



..... **2018**

T I M O R - L E S T E
C O M M U N I T Y - P O L I C E
P E R C E P T I O N S S U R V E Y

THEMATIC BRIEF — POLICE PERFORMANCE

.....



The Asia Foundation



**NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE**

Background

This is a review of the findings of The Asia Foundation's 2018 Timor-Leste Community Police Perceptions Survey (Survey) relating to the performance of the National Police of Timor-Leste (Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste—PNTL).¹ This is the fifth Survey commissioned by The Asia Foundation, following surveys conducted in 2008, 2009, 2013 and 2015.²

In 2018 over 70 questions were asked of 3,178 respondents across all 12 Municipalities and the Special Administrative Region of Oecusse-Ambeno through a process of random sampling. As with previous surveys, respondents were categorized into three groups – public (1,808), Police (731), Community Leaders (639) – with three distinct but similar sets of questions for respondents in each group. The data was collected from September-October 2018.

1. Overall public trust in and appreciation for PNTL as an institution is high and improving

- 1.1 In 2018 when asked whether they trust the police, 99 percent of both the public and community leaders responded yes. This is the same result as for 2015 (which is the first year in which this question was asked). Despite this remarkable expression of trust in PNTL as an institution, it is also clear that the public are dissatisfied with some aspects of PNTL's performance (see Section 4).
- 1.2 In 2018, 77 percent of the public, 82 percent of community leaders, and 79 percent of PNTL thought PNTL performance was better than a year ago. This is consistent with results from 2015 when 79 percent of the public and 83 percent of community leaders considered that PNTL performance was better than a year ago.
- 1.3 An overwhelming majority of the public report being treated with full respect and professionalism by the PNTL when seeking their help in resolving a crime. This ranged from 91 percent of the public saying they were treated with full respect and professionalism by the PNTL in cases of attack resulting in death to a low of 78 percent for cases of attack resulting in injury.
- 1.4 Despite these positive findings, when the public were asked whether they would first report a crime to a community leader or a PNTL officer, the majority (72%) said they would report to a community leader while only 27 percent said they would report to PNTL.³ Since 2015 there has been a decrease in both the public (2015=34%, 2018=27%) and community leaders (2015=48%, 2018=39%) who say they would report first to PNTL. There has been an increase in public respondents saying they would report first to a community leader (2015=64%, 2018=72%).

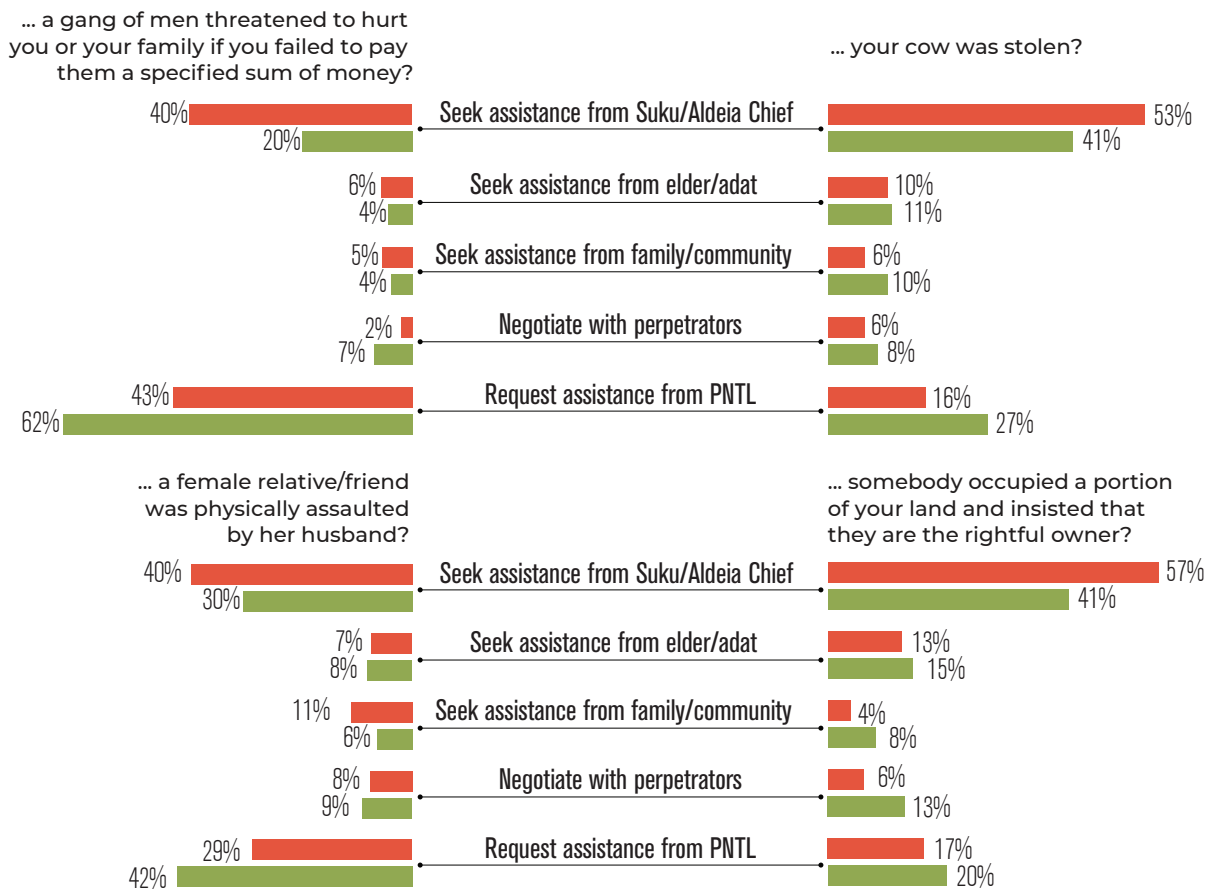
¹ The Asia Foundation Timor Leste would like to thank everyone who contributed to this report including: Robin Perry, Selene Ceja, Bu Wilson, Carmenesa Soares, Carlito Bobo and the Timor-Leste Research and Advocacy Network. For more information about the 2018 CPP Survey see: <http://asiafoundation.org/publication/timor-leste>.

² CPP Survey data can be accessed through The Asia Foundation's Data Portal: <http://surveys.asiafoundation.org/>.

³ This was also reflected in the findings of the Evaluation of Village Police Officers or Oficial Polisia Suku (OPS), commissioned by The Asia Foundation in 2018.

Figure 1

GP CL What is the first thing you would do if..



In all figures, GP refers to general public respondents, CL to community leader respondents and PNTL to respondents from the National Police of Timor-Leste (Policia Nacional de Timor-Leste)

1.5 These results are also reflected in the Evaluation of Village Police Officers or *Ofisial Polisia Suku (OPS)*, commissioned by The Asia Foundation in 2018, which found that ‘relations between OPS and the community were generally good’.

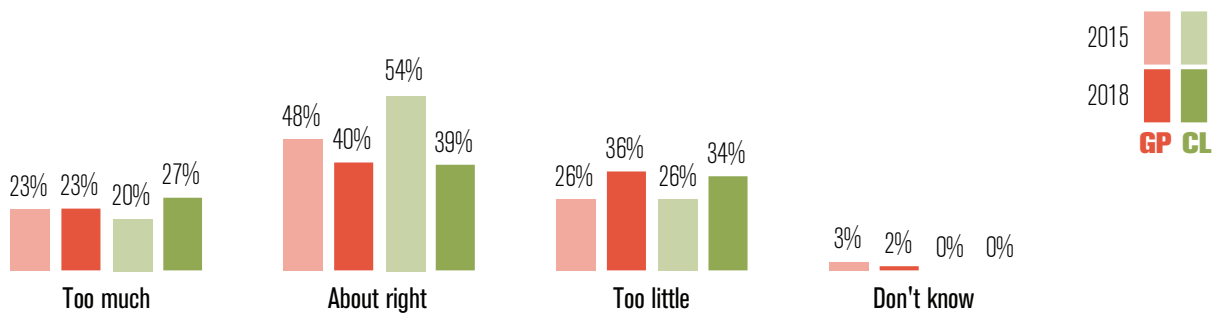
2. The public increasingly appreciates the presence of PNTL officers in their community

2.1 Increasingly people would like to see a greater PNTL presence in their communities.⁴ Between 2015 and 2018 there was a significant increase in public respondents who agreed PNTL’s presence was too little (2015=26%, 2018=36%). A slightly higher proportion—nearly half— of the public (40%) and community leaders (39%) believed that PNTL’s presence in their community is about right. (Fig 2)

⁴ According to the 2018 OPS Evaluation: ‘Three major obstacles to OPS fulfilling their visibility mandate are the number of OPS that a) do not live in the Suku due to a lack of housing, b) that are required to perform dual functions; and c) that the allocation of one OPS per Suku does not account for variabilities in the size and terrain of Suku, the number of Aldeia that a Suku covers, and the population of a Suku’.

Figure 2

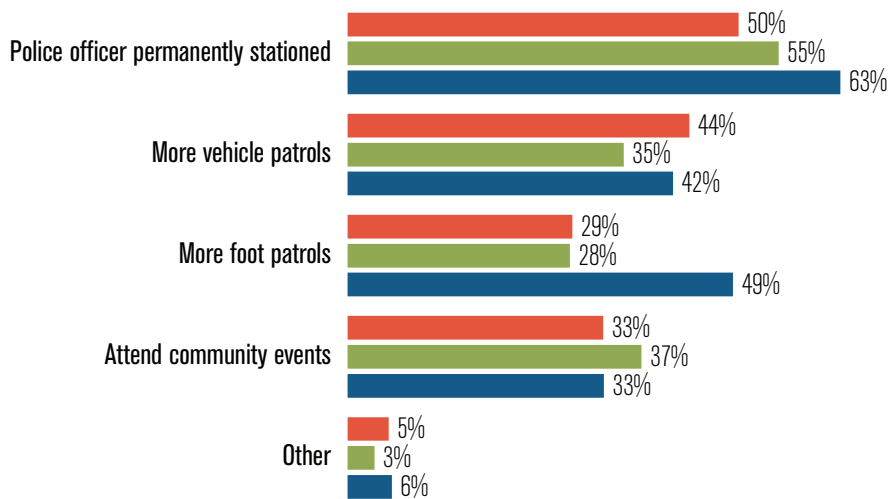
GP CL Do police have enough presence in your community?



2.2 Respondents who said the police presence was too little were asked a follow-up question about what the PNTL should do to increase their presence. Half of the public (50%), just over half of community leaders (55%) and well over half of PNTL (63%) agreed that a police officer should be permanently stationed in the community. In addition, significant percentages of all respondent groups called for more vehicle patrols (public=44%, community leaders=35%, PNTL=42%), more foot patrols (public=29%, community leaders=28%, PNTL=49%) and attendance by PNTL at community events (public=33%, community leaders=37%, PNTL=33%).

Figure 3

GP CL PNTL What should the PNTL do to increase their presence in your community?



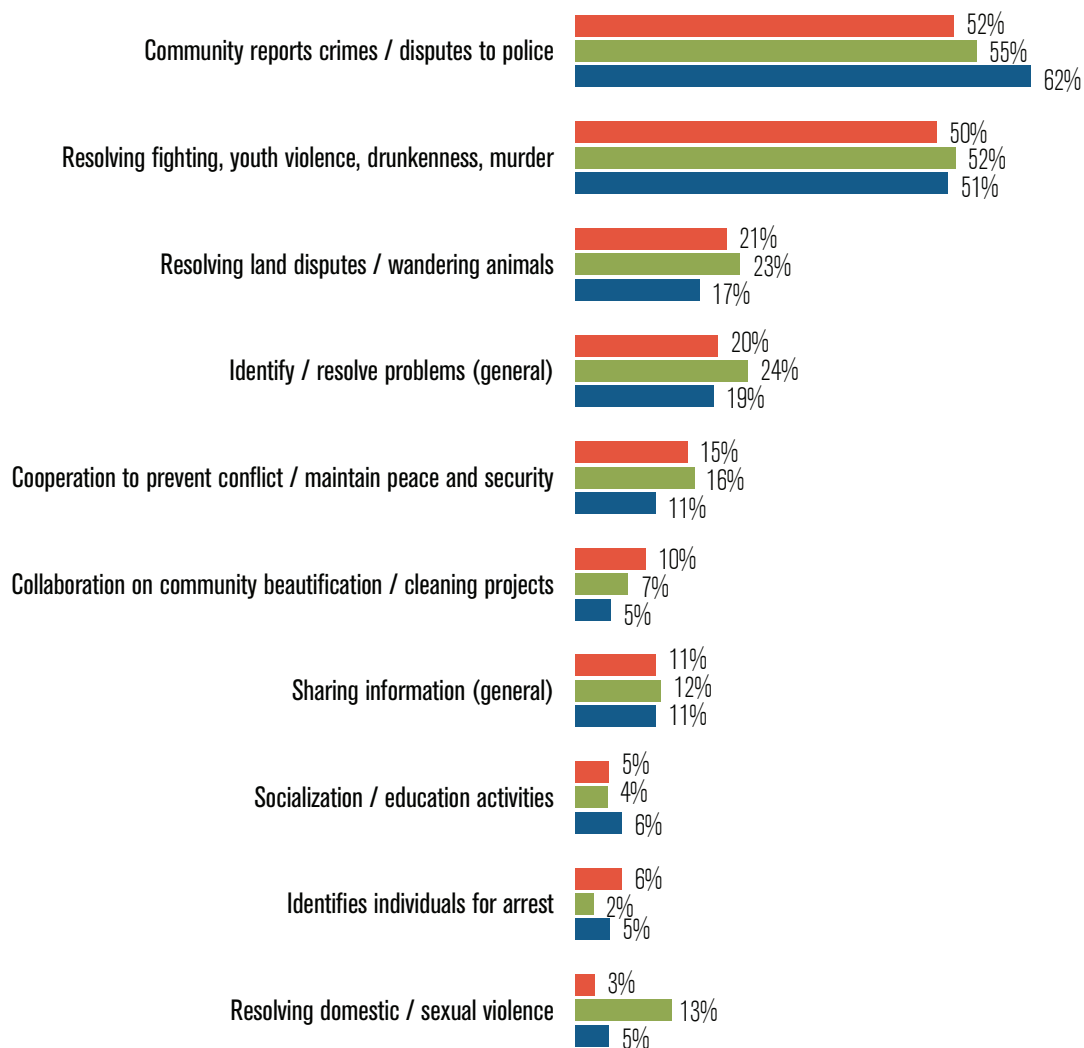
2.3 Respondents were also asked the similar but distinct question about PNTL involvement in their community. Between 2015 and 2018 there was a significant increase in public respondents who said that PNTL’s presence was too little (2015=16%, 2018=29%). A majority of the public and community leaders say that the PNTL’s involvement in their community is either about right (public=39%, community leaders=40%) or too little (public=29%, community leaders=20%).

3. PNTL is increasingly adopting a greater orientation towards the community

3.1 The overwhelming majority of the public (83%), community leaders (93%) and PNTL (95%) say that PNTL and citizens are working together to address security problems in their community. When respondents were asked for specific examples of police and citizens working together the most common example given was the community reporting crimes/disputes to the police (public=52%, community leaders=55%, PNTL=62%), followed by the categories of resolving fighting, youth violence, drunkenness and murder (public=50%, community leaders=52% PNTL=51%). Other common ways in which citizens and police are working together is in relation to resolution of land disputes, problem solving and general information sharing.

Figure 4

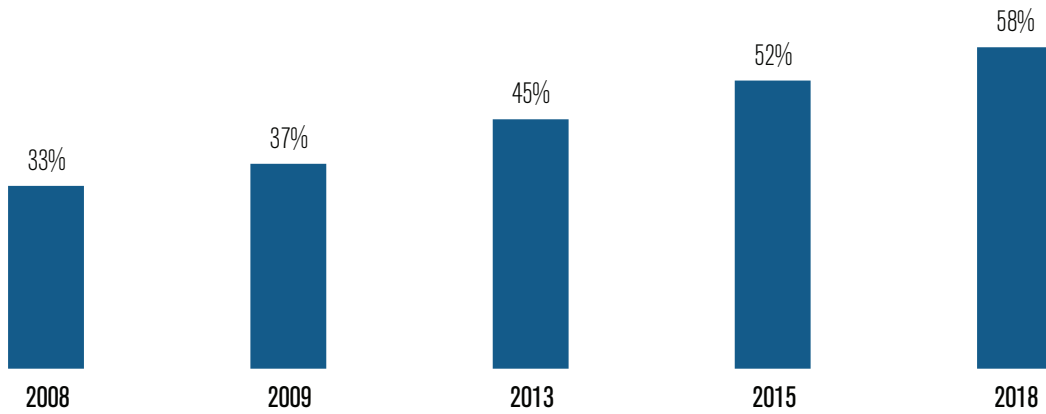
GP **CL** **PNTL** Can you provide two specific examples of how citizens and police have been working together?



3.2 The percentage of PNTL who have received specialized training in community policing has increased over time. In 2008, 33 percent of PNTL received training compared to 58 percent in 2018. Fewer women PNTL officers (40%) have received community policing training.

Figure 5

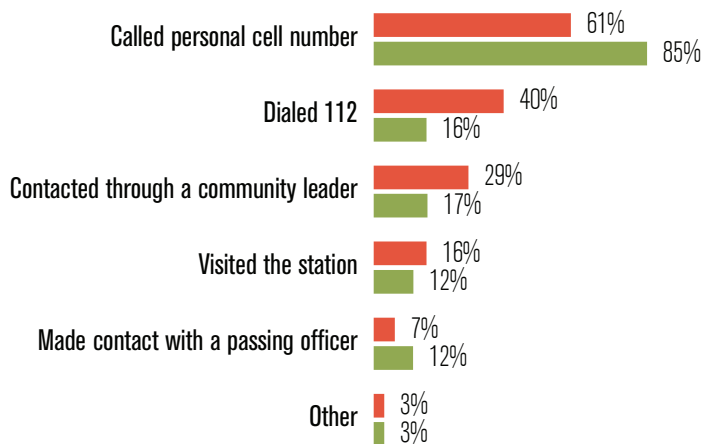
PNTL Have you received any specialized training in community policing?



3.3 Communication between police officers and the community takes place in a variety of ways. The majority of the public (61%) and the vast majority of community leaders (85%) who contacted the PNTL in the last year did so by calling a personal mobile number. The other popular ways of communicating with PNTL are through the emergency line (public=40%, community leaders=16%) or through a community leader (public=29%, community leaders=17%). Only a small number visited a police station (public=16%, community leaders=12%).

Figure 6

GP **CL** How did you contact the PNTL?

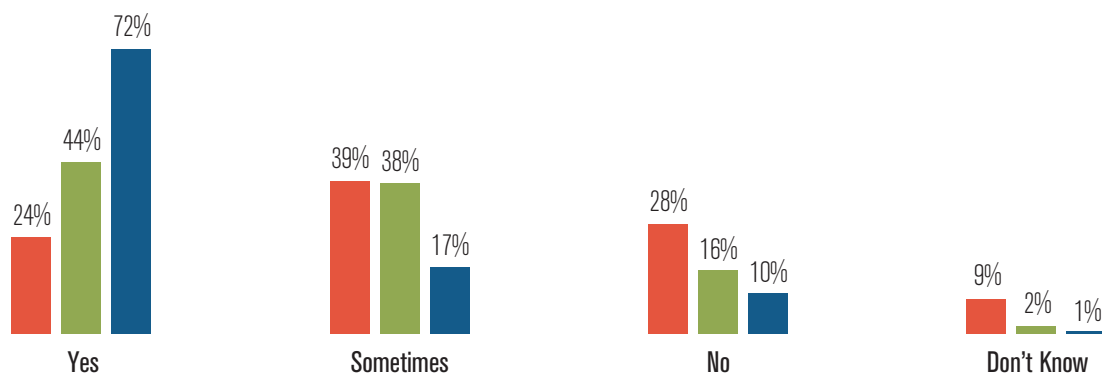


4. Despite these positive perceptions it is clear that PNTL officers need to improve their performance across a range of areas, including responsiveness to the public, professional integrity and gender sensitivity

4.1 While 72 percent of PNTL officers believe they are gender sensitive in the performance of their duties far fewer members of the public (24%) or community leaders (44%) agree.⁵

Figure 7

GP CL PNTL Are the PNTL inclusive of gender sensitive issues when performing their duties?



4.2 An overwhelming majority of all respondent groups believe that the percentage of women PNTL officers should be increased (public=89%, community leaders=93%, PNTL=87%).⁶

Nearly half (47%) of the public and more than one third (36%) of community leaders have never seen a female PNTL officer in their community. By contrast only 13 percent of the public and 3 percent of community leaders have never seen a male PNTL officer in their community.

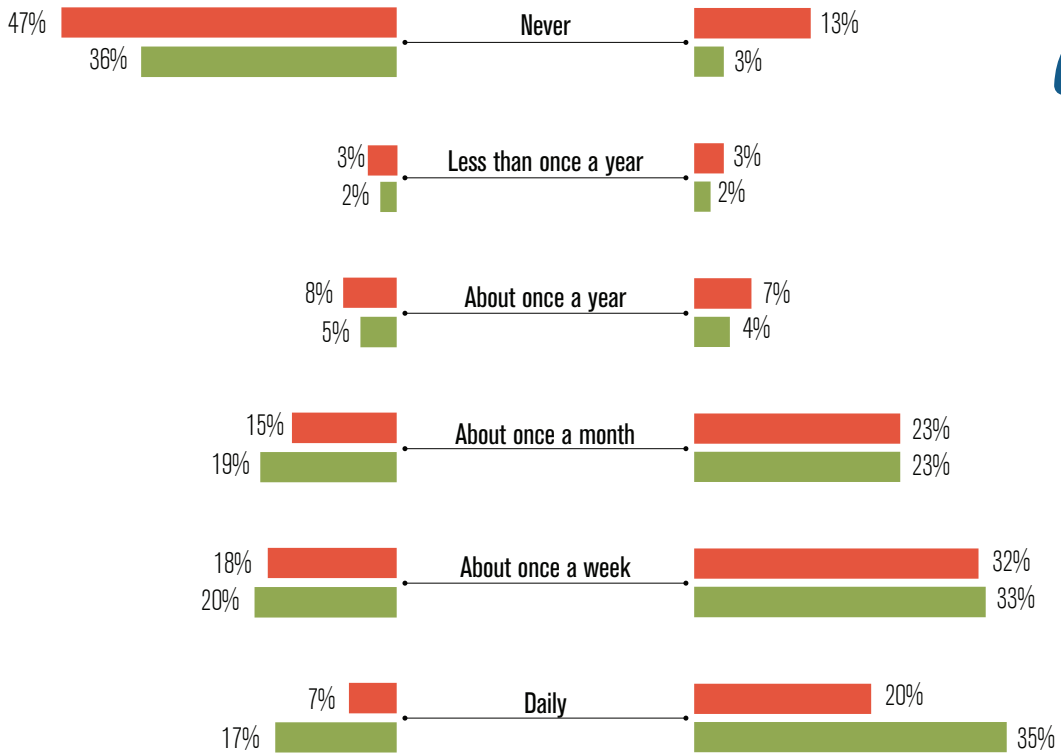
4.3 Overall women have much less trust than men in PNTL. Only 65 percent of female public respondents said that they were treated with full respect and professionalism when they sought help following an attack resulting in jury, compared to 94 percent of men who were in this position. Similarly, while 85 percent of male community leaders agree strongly with the statement that ‘they trust the police to carry out their job to benefit the public’, only 65 percent of women community leaders would agree with this statement.

⁵ The 2018 OPS Evaluation found that OPS ‘demonstrated little understanding or sensitivity regarding gender issues’ and suggested that ‘this is likely influenced by cultural practices existing in communities, which reinforce the power of men over women and children within a patriarchal system’.

⁶ According to The Asia Foundation’s 2018 Tatoli! Timor-Leste Public Perceptions Survey (Tatoli Survey), more than three out of four respondents (78%) believed that having a larger percentage of women in the PNTL would improve policing services in Timor-Leste.

Figure 8

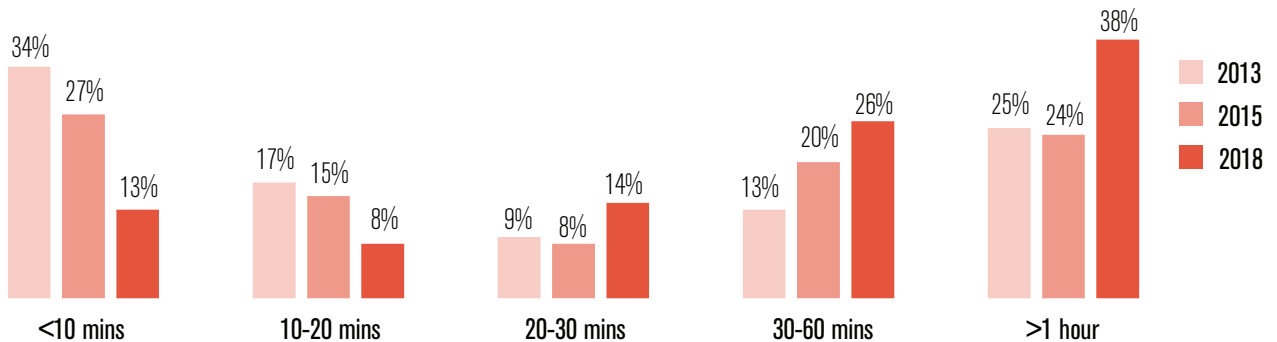
GP CL How often do you see female/male PNTL officers in your community?



4.4 More than a third of public respondents (38%) indicated that PNTL took more than an hour—the slowest response option presented to respondents—to respond to their request for assistance. The graph below (Fig 9) shows that since 2013 PNTL are becoming slower to respond to requests.

Figure 9

GP How long did PNTL take to respond to your request for assistance?



7 According to the Tatoli Survey, corruption is one of the greatest challenges facing the nation, with nine percent of respondents considering it to be the biggest problem facing Timor-Leste (making it the third most cited problem for respondents). Furthermore, when asked about aspects of public life which are affected by corruption, the most popular response was 'government ministries' (identified by 25% of respondents).

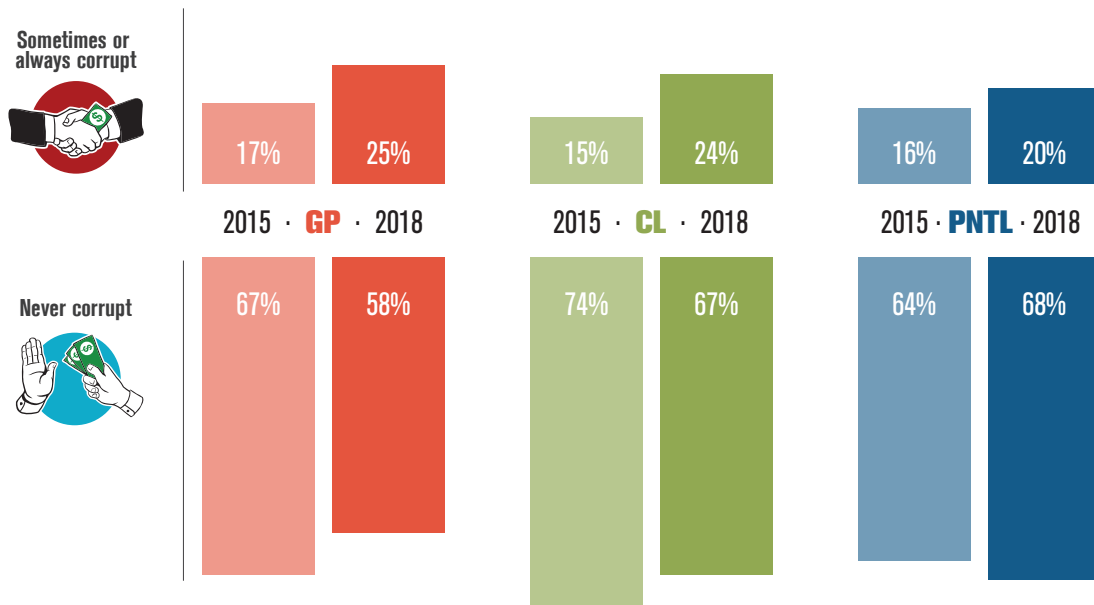
8 Prior to asking respondents the question referred to in Figure 12, they were informed that 'corruption involves the misuse of position in power for personal interests, acting dishonestly, taking bribes, breaching public trust and/or participating in, and protecting organized crime'.

In the 2018 OPS Evaluation, 76 percent of community members reported that OPS responded ‘quickly’ rather than ‘slowly’ to incidents, although there were big differences within districts, with responses more likely to be slower in rural areas compared to urban locations. The most important determinant for response time, however, was whether the OPS lived in, or close to, the Suku. If the OPS lived in, or close to, the Suku then 91 percent rated the response time ‘quick’, but if they lived further away only 46 percent rated them ‘quick’.

4.5 A quarter of public and community leader respondents believe that PNTL officers are either sometimes or always corrupt.⁷ Although most people believe the PNTL are never corrupt, since 2015 there has been a significant increase in the percentage of the public (2015=17%, 2018=25%) and community leaders (2015=15%, 2018=24%) who consider the PNTL to be corrupt (Fig 10).⁸ It is worth noting that only slightly fewer PNTL respondents believe there is corruption within their organization (2015=16%, 2018=20%).

Figure 10

GP **CL** **PNTL** In terms of corruption, which of the following responses best describe the members of PNTL who serve your community?



5. All respondent groups identify human resources, transportation and training as the biggest challenges facing PNTL

5.1 The biggest challenges identified by PNTL are resource-based, relating to a lack of: human resources (66%), transportation (60%), training (55%), and, communications equipment (55%) (Fig 11).⁹ Since 2015 there has been a marked increase in the proportion of PNTL respondents identifying a lack of adequate human resources (2015=54%, 2018=66%) and lack of job clarity (2015=10%, 2018=20%) as a challenge.

⁹ Similarly, the OPS Evaluation found that PNTL performance at the community level was heavily impacted by resource limitations, in particular: inadequate supervision of OPS by Squadron Commanders; lack of fuel for motorbikes; and, lack of housing.

The public and community leaders also identified lack of human resources (public=34%, community leaders=42%), transportation (public=21%, community leaders=22%) and training (public=16%, community leaders=9%) as the biggest challenges facing PNTL.

Figure 11

PNTL What do you consider to be the most serious challenges facing the police in the area in which you work, today?

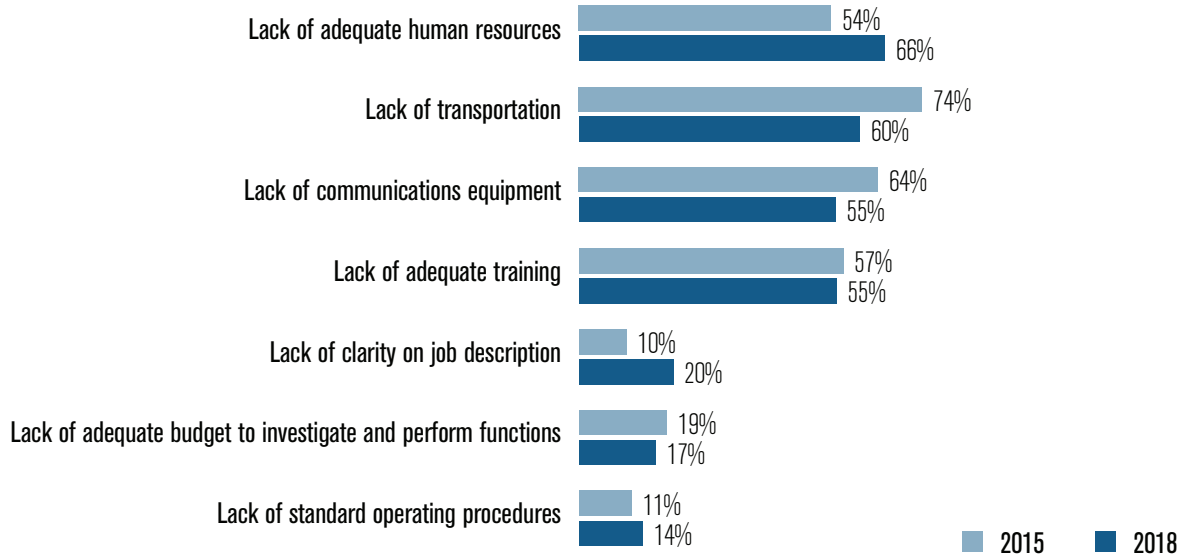
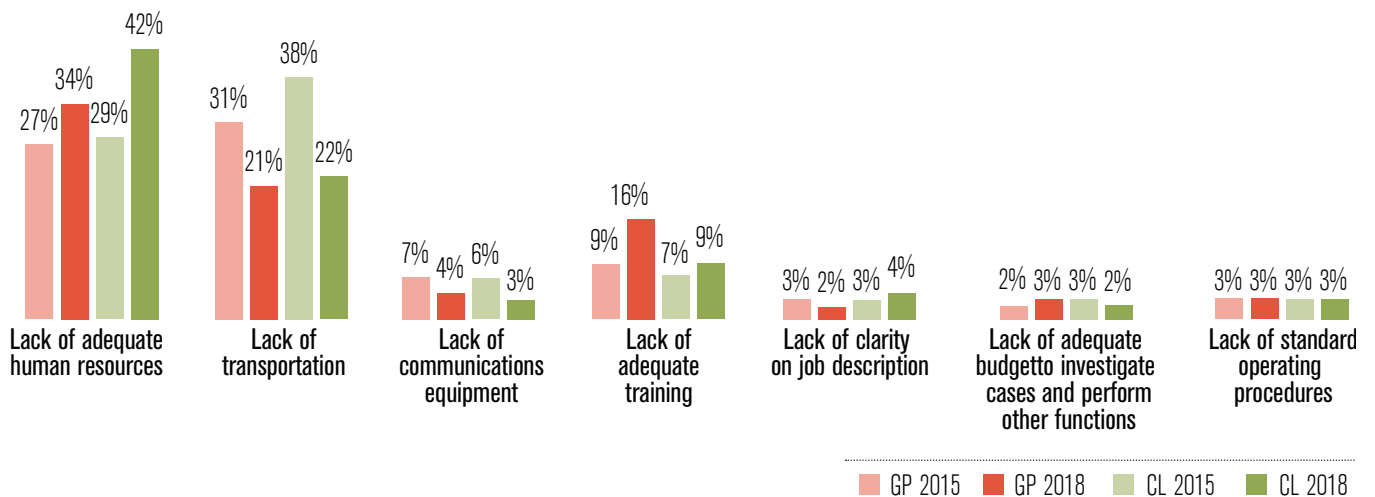


Figure 12

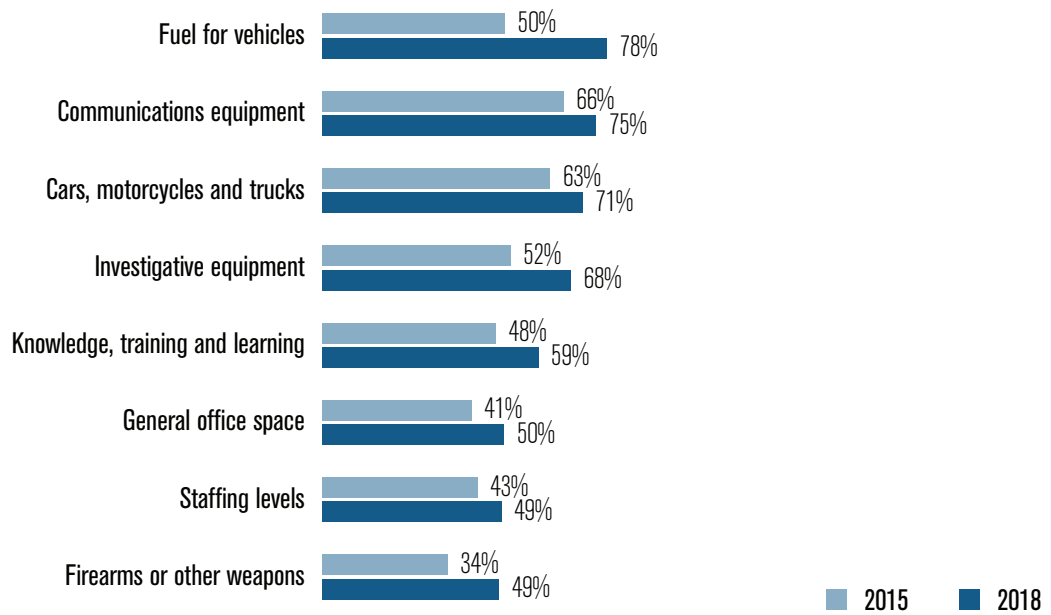
GP **CL** What do you consider to be the most serious challenge facing the PNTL in this locality today?



5.2 The majority of PNTL respondents identified vehicle fuel (78%), communications equipment (75%) and transport (71%) as the three most inadequate resources. It is striking to see in Fig 12 that respondents believed that in 2018 there are less resources available to them across all eight resource types than in 2015.

Figure 13

PNTL PNTL identified inadequacy of resources



6. PNTL performance in Timor-Leste in 2018

The findings of the survey provide an excellent insight into public perceptions of PNTL officers' performance in 2018. They also provide a compelling evidence base for a broad range of important policy initiatives which could be considered by the Government with a view to reinforcing PNTL efforts amongst the communities that they serve.

Firstly, ensuring adequate financial and human resources is one of the greatest challenges facing PNTL. Institutional commitment to allocate the necessary resources to accomplish PNTL's mission and vision is therefore critical. Finalizing the draft PNTL Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and establishing a coordinating mechanism for management and implementation the necessary reforms would be important initial steps.

Secondly, respondents identify attitudes, mindset and performance accountability as the main reason for PNTL's presumed under-performance (see Section 4). These issues could be addressed by the Government through strengthening PNTL's commitment to public service and orientation towards the community. This could be achieved through a robust and focused training regime for OPS as well as the operational realization of PNTL's Strategic Plan 2019-2022. This paradigm shift in PNTL training would not require a substantive increase of internal resourcing, and could encourage technical support from the international community.

Thirdly, one of the most important findings of the 2018 Survey is that cooperation between PNTL, community leaders and other community-based security actors is high, and that cooperation has continued in recent years. The Government could help to solidify this cooperation through the introduction of appropriate legislative instruments, policies and operational guidelines. An excellent start point would be a strategic review or revision (if necessary) and implementation of the 2017 Community Policing Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of State Administration and the Ministry of Interior.