylvia from England were prevented from doing their placement in the Solomon Islands because of the fighting, so stayed on in Dili during part of the conflict!



Margaret an Australian midwife was working with our midwives throughout May and June. They are now able to train other staff.

Conrad and Anousha arrived for 6 weeks at the crucial time and were quickly acclimatised for action.

Liz the other New Zealander was evacuated after only 4 months here, but is very happy to be back.

New Projects

First Aid Training – to IDP Camp Managers. Due to the support received this may be extended

Health Promotion – showing our Nutrition DVD to 8,000 people at Don Bosco IDP Camp. Thank you Ian Melrose for the equipment to produce the DVD.

Thank you for your support of the Clinic – it is needed and appreciated