

March 2007

East Timor—Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

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The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and to promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.



Official Name:

Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Population: 1,062,777 (2006)

Area: 15,007 sq km

Official Languages:

Tetum, Portuguese

Literacy: 59%

Religion: 98% Catholic

Avg. per Capita Income: \$400/year

Electoral System:

President selected in single constituency election for a five-year term.

65 seat Unicameral National Parliament; five-year term. The 2007 election reduces the number of seats from 88 to 65.

Parliament elected by a closed party-list proportional representation system for a five-year term.

Voter eligibility: Citizens residing in East Timor, 17 years of age or older.

504 polling centers and 706 polling stations across East Timor's 13 districts.

On April 9, 2007, East Timor will hold a presidential election for only the second time in the country's history. The election will replace current President Xanana Gusmão, a former guerilla leader. A date for the parliamentary election will be announced following the presidential election, with the earliest possible date of June 28, 2007.

In the past eight months, East Timor has been challenged by renewed violence and the displacement of roughly 15 percent of its population, primarily in the capital, Dili. Restoring stability to the troubled country, foreign relations, economic development and poverty reduction are expected to be central issues during the presidential campaign period from March 23 to April 7.

Political Overview

On August 30, 1999, the citizens of East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia, thereby ending 25 years of foreign occupation. The vote was followed by 32 months of administration by the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET, 1999-2002), assisted by the National Consultative Council, a joint East Timorese—United Nations (UN) body.

On August 30, 2001, East Timor elected an 88-member Constituent Assembly; 13 members were elected in single-member constituencies and the remaining 75 through a party-list system. The Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) received 57 percent of the vote, securing 55 assembly seats. The Democratic Party (PD) received the second highest proportion with seven seats. In March 2002, the Constituent Assembly approved a constitution and transformed itself into the country's first National Parliament (PN), under the leadership of Francisco 'Lu Olo' Guterres (FRETILIN). Presidential elections were held on April 14, 2002, with Xanana Gusmão (Independent) defeating parliament-member Francisco do Amaral (ASDT) with 83 percent of the popular vote.

On May 20, 2002, East Timor achieved full independence and became the 191st member of the UN.

The 2006 Crisis and Beyond

Since independence, East Timor has experienced both dramatic growth and unfortunate setbacks. Despite its significant off-shore oil and gas wealth, East Timor remains the poorest country in the Asia-Pacific. Once hailed as the poster-child for post-conflict reconstruction, fighting has repeatedly shaken the small nation in the last year. In April-May 2006, the government lost control over both the East Timor Na-

tional Police (PNTL) and the Armed Forces for the Liberation of East Timor-East Timor Armed Forces (F-FDTL). The country has since struggled to regain stability.

In February 2006, 418 members of the F-FDTL held a march in Dili to protest alleged military discrimination against East Timorese from western districts. Afterward, 594 soldiers were dismissed for not returning to their barracks immediately after the demonstration. The petitioners held more protests, which turned violent on April 28. They were joined by other, similarly disaffected members of the police force and clashed with members of the PNTL, Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR), and F-FDTL. The violence killed over 30 East Timorese, and displaced 150,000 people, mainly in Dili. The instability also necessitated the deployment of 3,000 international security forces and the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) involving over 1,600 UN Police.

The crisis forced the resignation of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri (FRETILIN), who, along with his Interior Minister, Rogerio Lobato (FRETILIN), was accused of arming civilians during the violence. Alkatiri was replaced by Nobel-prize winner and then-Foreign Minister, Jose Ramos-Horta (Independent). While the court determined that it lacked sufficient evidence to pursue the case against the former Prime Minister, in March the District Court sentenced Lobato to seven-and-a-half years imprisonment. Lobato has vowed to appeal.

In late July 2006, Major Alfredo Reinado, the high-ranking leader of an armed group of petitioners from the military police, was jailed on charges of illegal weapons possession and his connection with five deaths. On August 30, 2006, Reinado and 56 others escaped from Becora prison. In February 2007, Reinado's group took 25 automatic weapons from a border station, thus ending six months of peaceful negotiations with the government of East Timor and precipitating an unsuccessful raid by the Australian-led International Stabilization Forces (ISF) in March. While Reinado escaped, five of his supporters were killed. Reinado has cultivated a 'Robin Hood' image and has attracted support throughout the country by claiming to protect citizens from FRETILIN intimidation. Reinado also released a letter in late March instructing his supporters to oppose the candidacies of the prime minister and the president of the parliament.

<i>Major Political Parties: Seats in Parliament</i>		
ASDT	East Timor Social Democrat Assoc.	6
FRETILIN	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor	55
KOTA	Association of Timorese Heroes	2
PD	Democratic Party	7
PDC	Christian Democrat Party	2
PL	Liberal Party	1
PNT	Timorese Nationalist Party	2
PPT	Timorese People's Party	2
PSD	Social Democrat Party	6
PST	East Timor Socialist Party	1
<i>Trabalhista</i>	Labor Party	0
UDC/PDC	Christian Democratic Union	1
UDT	Timorese Democratic Union	2

East Timor faces numerous challenges. Problems include the weakness of the F-FDTL and PNTL, Reinado's sustained popularity, anger at the Australian military presence, and high numbers of internally displaced persons. All are compounded by a severe rice shortage and high rates of urban unemployment. Protests by the Movement for National Unity and Justice have both called for food aid and voiced dissatisfaction with the majority party. The presidential race is expected to be close and the parliamentary elections have the potential to significantly shift the balance of power within the National Parliament.

NDI Programs

In light of ongoing instability, peaceful and credible presidential and parliamentary elections are critical for rebuilding confidence in the democratic political process. The campaign process and the elections themselves present a crucial opportunity for the people of East Timor to peacefully express their political will. In support of the elections, NDI is working with the Coalition for Monitoring the General Elections (KOME), a domestic elections monitoring coalition, and is partnering with the East Timor Institute for Security Studies (ETISS) to hold a roundtable discussion on elections security.

Domestic Elections Monitoring: Support for KOME

NDI currently supports the work of KOME. The coalition, which was formally launched in December 2006, brings together 16 local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The members contribute extensive experience in women's issues,

budget monitoring, education and justice and include representatives of East Timor's Catholic, Protestant and Muslim communities.

In December, KOMEg began working with 12 male and 14 female coordinators to organize monitoring efforts in each of East Timor's 13 districts. In March, KOMEg submitted the names of over 1,036 observers to the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE). For the elections these observers will be stationed in male-female teams at all 504 polling centers and monitor voting at all 706 polling stations. NDI has been instrumental in training these observers and creating the materials to be used on election day.

NDI has also assisted KOMEg in the drafting and dissemination of a National Pact for Credible, Secure and Peaceful Elections. This pact was unveiled at KOMEg's launch and will be published in each of East Timor's major newspapers before the election.

Electoral Administration

Two bodies oversee elections in East Timor: STAE and the National Electoral Commission (CNE). STAE is responsible for the technical aspect of elections, including the registration of voters, the printing and distribution of ballots, and the counting of votes. STAE answers to the CNE. CNE, a fifteen-member body appointed to six-year terms, is responsible for overseeing the work of STAE and ensuring that the electoral process adheres to legal guidelines. CNE is also tasked with approving any regulations or codes of conduct relating to the elections. Complaints handling is the responsibility of the CNE; any resulting appeals shall be heard by the Supreme Court of Justice.

The elections are being overseen by a three-member UN Independent Certification Team, appointed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In

mid-March the team released its fifth report in which it concluded that the "electoral process was not proceeding satisfactorily." The report outlined unaddressed weaknesses in the presidential and parliamentary electoral laws and also noted that the CNE had failed to perform some of its core functions. At the time of the report's publication, regulations governing polling and counting had not been issued – almost two months beyond the date by which they were legally required to be published.

Presidential Candidates

President Gusmão's decision to not run for a second term has opened up the presidential race and eight candidates have registered their candidacies. The field includes the current Prime Minister, Jose Ramos-Horta, and the current President of the National Parliament, Francisco 'Lu Olo' Guterres. While accurate polling data is not available, these two candidates are widely believed to be the front-runners.

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PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

EAST TIMOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, APRIL 9, 2007

Candidate	Party	Biography
Francisco Xavier do Amaral	ASDT	Amaral (b. 1937, Turiscai, Manufahi) was a founding member of FRETILIN. Following a unilateral declaration of independence by FRETILIN, Amaral assumed the presidency from November 28 to December 7, 1975. In 1977 he left FRETILIN; the following year he was arrested and held under house arrest in Indonesia until 1999. In 2000 Amaral returned to East Timor, and in 2001 he won a seat in the Constituent Assembly. In 2002 Amaral ran unsuccessfully against Xanana Gusmao for the presidency. He is currently a member of the National Parliament and leads ASDT.
Fernando 'Lasama' Araujo	PD	Araujo (b. 1963, Manutasi, Ainaro) co-founded the clandestine political organization National Resistance of East Timorese Students (est. 1988) while in exile. From 1992-1998 Araujo was held as a political prisoner in Indonesia. Following independence, Araujo took the helm of the Democratic Party - East Timor's second largest party.
Avelino Coelho	PST	Coelho (b. 1962, Laclubar, Manatuto) fought with FALINTIL during his adolescence. Later, while in exile in Indonesia, he formed the resistance organizations Ojectil (est. 1981), the Timorese Socialist Association (AST, est. 1990) and Feclitil (est. 1991). Following protests in 1991, Coelho was jailed for four months. In 1998 Coelho transformed AST into the Timorese Socialist Party and became Secretary General. Since 2004 Coelho has served on the State Council, a presidential advisory body.
Francisco 'Lu Olo' Guterres	FRETILIN	Guterres (b. 1954, Ossu, Viqueque) joined the FALINTIL resistance movement in 1974 and fought against the Indonesian occupation from the mountains of East Timor until 1999. In 1997, following the death of Konis Santana, Guterres became the most senior leader within FRETILIN, a position he continues to hold. In 2001, Guterres became a member of the Constituent Assembly. He currently serves as the President of Parliament.
Joao Carrascalao	UDT	In the late 1970s, Carrascalao (b. 1945, Hatumassin, Liquica) moved to Australia and led UDT from Sydney. During this period, his brother, Mario Carrascalao, served as the Indonesian-appointed the Governor of East Timor (1982-1992). Joao Carrascalao acted as the international spokesperson of the National Council for Timorese Resistance (CNRT, est. 1998), an umbrella political organization. In 2001 he became a member of the Constituent Assembly. Carrascalao currently sits in the National Parliament and serves as the president of UDT.
Lucia Lobato	PSD	Lobato (b. 1965, Liquiça) received her law degree from the Arlangga University of Law, Surabaya. In 1999 Lobato joined CNRT. She currently sits in the National Parliament and serves as the vice-president of PSD.
Jose Ramos-Horta	Independent	Ramos-Horta (b. 1949, Dili) became involved in the East Timorese independence movement as a young man and for this work was exiled to Mozambique from 1970-1971. In 1974 he helped to found ASDT and FRETILIN but was forced to flee East Timor in 1975. From exile Ramos-Horta served as the party's international spokesman. In 1996, he and Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo shared the Nobel Peace Prize. He served as vice-president of CNRT. In 1999 he returned to East Timor and became Foreign Minister. Following the 2006 crisis, Ramos-Horta became Prime Minister.
Manuel Tilman	KOTA	Tilman (Maubisse, Ainaro) lived in Macau during the Indonesian era where he worked as a lawyer. Tilman returned to East Timor in 1999 and became a member of the Constituent Assembly in 2001. He currently serves as a member of the National Parliament and is the president of KOTA.