

April 2007

East Timor—Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

**Contents:**

Political Overview	p. 1
Regulations	p. 1
Camp. and Reg.	p. 2
Voting	p. 2
Counting	p. 2
Complaints	p. 2
What's Next	p. 3
NDI Programs	p. 3
Candidates	p. 3



**Key Figures:**

Registered Voters: 522,933  
 Total votes cast: 427,712  
 Total valid votes: 403,941  
 Total invalid votes: 23,771  
 Invalid votes: 5.6%  
 Voter turnout: 81.8%

**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
- Run-off held if no candidate receives over 50% of the vote
- Voter eligibility: Citizens residing in East Timor, 17 years of age or older
- 504 polling centers and 706 polling stations across 13 districts

*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.*

East Timor's presidential elections – the second in the country's five-year history of independence – took place peacefully on April 9, 2007. The success of the voting and the turnout rate of over 80 percent affirm the East Timorese people's commitment to the democratic process.

The president of the National Parliament, Francisco Guterres of the majority Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) party, took the top spot in an eight-candidate race with 27.89 percent of the vote, followed by Prime Minister José Ramos-Horta with 21.81 percent.<sup>1</sup> As neither candidate exceeded 50 percent of the vote, they will face each other again in the May 9 run-off election.

**Political Overview**

East Timor emerged from 25 years of Indonesian occupation in 1999 following a referendum administered by the United Nations (UN). The nation of one million gained full independence 32 months later in 2002. Despite significant undersea oil wealth, East Timor remains the poorest country in Asia, and, in terms of per capita non-oil income, the poorest in the world.

Violence erupted in April-May 2006, causing over 30 deaths and the internal displacement of over 15 percent of the nation's population. The arrival of over 3,000 peacekeepers and UN Police, under the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), has largely stabilized the country since the crisis.

The recent presidential and upcoming parliamentary elections are an important test for the majority FRETILIN party and their handling of the 2006 crisis. FRETILIN currently controls over 60 percent of the National Parliament. President Xanana Gusmao, who did not stand for re-election, is expected to run for Prime Minister in the June 30 parliamentary elections.

**Electoral Regulations**

At the end of December 2006 – less than three and a half months before the presidential election – the National Parliament approved the presidential and parliamentary elections laws, as well as the law constituting the National Electoral Commission (CNE).

This timeframe prohibitively shortened the period to amend flaws in the electoral regulations. The Elections Certification Team (ECT), a three-person body appointed by the UN Secretary General, stated in its fifth report that, of its 13 recommended

<sup>1</sup> Both candidates resigned from their political positions, as stipulated by law, prior to the election.

changes, in only one case did the parliament take sufficient action to remedy the problem prior to the election. Less than two weeks before the election, the parliament passed amendments allowing the counting of ballots to be completed at the polling stations. The amendments also removed the provision of the mandatory use of transparent ballot boxes. One of the most controversial amendments, which the Supreme Court sustained upon appeal, approved the use of symbols on the ballots. Six candidates eventually used the Timorese flag as their symbol, including Ramos-Horta and third place finisher Fernando de Araujo. FRETILIN tried to invalidate the use of the national flag but the court refused; Guterres used the party's flag instead.

In addition, key regulations concerning voting and counting procedures were not published by the CNE until a week before election day. The late release of these guidelines contributed to inconsistencies in the methods used during counting. This delay also caused difficulties for the Coalition for Monitoring General Elections (KOME), which had to delay trainings and rely on the latest draft guidelines for producing its domestic observer manuals.

## Campaign and Registration Periods

From January 29 to March 21, the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) registered new voters and provided voter identification cards to those need new ones. The registration period was extended by one week because of public confusion and to provide more time for voters who had felt threatened or intimidated enough to not register.

The campaign period from March 23 to April 6 proceeded largely peacefully, with only minor clashes between rival supporters. The neutrality of government officials, however, did emerge as an issue. Some observers saw the illegal display of party symbols on government vehicles. Additionally, the spokesperson for the CNE attracted widespread criticism for allegedly expressing his candidate of preference just days before the vote.

## Voting Process

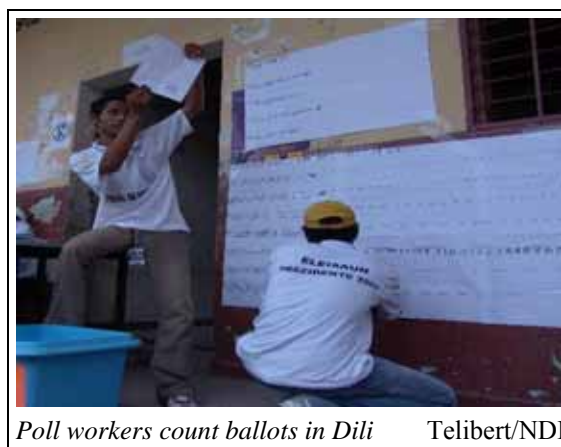
The voting process was mainly peaceful and orderly – a credit to Timorese voters. The regulations

<sup>2</sup> NDI learned after the day of the election one of the reasons for the shortfall was traced to the bundling of the ballots after printing. In a number of instances, what was assumed to be a 50-ballot pack actually contained fewer ballots. Also, East Timorese voters are not required to vote in the district where they registered. The number of registered voters in a region, therefore, does not determine the number of votes that will be cast there.

were generally adhered to according to most international and national observers. However, it was observed in some stations that voter cards were not punched, ballots not folded before given to voters, and inking not done properly. In the middle of election day, the CNE issued an alert that there were polling stations in almost all districts that had run out of ballots.<sup>2</sup> However, based on reports, additional ballots arrived on time for voting to continue. Eighty-two percent of the over half-a-million eligible voters cast their ballot.

## Counting Process

At the polling station level, counting procedures lacked consistency. Different procedures were observed and different standards were used to nullify ballots across polling stations. As night fell, election officials struggled to count ballots by the light of small battery-operated lanterns. Fatigue, varying rates of literacy and poll-worker attendance, and limited training led to frequent mathematical inconsistencies on the *actas* (official polling station records).



These inconsistencies and instances of incomplete *actas* caused a delay in the release of the official provisional results. The CNE had to secure permission from the court to reopen the ballot boxes and reconcile the erroneous figures. It completed its review of nullified ballots and revisions of the 18 flawed *actas* (Dili – 14, Ermera – 3, Manufahi – 1) on April 18 and announced the provisional results the same day. The CNE has submitted the provisional results to the Supreme Court of Justice (STJ). The STJ is expected to validate these results.

## Complaints

After the release of the provisional results, the CNE reported receiving 146 complaints; none of them affected the results. The 22 that constituted offenses under the Presidential Election Law were sent to the Public Prosecutor. The remaining complaints were

found by the CNE to be lacking in substance, did not contain enough information, or digressed from but did not violate the processes.

Candidate	Party	Votes	%
Francisco Guterres	FRETILIN	112,666	27.89
Jose Ramos-Horta	Independent	88,102	21.81
Fernando de Araujo	PD	77,459	19.18
Francisco X. do Amaral	ASDT	58,125	14.39
Lucia Freitas Lobato	PSD	35,789	8.86
Manuel Tilman	KOTA	16,534	4.09
Alvelino Maria Coelho	PST	8,338	2.06
Joao Viegas Carrascalao	UDT	6,928	1.72
<b>Total Votes Cast</b>		<b>427,712</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total Votes Counted</b>		<b>403,941</b>	<b>100</b>

### What's Next?

On May 9, 2007, Guterres and Ramos-Horta will face each other in the run-off election. NDI expects voting and counting procedures in the second round to improve, as poll workers, observers, and voters gain experience.

The presidential run-off election will be followed by the parliamentary elections on June 30. The candidate registration period began on April 11 and will continue until May 11. Members of East Timor's unicameral parliament are elected to five-year terms.

### NDI Programs

KOMEG, which receives financial and technical support from NDI and five other international organizations, emerged as an important participant in the presidential elections. The 19-member coalition successfully deployed over 1,000 trained, non-partisan observers – 474 female and 564 male - across all of East Timor's 13 districts. Observers were fielded in all but two of the 504 polling centers to observe voting and in 650 of the 705 polling stations to monitor counting processes. Obstacles to the deployment of observers included mechanical problems on key transportation and observers resigning out of fear after hearing gunfire on the eve of the election. By far the largest single contributor of lo-

cal poll-watchers, KOMEG observers constituted almost 60 percent of all registered domestic elections monitors. During the counting process, the coalition had to provide preliminary polling data because of the delayed release of the results by the CNE. KOMEG is expected to release a report of its observations in May.

### The Candidates

#### *Francisco "Lu' Olo" Guterres*

Guterres (b. 1954, Ossu, Viqueque) joined the 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.

Guterres polled strongly in East Timor's eastern districts. During the Indonesian occupation, the resistance movement was based in the east, far from the western border with Indonesia. These districts continue to identify strongly with the resistance and constitute Guterres's support base.

#### *Josè Ramos-Horta*

Ramos-Horta (b. 1949, Dili) became involved in the East Timorese independence movement as a young man, an association for which he was exiled to Mozambique from 1970-1971. In 1974 he returned to East Timor to help found the East Timor Social Democratic Association (ASDT) and FRETILIN but was forced to flee in 1975. In 1996, he and Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo shared the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to achieve independence for East Timor. In 1999 he returned to East Timor and became Foreign Minister. Following the 2006 crisis, Ramos-Horta was appointed the successor to Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, who resigned over his mishandling of the conflict.

On April 9, Ramos-Horta polled strongly in Dili, Liquica and Manatuto, and received the second highest number of votes in Baucau, Lautem and Bobonaro.

### For more information, please contact

In East Timor:  
Rua De Nu Laran No. 20, Bairro Dos Grihos  
Dili, East Timor  
Tel: + (607) 3325 151  
Fax: + (607) 3322 724

In the United States:  
2030 M Street, NW, Fifth Floor  
Washington, DC 20036-3306  
Tel: +1 (202) 728 5500  
Fax: +1 (202) 728 5520