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**Timor-Leste Parliamentary
Election Observation 2007**

Final Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary of Findings

Despite a newly established National Election Commission (CNE), revised election procedures, and a deeply divided electorate, Timor-Leste's Parliamentary elections were held without serious mishap, complaints, or violence that would undermine the validity of the results. Initial concerns voiced over the uneven cooperation between the CNE and the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE) diminished with evidence of a growing collaborative relationship between the two bodies at national and district levels.

The Carter Center deployed an international election observation mission to assess the June 30, 2007, Parliamentary elections. Observers visited 12 of Timor-Leste's 13 districts during the campaign period, the election, and the count. These observers focused on the procedural preparations for the elections, with particular emphasis on the role of youth in the election process, a topic that receives special emphasis in this report.

With the exception of the killing of two men in Viqueque and the burning of homes in Ermera, campaign-related violence was low. Some political violence rested upon long-standing divisions stimulated by historical conflicts over land, resources, or affiliations during the resistance against

Indonesian occupation (1975-1998). The low level of pre-election-related violence was possibly due to a more politically mature electorate, increased institutional emphasis on transparency, and the visible presence of foreign and Timorese police at every phase of the election process.

Personalities rather than party policies often predominated during the election campaign. Negative campaign practices, such as the use of incendiary political rhetoric, threatened to trigger more violence among political supporters and may have intimidated candidates and citizens from engaging in more vigorous debate.

On election day, Carter Center observers found that polling stations were very well organized and electoral workers carried out their responsibilities competently and professionally. Party agents and nonpartisan domestic observers were present in nearly all polling stations visited. Although counting procedures were revised at a late date following the presidential election held in April and May 2007 (the revision shifted counting from individual polling stations to 13 centralized district locations), they appeared to be well implemented. However, the considerations involving the security and transparency of the counting process require careful assessment before future elections.



All segments of Timor-Leste's population demographics were well represented among the voting population, with strong voter turnout by youth and women.

After results were tabulated, vague language in the constitution led to confusion over what was required for a party to form a Parliamentary majority and elect the prime minister, leading to a dispute among the parties in Parliament and violence among the respective parties' supporters. Although the Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (Fretilin) party was the plurality winner of the election, with 29 percent of the vote, they did not have enough votes to form a parliamentary majority. Three other parties formed an alliance and their combined seats created a parliamentary majority, leading to a conflict between Fretilin and the opposing coalition regarding who was able to appoint the prime minister. Eventually the dispute was resolved when President Ramos Horta appointed Xanana Gusmão prime minister.

Overall, the administration of these elections was very well executed, bearing testimony to the hard work of election officials and the determination of Timorese citizens to ensure their country remains on the democratic path chosen at independence.

Key recommendations of this report include:

Election law

- The multiple election laws should be reviewed for coherence and

consistency and ideally codified into a single election law.

- Any significant change in election law or key procedures should occur well in advance of elections, especially if it concerns key elements of election day.
- The election management bodies, CNE and STAE, should be staffed by personnel who act in an impartial, neutral, and transparent manner for the conduct of credible elections.
- To secure their independence from potential political interference, CNE and STAE should have independent budget line items approved by Parliament.

Voter registration

- The period for voter registration and effective public review of the provisional voter roll should be reviewed with consideration given to regular, periodic updating, either on an annual or a continuous basis.

Election campaign

- More security officers should be placed strategically at campaign rallies and in districts with reports of consistent violence to discourage conflict.
- All political parties should adhere to the published campaign schedule to avoid conflicts arising out of chance meetings between supporters of rival parties.
- Political party leaders should consider how their rhetoric affects the actions of their members and be held accountable for violating the code of conduct.
- District officials, church leaders, village leaders, and party leaders



should organize dialogues about peaceful prevention and resolution of disputes.

Election procedures

- Voter education should include greater information about the roles of the CNE and STAE.
- The electoral calendar should be revised to allow voting materials to be delivered to polling stations more than one day in advance of voting.
- Printed voter lists should be used at each polling station to safeguard against multiple voting and support the integrity of the vote.
- Vote counting should occur at polling stations immediately following the close of polls.
- More capacity building, technical skills, and resources will enable the Timorese to run future elections without the aid of the United Nations.

Specific recommendations for youth

- The president and Parliament should make a concerted effort to pass and implement youth-focused legislation, including:
 - Rural programs for youth;
 - Political literacy policy and programs;
 - Women's leadership programs;
 - Media programs for youth; and
 - Youth exchange programs.

The Carter Center in Timor-Leste

The Carter Center's history in Timor-Leste began in August 1999 when the Center monitored the historic public consultation and the Timorese chose

independence over special autonomy within Indonesia. The Center then returned to Timor-Leste to monitor the Constituent Assembly elections in August 2001, the subsequent constitution drafting process, and the presidential elections in April 2002.

Timor-Leste successfully completed three election cycles in 2007: a presidential election in April, a presidential runoff election in May, and parliamentary elections in June. In response to an invitation by CNE, The Carter Center opened a field office in Dili in early June 2007 to observe the parliamentary elections and deployed long-term and short-term observers (LTOs and STOs).¹

The Carter Center conducts election observation in accordance with the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observation adopted at the United Nations in 2005. The Carter Center assessed Timor-Leste's electoral process based on domestic legislation as well as international obligations and commitments.

¹ See appendices for delegation list and deployment plan.



HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Timor-Leste's political party differences are based on ideological, regional, historical, and individual leaders who gained personal notoriety during the resistance against Indonesian occupation, which began in 1975. Leaders arose from Timor's regions to participate in the guerilla war against Indonesian forces. Some were political activists, while others were farmers, students, diplomats, or sympathizers living abroad. Just as democratic politics can draw on such variations to produce diversity, the multiparty system, party campaigns, and even the election process itself can politicize unresolved sources of division among the population.

Timor-Leste's contemporary struggle began in 1974 when the area was released from Portuguese colonial control. In 1975, the Fretilin party, a leftist and anticolonial entity, fell into civil war against the pro-Portuguese members of the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT). The UDT opted for realignment with Portugal while the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (APODETI) pushed for union with the anti-communist state of Indonesia. War ensued between UDT and Fretilin resulting in the mass displacement of more than 50,000 Timorese. Virtually all of the key actors of the day were current or former members of Fretilin. Indonesia, in the meantime, grew increasingly alarmed by the prospect of a communist outpost on its border and began a program of

Brief History of Timor-Leste Before 1975

The nation of Timor-Leste, with an estimated population of 800,000, occupies approximately half of a small island off of the northwestern coast of Australia. The nation also includes the small enclave of Oecusse on the northwest coast of the island and the islands of Atauro and Jaco.

Timor-Leste's history of occupation began in the 16th century with the arrival of Portuguese traders who were chiefly interested in the island's sandalwood. A ship of Magellan's fleet was the first European vessel to visit the island on Jan. 26, 1522. By this time, Timor had been trading its sandalwood with merchants from China, Java, and Malacca for centuries. The Dutch arrived at the western half of the island in 1652. They began a struggle with the Portuguese for control of the island, which continued into the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1769, the Portuguese shifted their center of authority from Oecussi in the west to Dili in the east of the island.

The two nations signed a formal agreement in August 1916 that divided the island with its present-day borders. The Dutch maintained control of the western side, and the Portuguese maintained control of the eastern side, along with the small enclave of Oecussi in the west. Timor-Leste was briefly occupied by Japan during World War II.

When Indonesia became a legally independent state in 1949, the Dutch recognized the western half of the Timor island as a part of Indonesia, while the eastern side of the island remained a Portuguese colony until 1975.



infiltration, propaganda, and destabilization, into which it drew many of the new Timorese political organizations.

On Aug. 11, 1975, the UDT launched a military action against Fretilin. After about a week of solid UDT gains, Fretilin armed forces, calling themselves Falintil (*Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste*) struck back, under the command of Rogerio Lobato, then the highest ranking Timorese in the Portuguese army, who was able to persuade many of his fellow soldiers to join Fretilin ranks. Falintil was thus born not out of the struggle against Indonesia but as a party to a civil war. Wracked by starvation, disease, and fear, the intra-Timorese conflict carved divisions between families, communities, and parties. These tensions diminished somewhat when the Indonesian military arrived to occupy the country in 1975.

When the Indonesians invaded, Fretilin formed a shadow government in the mountains. Fretilin's fighting force was unified with its political body until Xanana Gusmão separated the two in 1987. During the early 1980s, Xanana made other gestures to leave the leftist roots of Fretilin when he approached the Catholic Church, the nobility, and ritual house leaders to strengthen the clandestine power of his increasingly inclusive, and secretive, movement. Weapons shipments, financial support, and intelligence flowed through conduits linked less by ideology than familial ties, youth groups, and the branches of the church committed to independence. Following the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre in which Indonesian forces killed 250

The 1974 military coup in Portugal sparked an increase in political activity in Timor-Leste, with Timorese dividing around the issue of independence. The Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), Timorese Popular Democratic Association (APODETI), the Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA), and the Association of Timorese Social Democrats (ASDT) emerged as key players. During this period, ASDT transformed itself into the Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (Fretilin). UDT favored a continued association with Portugal, while APODETI favored integration of Timor-Leste into Indonesia. These groups, along with KOTA, aligned themselves against Fretilin, which supported an independent Timor-Leste state.

Fighting broke out, and Fretilin won this brief conflict, establishing control of Dili in September 1975 and declaring Timor-Leste's independence from Portugal on Nov. 28, 1975. Francisco Xavier do Amaral was briefly appointed East Timor's president. Nine days later, on Dec. 7, 1975, Indonesian troops launched an invasion of East Timor. The East Timorese mounted a substantial resistance campaign relying on the military wing of Fretilin, the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (Falintil). The Indonesian military launched a brutal counter-insurgency strategy that included retaliation against civilians.

In 1976, Indonesia named East Timor its 27th province, despite Portugal's refusal to cede the right to govern the territory. Human rights organizations claim that during the Indonesian occupation as many as 200,000 East Timorese may have lost their lives to disease, famine, and Indonesian attacks, many of them within the first 10 years after the Indonesian invasion.

After four centuries of Portuguese rule, 24 years of Indonesian occupation, and two years of U.N. administration, Timor-Leste gained independence on May 20, 2002.



civilians, Timor's struggles attracted more international attention, and Xanana Gusmão, after nearly 10 years of a close relationship to the church and human rights community, was no longer referred to as a "communist affiliate."

The 1990s saw the integration of a large component of Timorese youth studying at universities throughout Indonesia into clandestine networks related to both Xanana's Falintil and the more political Fretilin. These student networks also facilitated contact with leaders of the Diplomatic Front such as Ramos Horta. The relative youth of Gusmão's clandestine supporters served him well in Timor-Leste, Indonesia, and among the international human rights community. They serve him still in his new party, the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT).

Meanwhile, the exile groups based in Mozambique and Angola became visible only after Timor-Leste's independence from Indonesia in 1999. The separation of Fretilin and Falintil in 1987 had profound implications for the political dynamics of post-conflict Timor-Leste. After 1987, Fretilin's party political leadership was concentrated in the diaspora, particularly with key central committee members based in Angola and Mozambique. Those who stayed in Falintil until the end were virtually all Xanana Gusmão supporters. After independence, this political divorce delineated a divide between the party and the military, Fretilin and Gusmão, reflecting the many years of geographical separation.

The distinctions between insiders and outsiders generated tension within the Fretilin party structure and Gusmão's presidency. On the one hand, Fretilin was believed to be controlled by the Mozambique group of leaders who spent most of the Indonesian occupation speaking Portuguese in Mozambique or Angola. On the other hand, it was widely believed that Xanana Gusmão's leadership was being defined by a small group of Australian-trained CNRT loyalists led by Asio Pereira and Ines Almeda. It was believed that this group was responsible for creating the gulf between Xanana and the battle-tested elite he had groomed in Indonesia and Timor-Leste during the 1980s and 1990s.

In fact, Gusmão's dependence on the Australian group for advice during the Australia-dominated phase of reconstruction under the United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor (UNTAET) was one of the reasons given to explain Fretilin's decision to leave the CNRT in 2000. For this reason, Fretilin was able to run as a political party independent of Xanana Gusmão. Ironically, after Fretilin won the elections in 2001, most of the anti-outsider sentiment directed at Gusmão's Australian clique in 1999 and 2000 then shifted to Mari Alkatiri's clique of Mozambique-trained loyalists. Alkatiri, an Arab Indonesian, and Anna Pessoa, a Timorese schooled in party affairs in Mozambique, embodied the same non-Timorese ethno-cultural elements that gave rise to so much of Fretilin's criticism of Gusmão's "Australia clique." Partly to avoid undue attention to the members of the diaspora, Fretilin chose to empower the



partisan—as opposed to historical—nature of the struggle. After separating itself from CNRT, Fretilin leadership pushed for a return to 1974 idealism as opposed to a more historical understanding of struggle against Indonesia.

The 1974 party plan under Fretilin was appealing because the clandestine leadership had not come up with their own plans for political and economic development. The clandestine leadership of the late 1980s and 1990s was skilled at activism but lacked a clear policy program after independence was achieved. Meanwhile, the 1974 goals of the Fretilin party called for universal health care, free education, and a populist ideology that would prioritize Timorese peasantry over the Lusophone elite.

Xanana’s activism in the 1980s distanced itself from the leftist-populist aspects of the 1974 agenda in a bid to integrate the church, the nobility, and the other parties (e.g., UDT, APODETI) into the independence movement (which he accomplished in 1983).

Broadly scattered by these different tensions (e.g., East-West, “insider”/“outsider,” migrant/non-migrant, Indonesia-educated/Lusophone), Timor-Leste’s political actors march to mixed beats.

2007 Presidential Elections

The Carter Center did not observe the 2007 presidential elections, choosing to focus its efforts on the subsequent parliamentary elections on June 30, 2007. On April 9 and May 9, 2007,

Timorese voters went to the polls to elect a new president. In the runoff election, Nobel Peace Laureate José Ramos-Horta won 70 percent of the vote to be elected president of Timor-Leste. Although there were minor inconsistencies in vote counting and polling procedures, the international observer community deemed that both rounds produced a clear and credible result through a fair electoral process.

Newly formed electoral institutions—CNE and STAE—administered the elections for the first time. Eight candidates entered the race to replace President Xanana Gusmão, who chose not to run for re-election. While the president has limited governing power under the constitution, the position is revered as a symbol of national unity.

Both rounds of elections saw great participation by Timorese citizens as polling staff, party agents, and domestic observers who worked long hours with patience and dedication. In particular, the Coalition for Monitoring the General Elections (KOME), a domestic observation group, provided complete national coverage by deploying more than 1,000 observers to monitor voting.

April 9 Presidential Election

In the first round of presidential elections on April 9, no candidate won more than 50 percent of the vote required to secure the presidency. Francisco Guterres “Lu Olo,” leader of the majority Fretilin party, won 27.89 percent, followed by Prime Minister José Ramos Horta, who ran as an independent and garnered 21.81 percent of the vote. Fernando de Araujo Lasama, the leader



of the Democratic Party (PD), received 19.18 percent of the vote. The top two candidates, Guterres and Ramos Horta, secured spots in the runoff election on May 9.

While voting was mostly peaceful, with high voter turnout (80 percent of registered voters), observers identified several areas for improvement. The most important procedural development was that Parliament amended counting procedures two weeks before the election and finalized polling and counting regulations only one week before the elections.

May 9 Presidential Runoff Election

In the peaceful runoff election, 70 percent of Timorese voters chose José Ramos Horta to be their new president, while Guterres won 30 percent of the vote. International and national observer groups declared the election credible and noted that the technical aspects of the election had improved from the first round of voting.

Both the European Union (EU) mission and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) lamented a campaign period saturated with unsubstantiated accusations, insults, and inflammatory rhetoric that emphasized divisions in a country in need of unity. Discussion and debate about national policy were largely absent from the campaigns. Fortunately, candidates' negative campaigning did not greatly aggravate tensions among communities nor spark violence on election day.

Observers also noted a need for better communication and cooperation between the CNE and STAE. The roles of the institutions need to be more clearly defined in law so as not to provoke disputes over areas of jurisdiction. The runoff election saw trust between the two institutions deteriorate as disagreements were aired through media coverage instead of through direct conversation.



ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK

Election Management

Elections in Timor-Leste are regulated by two bodies, the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE) and the National Election Commission (CNE). In August 2006, in response to a request from President Xanana Gusmão, the U.N. Security Council agreed to provide logistical assistance to both STAE and CNE during the 2007 elections. However, STAE and CNE domestic staff were, ultimately, in charge of the electoral process at the national level for the first time since authority was transferred from United Nations to Timor-Leste officials in 2002.

Although Timor-Leste's election laws envision a STAE and CNE that work together during the elections process, the two bodies have distinct roles and different mandates. STAE is an organ of the national government and falls under the authority of the Ministry of State Administration. It is tasked with regulating the technical and administrative aspects of an election, including voter registration, voter and civic education, and the maintenance of voter statistics. During the 2007 parliamentary elections, STAE was also responsible for selecting polling sites, establishing polling stations, and publishing the electoral calendar.

The CNE is an independent agency responsible for regulation and oversight of elections. Specifically, CNE ensures the transparency and fairness of voter

registration and electoral operations. It is also the body that regulates electoral offenses. As part of its duties, CNE receives and responds to official complaints filed by voters or political party agents. Finally, it is responsible for tabulating, certifying, and announcing national election results. Its 15 members are appointed to serve six-year terms by various governmental and civil society organizations.

The technical capacity and capabilities of both STAE and CNE were untested in the period leading up to the 2007 parliamentary elections. Not only did STAE and CNE staff have little experience running a national election, they also had to adapt to last-minute changes in the election law.

Electoral Law

The original law on the election of the national Parliament was passed on Dec. 28, 2006, and provided universal suffrage for all Timorese citizens over the age of 17.² It fixed the size of the Parliament at 65 members and created a single national constituency, with representatives to be chosen from party lists. Political parties were allocated seats proportionally according to the D'Hondt method, with a three percent threshold mandated in order for a party to qualify for representation.³ The law also included a provision that required parties to have one woman per every group of four candidates on its list.

² Law No. 6/2006.

³ 1st Amendment of Law No. 6/2006, Law No. 06/2007, Article 2.



A complaints process was instituted that allowed aggrieved voters or party agents to appeal to a team of CNE lawyers in the national capital. The law also established procedures for resolving disputes at the polling-station level on election day. Under the complaints procedures described in the election law, any registered voter or party agent who witnessed a violation or incident was allowed to lodge a complaint with CNE. During the campaign period, complaints could be registered for unfair access to media, bias by public agencies, vote buying, and intimidation.

Election day complaints were made orally to polling station officials and then in writing to CNE if they could not be resolved. Complaints on election day were permitted for procedural errors and also for issues such as interference with the voting process, improper campaigning, and attempts to influence voters. By law, CNE was required to deal with any complaint that could have affected election results, classify complaints by seriousness, and, finally, communicate the result of their decision to the complainant.

Administrative Districts

East Timor is divided into 13 administrative districts (total population in parentheses):

1. Lautém (52,100)
2. Baucau (97,600)
3. Viqueque (59,600)
4. Manatuto (34,900)
5. Dili (179,600)
6. Aileu (32,500)
7. Manufahi (37,200)
8. Liquiçá (54,800)

9. Ermera (89,500)
10. Ainaro (44,100)
11. Bobonaro (90,700)
12. Cova-Lima (63,900)
13. Oecussi-Ambeno (54,500)

The districts are subdivided into 65 sub-districts and 2,336 towns, villages, and hamlets. CNE established a total of 708 polling stations throughout the country.

Voter Registration

Following the presidential election, STAE conducted a brief voter registration update from May 21 to 25, exhibited voter lists from May 29 to June 4, and allowed one week for complaints, June 5 to 11. A total of 5,125 new voters were registered during this period, bringing the number of Timorese eligible to vote in the parliamentary election to 529,198, of whom 48.7 percent were female.

Candidate Nomination

The election law permitted parties to form coalitions for electoral purposes, and two coalitions were declared before the May 1 registration deadline. The deadline for parties to submit their lists of candidates and alternates was May 11.

Late Electoral Reform: Counting and Tabulation

In late May, barely a month before election day, the national Parliament passed an amendment to the election law. The most significant change was a procedural one: counting of ballots, which had been done at polling stations during both rounds of the presidential election, was moved to more centralized offices in each of Timor-Leste's 13 districts. Supporters of the change



argued that it would enhance the ability of local and U.N. police to provide adequate security during the counting process and that it would also reduce the potential for intimidation because the votes of an individual polling station would not be known.

However, the amendment also raised concerns about the transparency of the new counting procedure and about the ability of STAE and CNE to adequately

train their staff and conduct the appropriate voter education programs in time for the election. Domestic and international critics worried that voters would not understand why counting was being moved to district offices and questioned why a procedure that had worked well during the presidential election was being changed at the last minute. The amendment also presented new logistical challenges related to the security and transport of ballots.



POLITICAL PARTIES

When Timorese went to the polls on June 30, 2007, they cast their vote for one of fourteen parties on the ballot. No one party was expected to win a majority in the election, and pre-election negotiations resulted in two coalitions. The CNRT, ASDT/PSD, and PD stood to gain votes from former supporters of the ruling party, Fretilin, but no other party had enough support to win more than 5 percent of the vote. Below is a brief description of the main political parties in the parliamentary elections.

Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (Fretilin)

Founded in 1974 as a pro-independence revolutionary front, Fretilin was the largest party in the country. Throughout the Indonesian occupation members of Fretilin formed the major part of the resistance movement both within the territory and among the Timorese diaspora, a legacy that enabled the party to attract widespread support in elections since 2001. Party leaders President Francisco Gutierrez “Lu-Olo” and Secretary General Mari Alkatiri both claimed that the Fretilin government’s legitimacy was not just historical but had also been earned democratically and constitutionally.

The party’s large rural and urban following ensured that the party won 55 out of 88 seats in the 2001 elections, and in the 2005 local elections, Fretilin gained almost 60 percent of votes. Fretilin was the only party that fielded candidates for almost all village council positions across the country. The

eastern region, particularly Baucau and the capital, Dili, remained a strong support base of Fretilin, with opposition parties claiming to have gained more support in western districts.

Fretilin was the best-organized party, with party leaders actively involved in village government in almost every hamlet, village, subdistrict, and district of the country. Fretilin leadership under Lu Olu and Mari Alkatiri formally stated that they did not wish to form coalitions. Instead, they told The Carter Center that they would integrate other party members into the Fretilin fold if they joined their party’s interests. Fretilin officials said, however, that they were capable of practical gestures when or if a more conciliatory coalition appeared to be the only option. Otherwise, other parties would have to convert to Fretilin and not merely align their party to its interests in Parliament.

National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste (CNRT)

The CNRT is led by Xanana Gusmão and Dionysius Babu with a platform oriented to the needs of youth, regular institutional subsidies for impoverished families, and work programs to stimulate enterprises among Timorese. CNRT enjoys support throughout the country with considerable support in Dili. CNRT did not win many districts in “Fretilin country” such as Baucau, Viqueque, or Los Palos.

Gusmão proposed a platform for job creation and steady dispersal of oil



revenues to jump-start Timor-Leste's economy. In contrast to blanket aid packages that rarely work in the long term, Gusmão said that job creation relied on useful bait-and-tackle capacity-building gestures rather than "fish" or cash-in-hand gifts.

Democratic Party (PD)

Founded in June 2001, just a few months before the Aug. 30 Constituent Assembly elections, PD became the second largest party in the country, gaining almost nine percent of the popular vote. Some of the party's 2001 success was drawn from the large network of youth and former students aligned to the pro-independence student organization in Indonesia, Resistencia Nacional Estudantil de Timor-Leste (RENETIL), which was led by then imprisoned Fernando "La Sama" Araujo. PD participated in the 2005 local elections, gaining almost 11 percent of the total votes cast across the county. PD held seven seats in the National Parliament, but like the party presidents of PSD and UDT, PD's "La Sama" chose not to lead the party's parliamentary bench, preferring to concentrate instead on building the party's grassroots support.

Very much an activist organization, PD leaders and representatives at the district level are mostly young former members of the clandestine movement. Most of these leaders were educated in Indonesia and had not been accommodated by the Fretilin government. During the 2006 crisis, PD was identified as a Western or *Loromono* party. The rebel military police head, Alfredo Renaldo, also identified with PD and the church as

counter to the "communist sympathizers" in Fretilin.

PD officials were critical of Fretilin's exclusivist approach to political decision making and advocated a more integrated approach through regular seminars with Timor's peasantry and recipients of government programs.

Association of Timorese Social Democrats (ASDT)

ASDT was originally established in Dili in August 1974 but within one month changed itself into Fretilin. In 2001, ASDT reappeared on the political scene under the leadership of the first president of Fretilin and 1975 Timorese independence leader Francisco Xavier do Amaral. ASDT has strong support in the *Mambae*-speaking areas of central Timor-Leste (Ainaro, Aileu, Manufahi, and Manatuto), particularly in the areas close to Amaral's home village of Turiscai.

ASDT won six seats in the 2001 Constituent Assembly election and Amaral stood against Xanana Gusmão in the 2002 presidential election. ASDT was the closest parliamentary ally of Fretilin, and Amaral was selected to be the deputy president of the Parliament.

Social Democratic Party (PSD)

Established in 2000 as an alternative to Fretilin and UDT, PSD is a centrist party, which, along with PD and ASDT, forms the major opposition to Fretilin. PSD won six seats in the 2001 national Parliament. The party is led by Mario Carrascalao, who was a founder of UDT in 1974 and then served as the governor of Timor-Leste during the Indonesian



occupation. PSD support comes from Baucau, Dili, and former UDT strongholds in districts such as Ermera.

PSD first joined ASDT in a coalition followed by the July 6, 2007, coalition with CNRT and PD to win a ruling majority in Parliament. As the former

founder of Fretilin, Franscisco do Amaral identified with the party leaders as fellow patriots of Timor-Leste. However, he saw real weaknesses in Fretilin's political performance, which he believed could be corrected through cooperative labor of many parties, regions, and political backgrounds.



PRE-ELECTION OBSERVATION

The Carter Center was active during Timor-Leste's path to independence by observing the 1999 independence vote, the subsequent 2001 Constituent Assembly, and the 2002 presidential vote.⁴ During an early 2007 pre-election assessment mission conducted by the Center, Timorese leaders and international representatives noted the importance of previous Carter Center involvement in Timor-Leste's transition to independence and reaffirmed a desire for the presence of international observers for the June parliamentary elections.⁵ Their interest in receiving international election observers was underscored by the continuing challenges facing Timor-Leste's democratization.

One year earlier, in 2006, Timor-Leste and its new polity were in dire straits. In April 2006, grave circumstances divided Timor-Leste's military, police, and political elite. This political conflict took on social dimensions when members of the military from the western part of the country fought with members of the eastern part due to perceived favoritism shown to Fretilin members of the armed forces from eastern parts of Timor-Leste. The main conflict took place in the capital city of Dili, where gangs and youth groups participated in violence against rival groups. Most of these rivalries occurred between long-standing and recent migrant youth groups.

Nevertheless, new migrants and old villagers also identified with regional origins pitting East against West, village against village, and party against party. For instance, the Fretilin party was identified with the East (*Lorosae*) while more "youthful" parties such as PD were considered to have support bases in the West (*Loromono*). Nevertheless, such divisions also appear to have been an inexact means to either impose highly localized ambitions at the village level (e.g., wreak vengeance on a weaker rival) or satisfy the bidding of a powerful political patron.

The violence in 2006 displaced thousands of Timorese, burned hundreds of homes, and forced Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri from office. Against this background, the 2007 elections were seen to be a test of Timor-Leste's viability as a democratic country. In addition to pessimism regarding the country's ability to rule itself, massive inward migration, food shortages, high unemployment, and an especially young and poorly educated population added to burdens of this struggling country.

The Carter Center opened a field office in Dili on June 3 and deployed eight long-term observers (LTOs) to monitor the pre-election environment. They were joined by an additional number of short-term observers (STOs) on June 27, including delegation leaders Jeff Carter and Democracy Program Associate Director David Pottie.

⁴ See various public reports on this period at www.cartercenter.org.

⁵ See appendices for copy of CNE invitation letter to international observers.



Carter Center Long-Term Observers

The LTOs were selected based upon their knowledge and experience in Timor-Leste as well as their language skills (including Bahasa Indonesia, Tetum, or Portuguese, with some observers who spoke two of the three languages). Several observers had also participated in previous Carter Center election observation missions, providing the invaluable opportunity for the Center to sustain relationships with civil society and political leaders in local communities.

During the campaign period, LTOs were deployed in teams of two to 12 of 13 districts in Timor-Leste, the exception being the enclave of Oecussi in West Timor. On election day, delegates observed voting in 56 polling stations in seven districts (Lautém, Bobonaro, Ermera, Viqueque, Liquiçá, Dili, and Manatuto). While the territory's small size was an advantage and enabled teams to visit many districts and subdistricts each week, limited telecommunications capacity, the mountainous terrain, and poor road conditions presented operational challenges.

Once deployed, LTOs met with STAE and CNE district administrators, representatives from the United Nations Police (UNPol) and Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL), domestic and international observers, local political party leaders, community leaders, and the public. Observers were to assess the overall administration of the election process, the security climate and potential for conflict, voter education activities, and citizens' knowledge of the electoral process.

In the context of the political divisions and violence of 2006, the Center also established two specific monitoring priorities beyond operational issues: assess the openness of the campaign period and evaluate the role of youth in the political and electoral process. Observers looked for evidence that the major stakeholders were committed to ensuring a level playing field in which all parties and candidates had a reasonably equitable opportunity to transmit their message to the electorate. With the focus on Timor's growing youth population, the Center analyzed how youth were mobilized and what motivated their participation in elections and politics.

Campaign Period

The official campaign period for the parliamentary elections (May 29–June 27) was largely peaceful, with intermittent occurrences of injuries and property damage but few incidents of lethal violence. Conflict was concentrated mostly in Viqueque, Baucau, and Ermera and was absent from Ainaro, Aileu, and Cova Lima.

The Center's LTOs reported that political disputes often had roots in longstanding disagreements over land, resources, or past political affiliations. It was not always easy to distinguish electoral conflicts from pre-existing community divisions, and many older disputes were cloaked in present politics. During the campaign period, careless insults and accusations by party leaders may have aggravated these existing divisions.



Political parties tried to prevent the recurrence of the negative campaigning prevalent during the presidential elections by ratifying a political party accord (code of conduct) prior to the start of the campaign period. The accord condemned electoral violence and intimidation and committed parties to resolving disputes through dialogue. It also proclaimed parties' belief in democratic principles such as transparency, inclusion, participation, and accountability. While the political parties' initiative to create peaceful campaign conditions was welcomed, sporadic incidents of violence in the first week of campaigning prompted questions about the effective implementation of the accord.

Two lethal incidents occurred during the first week of the campaign in Viqueque. The first episode occurred on June 3 during a campaign speech by CNRT leader Xanana Gusmão. CNRT supporter Afonso da Silva died after clashing with a local policeman and an alleged Fretilin supporter. Two days later, local police fired on a group of youth throwing stones at Gusmão's passing vehicle, resulting in another death and an injury. These events generated distrust and uncertainty that may have discouraged some Timorese from participating more fully in the electoral campaign.

In another serious incident, house burnings in subdistrict Hatiola B (Ermera district) displaced more than 60 families in May and resulted in a lower voter turnout in the presidential election compared to the national average. Citizens remaining in the village said

they were afraid to vote in the parliamentary elections. In an attempt to restore voter confidence, district administrators, STAE and CNE officials, party members, church leaders, and house-burning victims convened a dialogue on June 7. Attendees agreed to maintain a peaceful and secure environment, especially for their children who had stopped attending school due to the violence.

CNE attentiveness to irregularities is illustrated by a case of political intimidation in Lautém. A *chefe de suco* (village chief) in the *suco* of Home in Los Palos refused to allow parties other than Fretilin to campaign in his area. The CNE met with the *chefe de suco*, political parties, and U.N. security officers to resolve the issue peacefully. The *chefe de suco* signed an agreement not to obstruct campaigns by other parties, but refused to guarantee their security in the *suco*. The CNE monitored the situation for the rest of the campaign and did not report additional problems.

During the weeks following these attacks, the security situation throughout the country stabilized. A U.N. spokesperson described the atmosphere of the second week of campaigning as calm, and Carter Center LTOs reported that the U.N. police did not expect security issues to disrupt voting. For the most part, parties tended to conduct more door-to-door campaigns than large rallies, which may have helped reduce conflicts. However, rallies with large crowds, inflammatory speeches, and unscheduled campaigning all contributed



to violent confrontations in the first and last weeks of the campaign period.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and Belun, a Timorese nongovernmental organization (NGO), reported that in the two weeks before the elections, 35 people were wounded by election violence, down from 37 in the previous two weeks.⁶ Incidents were reported in all districts except Manufahi, with Baucau and Ermera having the most incidents—seven each. In all, monitors verified 45 incidents, with almost a quarter of these occurring on the last day of campaigning. Political party supporters were the ones most often involved in such violence, both as perpetrators and victims. The IFES/Belun report states that many of these incidents could have been prevented if parties had followed the political party code of conduct and the calendar for campaigns. The most common type of election-related violence was property damage, followed by physical harm.

Limited public finance was available for the campaigns. Political parties received \$30,000 and coalitions \$45,000 each. There were no campaign expenditure ceilings, and political organizations could spend an unlimited amount of money from individual donations or inheritances except as prohibited in the political party law (e.g., sources such as state companies, foreign governments or companies, and others).⁷

Election Preparations

Carter Center observers found CNE and STAE staff to be generally well prepared for the parliamentary elections. After administering two rounds of voting in the presidential elections, staff were adept at conducting voter education and familiar with polling-day procedures. Security forces also made appropriate preparations to ensure voter safety on election day. The greatest concerns surfaced around the revised counting procedures and heavy rains in late June that prevented access to villages in Manufahi, Ainaro, Viqueque, Lautém, and Cova Lima.

On May 16, Parliament passed an amendment to Law No 6/2006 on the Election of the National Parliament, which established that votes would be counted at a district tabulation center rather than at each polling station as was the procedure for the presidential elections. The revision of the counting procedures was controversial and required extensive retraining of polling staff, party agents, and domestic and international observers as well as voter education campaigns to inform citizens of the change. Supporters of the amendment argued that the centralized counting would increase security by enabling a concentrated presence of UNPol and PNTL officers.

U.N. resources and logistical support were essential to implementing this change in counting location and procedures. With that caveat and immediately following the conclusion of the presidential elections, CNE and STAE educators began extra training for polling staff and civic educators

⁶ IFES/Belun, “EVER Project Warns of Potential for New Violence,” July 17, 2007

⁷ Sec. 22, Law No 3/2004 on Political Parties.



regarding the new counting procedures. STAE, United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), local brigades, and NGOs conducted voter education that focused on explaining polling and counting procedures in hope of reducing the number of invalid votes. Despite these efforts, election staff told Carter Center observers that they still worried that many citizens were unaware of the change and would protest the transport of ballot boxes to district count centers.

In contrast to reports received about the presidential elections, Center observers reported that CNE and STAE cooperated well during the lead-up to the parliamentary elections. Improved relations between the two electoral bodies contributed to organized and professional election preparations. CNE and STAE also collaborated well with PNTL and the United Nations to ensure a safe polling environment and successful distribution of voting materials. In Viqueque, STAE officials who initially worried that election material would not be distributed before the elections were able to deliver supplies a day earlier than scheduled.

Carter Center observers also noted the security preparations undertaken by UNPol, PNTL, and International Security Forces (ISF) to ensure a safe voting environment. Assigning risk levels to polling stations was an effective way to prioritize the deployment of security officers to the areas with the greatest potential for conflict.

Heavy rainfall in Manufahi, Ainaro, Viqueque, Lautém, and Cova Lima in the week before voting presented unforeseen logistical challenges and strained scarce resources. Election officials and the United Nations responded as efficiently as their limited resources allowed to deliver voting materials to polling centers isolated by collapsed bridges and impassable roads. Limited helicopter assistance delayed the arrival of materials at six polling stations in Viqueque. Fortunately the rain ceased before the election, resolving the question of how to transport ballot boxes to district counting centers should more roads become impassable.

In the days immediately prior to the election, the Carter Center leadership delegation, led by David Pottie and Jeff Carter, met with the leaders of all the major parties, including Fretilin Secretary-General Marí Alkatiri, CNRT President Xanana Gusmão, PD President Fernando Araújo La Sama, and ASDT and PSD leaders Xavier do Amaral and Mario Viegas Carrascaloa, respectively.

Additionally, the team met with President José Ramos Horta and President of Parliament Francisco Guterres Lu Olo. Among international organizations, Carter Center team members conducted meetings with U.N. Chief Electoral Officer Steven Wagenseil, as well as leaders of the EU international election observation mission, IFES, and the International Republican Institute (IRI).



YOUTH AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

One of the main objectives of the Center's observation mission was to focus on the political participation of youth, as they remain a marginalized group in political processes. This is a particularly salient issue since 75 percent of Timor-Leste's population is under the age of 30. An increase in youth migration to cities has been accompanied by a rise in violence, most notably during the 2006 crisis. Many of the tensions that Timor-Leste has experienced since independence can be traced to youth disenchantment with the status quo or to conflicts between youth gangs or martial arts groups that cultivate and reinforce competing identities.

The Center observed that youth played a very important role as active campaigners, voters, and election workers in the implementation of the parliamentary election, which is a positive sign for the establishment of a politically active civil society. However, further work needs to be done in the areas of civic education for youth to strengthen their participation in higher level decision-making arenas.

Definition of Youth

Youth is generally defined as the transitional phase between the dependency of childhood and the independent period of adulthood. The Secretary of State for Youth and Sport in Timor-Leste defines youth within the age range of 12-30. By World Bank estimates, this group consists of 34 percent of the total population of Timor-

Leste and the percentage is increasing,⁸ making youth key to the future of Timor-Leste's development.

There are many divisions and groupings within Timorese youth. According to circumstances, youth in Timor-Leste may identify specifically with their neighborhood, broadly as a rural migrant or urban dweller, or generally as a *Loromono* (from the West of the country) or *Lorosae* (from the East). Moreover, the ability to participate in politics is another marker of generational identity.

An understanding of youth in the Timorese context thus goes beyond categories of age. Indigenous categories include *foin sae* and *klosan*, both referring to unmarried young people. *Juventude* refers to a collective group of young people. The term *Geracão Foun* (literally, "young generation") became a popular term of identification after independence. Rather than a strict biological category, *Geracão Foun* pertains to certain collective historical and cultural experiences that cannot be ignored in formulating a comprehensive understanding of young Timorese. Youth who experienced the Indonesian occupation and participated in the resistance identify themselves as *Geracão Foun*, although now they tend to be the elders of the youth. Members of *Geracão Foun* are engaged in current politics and lead youth organizations.

⁸ Timor-Leste Youth Social Analysis Report. World Bank. 2005.



For example, the head of the Democratic Party is Fernando La Sama, the former leader of a pro-independence student organization in Indonesia, RENETIL.

New youth are generally considered to be 15-24 years old, and involved in diverse social organizations, from religious groups to martial arts groups to political parties. These groups can provide their members with security, community, identity, and activity. Some groups are formed specifically to promote peace and unity or to resolve conflicts, and others to play sports or practice martial arts.

The generational definition highlighted in the indigenous category of *Geracão Foun* includes processes of education, colonialism, and linguistic capabilities. This is in contrast to that of members of the Portuguese-speaking generation who have had particular historical experiences leading to a different world view, conceptions of political processes, and notions of leadership and of the involvement of young people. Experiences under the 25-year rule of the Indonesian New Order, its use of Indonesian languages and subcultures (rather than Portuguese), as well as the clandestine struggle, all contribute to the identity of “youth” in Timor-Leste today. Even for those younger members who did not experience the clandestine movement directly, these historical experiences remain an important reference point in formulating an identity. Moreover, the systematic disenfranchisement of the youth since independence strengthened the notion of a “young generation.”

High numbers of youth are concentrated in urban areas, particularly from the age group of 15-19 year olds, reflecting schooling needs. It also reflects the search for a modern future for themselves and Timor-Leste. Better job prospects are in urban areas, since government centers and private sectors are located in major towns and the capital. Young people are also remaining in urban areas and there are little, if any, trends of urban-rural migration. Young men also outnumber young women in the urban areas.

The decision to make Portuguese one of the official languages (Tetum is the other) has alienated youth and rural populations from government affairs. The constitution and government documents are written in Portuguese, and official government business is conducted in Portuguese. Youth who grew up under Indonesian occupation learned to speak Indonesia Bahasa in school and studied at Indonesian universities. In contrast, most of the current government leaders were raised during Portuguese colonial rule, speak Portuguese, and never learned Indonesia Bahasa. Only 11 percent of Timorese under the age of 25 and only one-fourth of adults ages 35-50 speak Portuguese.

Youth Politicization

In addition to the more recent dynamics of youth inward migration, youth politicization has been influenced by the resistance to Indonesian occupation.

The primary youth organization in the Timorese resistance movement was Organização Popular da Juventude de Loriko Assuwain de Timor-Leste



(OPJLATIL), a youth wing of the new political movement established by Xanana Gusmão after it was decided that Fretilin (political wing) and Falintil (military wing) would be separate entities within the resistance movement.

OPJLATIL was the youth component responsible for establishing a clandestine structure capable of linking students studying in Java and youth activists in Timor-Leste and building logistics networks between the two (to ferry such things as medical supplies, ammunition, etc). As Gusmão broke these groups down into clandestine cell structures their roles diversified. For example, OPJLATIL was formed to run demonstrations and became subordinate to Falintil and was regularly used to support their soldiers in the mountains. Meanwhile, another youth organization, the Organization of Youngsters and Students of East Timor (OJETIL), served as a group subordinate to Fretilin's political front and was divorced from the military resistance. When the Maputu group of Fretilin exiles returned from Mozambique in 1999, they used former OJETIL youth to recompose Fretilin's support network.

After the 1999 referendum, OPJATIL sided with Xanana, not Falintil, and, in the 2001 election, became more closely identified with the Democratic Party (PD). For this reason, PD is full of younger (28-to-40-year-olds), Indonesia-educated Timorese very much steeped in the language of activist politics and strategy. They learned these strategies and tactics while working for OPJATIL during the 1990s when there was one clear goal: independence. OJETIL was

different in this regard. It was a pro-Fretilin grouping that saw independence as one step in a long set of progressive steps toward state formation.

As noted above, the youth of Dili gained particular notoriety in April 2006 for their involvement in violence that killed 35 people and displaced 150,000. Violence between military factions triggered the involvement of youth martial arts groups and served to animate east-west tensions as a divisive factor among these already alienated youth. Western soldiers claimed that eastern soldiers received preferential treatment and each faction mobilized support from youth groups, who demonstrated with soldiers in Dili. As the conflict escalated, youth burned buildings, looted stores, and fought with one another. The perpetrators of the violence were mostly young men living in Dili who were particularly susceptible to political manipulation for the reasons described above.

Unemployment, poverty, poor education, and lack of career advancement opportunities are problems throughout Timor-Leste, yet the scale and organization of the violence in 2006 was seen only in the capital city of Dili. Due to internal migration and the expanding population of youth in Dili, a broad generational gap emerged between Dili's political elders and its young population. Although the government subsequently established a Ministry for Sport and Youth Affairs, by the 2007 elections it was not yet a functioning institution, and its ability to develop useful youth programs was untested.



Inward Migration

One of the primary reasons given for a high incidence of youth-on-youth violence is the tension felt between recent migrant youth and long-term migrants or established youth communities. Youth are now the largest migrant community in Dili, and most migrate without their parents. According to the 2004 census, youth aged 15-34 account for 34 percent of the population (43 percent in Dili). More than half of these youth migrated to Dili between 2002 and 2004.

While youth can join groups easily, they have a much harder time finding work. In Dili, 60 percent of 15-to-19-year-olds and 50 percent of 20-to-24-year-olds are unemployed.

When youth migrate, they tend to seek out kin or ethnic peers from their region, village, or extended families living in Dili. According to the Hak Foundation, new migrants relocated to empty housing units abandoned by Indonesian government employees stationed in Dili prior to independence. Because these homes have no fixed ownership, they are subject to rival claims in which resident youth fight with migrants over squatting rights. Local youth fought with these migrants in areas such as Kampung Alor, Fatuhada, Hudi Laran, and Villa Verde Mata Duru of Dili. There are very few conflicts, even between politically opposed residents, in long-standing residential communities.

It is difficult to credit Dili's internal migration entirely with causing the sudden upsurge in violence since Dili has always had high levels of internal

migration, but the very young age of migrants and massive increase in their number exacerbated the situation. To make matters worse, after the number of U.N. employees diminished in 2001-2002, service sector labor opportunities also diminished drastically. High gasoline prices, marked inflation, and a decrease in cash flow for young labor resulted in the relative absence of organized, non-village-based employment.

The primary means that youth have to meet their peers is through involvement in village security activities, martial arts clubs, or mystical organizations. In these groups, young men meet well-connected men with positions in governmental bodies, political parties, and NGOs. Regular communication between institutional workers and unemployed migrants is possible in these clubs and, in times of political insecurity, becomes a source of community-based support. Within these youth clubs, leaders are often ages 35-50 with access to security jobs at nightclubs and the like. They educate young cadres in the political value of having turf, gangs, or security groups to rely on.

Political Background of Youth Leaders

Many of the youth leaders in their 30s were once members of different clandestine or Indonesian military-affiliated youth groups. These groups, although no longer functioning, created a style of thinking, organization, and interpreting political action that allowed for broad variations and responses to different political scenarios. These former clandestine leaders differed



dramatically from the Fretilin party leaders who tend to take a more measured and cautious approach to political action. Fretilin party leaders act to strengthen the party, fortify its economic and political interests, and protect it from criticism. These two different styles of thinking rest in two different periods (pre- and post-clandestine movement) and two different generations (the elder Fretilin functionaries and younger Indonesia-trained youth).

Some individual youth leaders, such as Joao da Silva—alias “Choque” (Punch)—have varied credentials, with a background in the clandestine movement, a mystical sect, and various political party links. People such as Choque are believed to be useful for their ability to mobilize youth without having any role in defining the ideological basis for any one movement.

In 2006, a new generation of neighborhood-level operators tended to act more like Choque than loyalists to any single cause. In this context, it is difficult to identify loyalties, much less to pit them against each other. Conflict occurred in areas with high levels of migrants in 1999 but it also erupted in areas with both residential and new migrants. Nevertheless, residential status (new versus old) tended to be a major source of divisiveness. Most of the violence occurred in the new Dili neighborhoods of Fatu Hada, Delta (an area developed during the late Indonesian period), Ai Mutin (a village in Fatu Lada), and Kampung Baru (in the Delta Komoro area). Most of the youth gangs in these areas were

organized or controlled by neighborhood-level operators. Sources at the scene of the violence in Osindo were quoted as saying that they saw a coordinator moving through the area.

East-West Political Regionalism

Youth divisions became more pronounced when east-west divisions within the armed forces were highlighted by members fired from the Timor-Leste Defense Force (F-DTL). These members complained that *Lorosae* (eastern section of Timor) soldiers were given preferential treatment while the *Loromono* (western section of Timor) were discriminated against. The *Loromono* camp argued that they suffered discrimination because the F-FDTL forces had experienced full participation of *Lorosae* in Fretilin’s historical struggle, while the western areas were not as heavily integrated during the Indonesian period. Once the F-FDTL and police acquired these east-west divisions, they compounded the Dili insider/outsider tensions. Ongoing inter-neighborhood conflicts, compounded by the political and military divisions, thus took on regional divisions as an overlay on otherwise parochial or localized concerns of Dili.

The Timor-Leste government was in an even more difficult position. With the security forces divided along regional lines, any effort to quell the 2006 violence in Dili or arrest perpetrators would be perceived as a political—not simply law enforcement—gesture. In this context, the government had no choice but to request assistance from a third party. On May 3, 2006, the government invited the Australians and



the United Nations to play a police role in the conflict.

Youth and the 2007 Elections

The Carter Center found that youth played an important and largely positive role in the 2007 parliamentary elections. They were most visible in their roles administering the election and campaigning for political parties. Young people's contributions to the success of the elections contrasts with the image of a violent youth that the 2006 crisis propagates and is a prime example of how this sector can contribute to democratic development in Timor-Leste.

Political parties employed a number of tactics to mobilize young people and stir up greater support for their party. They used youth to create enthusiasm by sending them on convoys to rallies at district centers. Parties attracted less-involved youth by hiring popular rock bands to play at rallies or paying them to plaster the city with posters.

Fretilin and PD worked closely with the former student groups and former clandestine cells to organize campaigns and inform other young people about the elections. In particular, PD drew on the support of former student groups from the Indonesian resistance movement, IMPETTU and RENETIL. Fretilin mobilized former clandestine cells into its youth group, OJETIL.

Carter Center observers noted examples where youth conducted or participated in voter education. In Bobonaro, a UNV worked with kids to create a civic education play, which was recorded and broadcast on the radio. When one voter

education session in Aileu attracted mostly citizens under the voting age, STAE officials used the youth to inform their parents about voting procedures.

Few martial arts groups were officially aligned with political parties, but they could often be mobilized around parties' needs. Martial arts groups would participate in a rally or hang posters, but these actions did not necessarily translate into loyal voters. Even martial arts groups that have traditionally allied with Fretilin could not be relied upon. A member of *Korqa*, a Fretilin martial arts group, said that many members supported CNRT. Thus while youth support may be easily courted, the youth vote remained elusive.

Political participation also differed across urban and rural areas. Urban youth have more options for participating politically, for example, in rallies, meetings, and distributing campaign material. Political participation for rural youth tends to focus on campaign rallies, which are celebrated in festival-like atmosphere.

While many youth participated in campaign and voter education efforts, few were involved in party decision-making at the national level. National-level leadership leaves youth little room for meaningful participation in formulating policies or platforms that could empower them. For the most part, there is a strict hierarchy of leadership, of which youth occupy the bottom rung. Even the few political parties claiming to be "the voice of the youth" have policies marked by a personification of politics ("we are the youth, therefore, we



represent the youth”) rather than a specific focus on formulating policies in consultation with the youth. The “youth problem” as defined by many political leaders is seen in the narrow terms of unemployment. Solutions offered are limited to a monetary solution, as in cash-for-work programs, short-term computer training, or English-language instruction.

Both CNRT and PD took steps to satisfy the demand for youth representation in party leadership, but Fretilin did not. CNRT sought out young intellectuals to include on its party rolls. PD touted itself “the party of the youth” because its leaders were from *Geracão Foun*. Fretilin, on the other hand, did not

comply with demands to include more young generation members on its candidate list. As a result, some dissatisfied youth formed a new party, Fretilin Mudansa, which supported CNRT.

The Secretary of State for Youth and Sport partnered with the National Youth Council, an umbrella organization consisting of former clandestine network organizations, new youth organizations, and village-level youth representatives. However, it was reported that this representation is dominated by older men out of touch with younger people’s perspectives. To date, this body has not been widely regarded as providing a voice for young people.



POLLING OBSERVATION

Prior to election day, The Carter Center delegation gathered in Dili for a joint briefing and orientation on the procedural and technical aspects of polling and tabulation. During the sessions, the Center's LTOs shared information about the pre-election environment in the districts. The delegation also received briefings from representatives of STAE, CNE, the United Nations, and the Coalition for Monitoring the General Elections (KOMEG). All of the Center's observers received training on the use of election-day checklists as well as on logistics, security, and other information relevant to their areas of deployment.

Polling Procedures

The Carter Center fielded seven observer teams in eight districts on election day, visiting a total of 56 polling stations throughout the country. The observation on election day primarily consisted of recording detailed information about the conduct of the polls on five different checklists that covered the pre-election environment, poll opening, voting procedures, poll closing, and vote counting (see appendices for copies of the forms).

In general, observers monitored poll opening and closing at the same polling station. During the rest of the day, they traveled to predetermined polling stations to observe the vote. When ballot boxes were transported to the district tabulation centers, observers followed the boxes and monitored their reception at the counting centers.

Overall, the Center's observers reported that the parliamentary elections were conducted in an organized and professional manner. Polling staff were well trained, and domestic observer groups and party agents were well informed about the election regulations. Domestic observers from two organizations, KOMEG and the Independent Observer Group of Timor-Leste (GOITIL) were present in most polling stations visited.

Carter Center observers noted that the majority of polling stations opened on time at 7:00 a.m. Most Timorese voted in the morning, with some citizens lining up as early as 3:00 a.m. The lines trailed off by midday when voting began to slow. Queues were orderly, and voters waited patiently for their turn to cast a ballot. Voter turnout for the parliamentary elections was 80.5 percent.

Observers reported that voters were familiar with the voting process, and the secrecy of the vote was generally maintained. Some exceptions included elderly voters who did not know to enter the polling booth to mark their ballot and people who did not properly fold the ballot before depositing it in the ballot box. Both problems were resolved by polling staff who were generally quick to respond to irregularities.

The most frequently reported irregularity was that polling officials did not check voters' fingers for indelible ink before



allowing them to vote. This irregularity posed the greatest potential risk to the integrity of the vote because the voter list was not broken down by polling station. Thus, voters could cast a ballot at any polling station and could confirm their identity with any one of three documents (old or new voter's card or passport). Checking for ink was the only way to ensure that citizens did not vote twice.

In Bobonaro and Lautém, Carter Center observers reported that parties frequently had more than one party agent present in the polling stations. In these districts, observers also saw agents try to enter polling stations with fake accreditation. In both cases, CNE and STAE responded by removing the agents from the station.

Many citizens remained in the vicinity of polling stations to socialize after they finished, and most of these gatherings were celebratory in nature. At some polling stations in Dili, however, groups of political party supporters gathered with the apparent purpose of intimidating voters and/or interfering with the work of the polling-station officials.

The closing of the polls proceeded without major incident. Although most Timorese voted in the morning, it was important for all polling stations to remain open until 4:00 p.m. to ensure that every voter had the opportunity to cast a ballot.

Ballot Box Retrieval and Reception

No major problems were reported by Carter Center observers during the

collection and transport of ballot boxes from the polling centers to the district counting and tabulation centers. Few voters remained at the polling centers when boxes were retrieved, an indication that they understood that the count would take place elsewhere. The ballot boxes were properly sealed and escorted to the tabulation center by UNPol, CNE polling staff, party agents, and observers.

Ballot boxes, however, were not always retrieved quickly due to road conditions, distance between polling stations, and limited number of U.N. vehicles available to transport the boxes. In Liquiçá, Carter Center observers waited two-and-a-half hours before the U.N. vehicle arrived. In Bobonaro, six inaccessible sites had to wait until the morning of July 1 before a helicopter retrieved their ballot boxes. And in Ermera, the votes from the last subdistrict did not arrive at the counting center until 10:30 p.m.

The ballot boxes were reconciled upon reception at the district counting center, a process that observers said was slow and confusing. Observers had a difficult time tracking the ballot boxes from their polling station because officials did not always read out the serial numbers before opening the boxes. Ballot boxes were opened and reconciled simultaneously at different stations in the tabulation center, making it difficult for party agents and observers to view the entire process. Polling staff worked late on election night (some until as late as 5:00 a.m.) to ensure that ballot boxes were received and counting would start in the morning.



In Dili, party agents protested the arrangement of the tables in the counting center, a large indoor arena, which kept them about 10 feet away from operations. A large group of party supporters disrupted proceedings by shouting their demand for closer access to the ballots. CNE and STAE officials accommodated their protests and rearranged the ballot counting stations to allow agents and observers to monitor from within several feet. Although CNE's responsiveness was positive, the dispute delayed the completion of the reconciliation process until the following morning and counting did not begin until July 2.

A last-minute change in the location of the counting center in Bobonaro complicated the reception of ballot boxes. Observers reported that CNE and STAE staff were unprepared for processing the ballots and only set up one processing station. As ballot boxes arrived, they were piled up in an unorganized manner, which led staff to overlook six sealed ballot boxes until the end of the reception. Despite the disorderly start, the count staff generally understood the process and kept agents and observers informed.

Participation of Women

The election law requires that 25 percent of the candidates on the party lists be female. All parties complied with this regulation, and as a result women won 18 of 65 (27.69 percent) parliamentary seats. This is a positive sign that Timorese leaders viewed women's voices as fundamental in the democratic process of the election. However, women's representation on party

candidate lists does not automatically translate in to cabinet appointments. Civil society groups such as Rede Feto, Alola, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) must be commended for advocating for women's participation in the election.

Women participated in the election as voters, polling-station officials, domestic observers, and party agents. Women accounted for 47 percent of registered voters. On average, women accounted for two of five polling-station officials at locations visited by Center observers, although it was also noted that many stations had no female officials. Party agents, UNPol, and PNTL officers, however, were almost exclusively male.

As compared to the polling, fewer female election staff were involved in the counting process. Where women were present, the role of ballot announcer (reading the vote choice from the ballot) was most often taken by a male official.

Election Day Security

PNTL and UNPol officers were present at all the polling centers visited by Carter Center observers. They maintained the required 25-yard distance from the polling stations and responded quickly to problems and complaints.

Despite earlier conflicts during the campaign period in Viqueque and Ermera, voting in both districts went smoothly. In Viqueque, the Carter Center team did not observe or hear reports of intimidation. In Ermera, voter turnout decreased about 5 percent from



the May 9 election. Only a high-risk polling station in the *suco* Lisapat (Hatu Lia) reported any problems. Throughout the district, only two incidents were reported and only one incident at a high-risk polling station. Both issues were resolved quickly and peacefully.

Presence of International/Domestic Observers

In total, an estimated 36 groups and 320 international observers monitored voting on election day. A full-day briefing session for international observers was organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). On election day, Carter Center observers coordinated with other international

observers in order to monitor more polling stations.

There were 18 domestic observer groups and 1,634 observers deployed to monitor election day. KOMEK had by far the largest presence and deployed a total of 1,190 observers to polling stations in all districts of the country. KOMEK observers were present through all parts of the election process, including observing the entirety of the count process. KOMEK had a policy of deploying one male and one female observer at each polling center, which ensured gender balance. The Center commends their contribution to the openness of the election.



POSTELECTION OBSERVATION

Postelection observation includes monitoring the count at the district and national level and ensuring that complaints and challenges are heard. The district counting began on July 1 and continued until July 5, when the last district (Dili) completed the count. National tabulation began on July 6 and ended on July 7, with the results consolidated and completed on the morning of July 8. On July 9, the CNE announced the provisional national results.

District Tabulation

Counting ballots can be a long and complicated process, but an honest and accurate count, conducted with respect for the dual needs of security and transparency, is crucial to securing citizens' faith in the election results. The Carter Center acknowledges the effort made by STAE and CNE to welcome international observers to view all stages of the counting process. However, a last-minute legislative change in the counting procedure from the presidential election moved the counting of ballots to a centralized location for each district. Several potential problems can arise through such arrangements, including the security of ballot boxes while in transit from polling stations to the district and the challenge of reconciling all of the essential materials as they arrive at counting centers.

Carter Center observers viewed the close of polls at their respective polling station and accompanied the ballot boxes, along with STAE and CNE officials, to the

district tabulation center to watch the reconciliation of the ballot boxes and counting of ballots. To the credit of election officials, although several district counting centers were relatively small and crowded, space was made to accommodate observers. The count lasted three to five days, depending on the district, and the Center observed the entire count process in three districts: Ermera, Lautém, and Dili. The Center also monitored counting at the national tabulation center, where the ballots from the districts were received and recorded.

Center observers noted that voters' interest in the count process decreased when the count moved to district tabulation centers. During the presidential elections, crowds gathered to watch the count, but in the parliamentary elections few voters remained when the ballot boxes were picked up from the polling stations. The change in procedure aimed to protect the secrecy of the vote so that individual polling stations could not be singled out for their support or rejection of a particular party.

The general mood at count centers was relaxed and calm. Polling staff worked through the ballot boxes according to procedures and were monitored at all times by party agents and domestic and international observers. The interaction between polling staff and party agents was positive, with agents voicing concerns and staff working with them to resolve problems. Where issues were not resolved between agents and staff,



the agents were aware of how to file a formal complaint.

At each counting center CNE, officials set up projector screens to display the results as they entered new data. Not all of the projector screens worked, but CNE officials still made an effort to vocally announce results in their center. In Dili, CNE held daily press conferences to release the new tallies.

The only consistent complaint about the count was that it was long and slow. While this is the nature of district-level manual counting, observers noted that the count in Ermera became faster and sloppier as the days wore on. The extended count motivated CNE staff to work past the official closing time of 10:00 p.m. and into the early morning hours. The dedication of the staff is to be admired, but multiple days of repetitious counting of ballots may have led to inaccuracies.

National Tabulation

The national tabulation of results began July 6. During the national tabulation, CNE officials evaluated and issued a final decision on the invalid and contested votes from all the district count centers. They also consolidated the district results into national results. Party agents and observers were welcome to monitor the national tabulation. It took four days to complete the national tabulation, after which the official tabulation results were submitted to the Supreme Court.

Complaints

The CNE reported that 83 complaints had been received as of July 8, of which

29 were sent to the public prosecutor. Complaints were most frequently filed by political parties against other political parties for acts of intimidation.

According to the election law, any party may file an appeal to the Court of Appeals against the provisional tabulation of the national results published by CNE within 48 hours of their posting.⁹ After any existing appeals have been decided, CNE sends the final tabulation results to the Court of Appeals together with the district tabulation minutes as well as the minutes on the conversion of votes to the allocation of seats. None of the complaints received were judged to affect the results, which became official on July 12.

Final Election Results

From the total number of 529,198 registered voters, 426,210 voters cast a ballot, of which 2,636 (0.62 percent) were blank, 7,970 (1.87 percent) were invalid votes, and 415,604 (97.51 percent) were valid.

⁹ Article 49 of Electoral Law No. 6/2006, as amended by the 1st Amendment to Law No. 06/2006, Law No. 6/2007, Article 10.



Table 1: Final parliamentary Election Results 2007

Party	Valid Votes	Percent Total Votes¹⁰	Seats	Percent Change in Representation¹¹	Party Leader
AD KOTA-PPT	13,294	3.20	2	-1.43	Manuel Tilman
ASDT/PSD	65,358	15.73	11	3.28	Francisco Xavier do Amaral (ASDT) Mario Carrascalao (PSD)
CNRT	100,175	24.10	18	27.69	Xanana Gusmão
FRETILIN	120,592	29.02	21	-30.19	Francisco Gutierrez “Lu Olo”
PD	46,946	11.30	8	4.36	Fernando “Lasama” de Araujo
PUN	18,896	4.55	3	4.62	Fernanda Mesquita Borges
UNDERTIM	13,247	3.19	2	3.07	Cornelio da Conceicao Gama

¹⁰ Figures do not add to 100% because parties which did not meet 3% vote threshold are not included in table.

¹¹ Calculated from percentage of seats held in the 2001 Parliament. The numbers for those parties without representation in 2001 (CNRT, PUN, and UNDERTIM) are percent share of seats in the current Parliament.



The results show that support for Fretilin deteriorated. In 2001, the ruling party captured 57 percent of the total vote, but in this election it won more than 50 percent of the vote in only one district. In Dili, 22 percent of voters chose Fretilin, while twice as many—45 percent—voted for CNRT. The percent share of parliamentary seats for Fretilin fell from 62.5 percent to 32 percent. The tarnished reputation of Fretilin's leader, Mari Alkatiri, who was forced to resign as prime minister during the 2006 crisis, may have damaged voter support for his party.

The three leading opposition parties, CNRT, ASDT/PSD, and PD picked up votes from Fretilin, and together they received 51.13 percent of the total vote. PD experienced a 4 percent gain in Parliament seats, and ASDT/PSD gained slightly more than 3 percent. CNRT success may, in part, be attributed to the name recognition offered by Gusmão and Ramos Horta.

The following parties won votes but did not meet the 3 percent of total votes (equivalent to approximately 12,000 votes in this election) threshold to secure a seat: Republican Party (PR); Timor Democratic Republic Party (PDRT); Christian Democratic Party (PDC); Timorese Democratic Union (UDT); Millennium Democratic Party (PMD); Timorese Socialist Party (PST); and Timorese Nationalist Party (PNT).

After converting voting results into the allocation of seats, 18 female candidates from the candidate lists of political parties and coalitions obtained seats as deputies in the National Parliament.

Women represented 27.69 percent of Parliament (from a total number of 65 seats).

Voter Turnout

Voter turnout for the parliamentary election (80 percent) matched the first round of presidential elections and increased from the second round of presidential elections when voter participation was 76.7 percent. It was, however, a decrease from 2001 and 2002 when voter turnout was 91 percent and 86.3 percent, respectively.

Despite high voter turnout in the 2007 elections, CNE and STAE should consider holding presidential and parliamentary elections during different years. Training and voter education occupied citizens and the government for three months, taking the focus from other needs and responsibilities. In some regions (e.g., Cova Lima) voters had to travel far to vote and said they were physically tired of the ongoing elections. Separating the presidential and parliamentary elections might improve voter education, political party campaigning, and voter turnout.

Postelection Politics

Following the announcement of the results, Timor-Leste faced a political impasse. After five years of dominance by the Fretilin party, plurality winner of the election with 29 percent of the vote, the party fell significantly short of a majority in Parliament.

PD's decision to join a coalition with CNRT and ASDT/PSD rather than Fretilin resulted in the July 6 announcement of the leaders of PD,



CNRT, and ASDT/PSD that they were issuing a “Communiqué for an Alliance to form a parliamentary majority.”

Representing more than 52 percent of voters and holding 31 seats, the alliance claimed the right to name the prime minister. Fretilin, the party that won the most votes in the election, argued that the constitution does not allow a postelection coalition to name the prime minister, and, therefore, it was Fretilin that should name the prime minister.

The Timor-Leste constitutional language is admittedly vague in regard to which party or coalition can legitimately lay claim to having a majority in the Parliament and, therefore, elect the prime minister. Article 106 of the Timor-Leste Constitution reads: “The party with the most votes or the party with a majority coalition in Parliament is eligible to elect the prime minister.”

Thus, according to the constitution, both the CNRT coalition and Fretilin could reasonably claim the right to elect the prime minister. In order to avoid such an impasse, the article should read, “The party with 50 percent + 1 vote has the right to select the future prime minister. If no one party wins 50 percent +1 vote in the election, a coalition of parties with votes amounting to 50 percent +1 is eligible to elect the prime minister.”

The constitution allows the president to intercede in favor of either party’s claim to legitimacy. Although President Ramos Horta called on the parties to work out their differences, he also signaled his preference for the CNRT-led coalition. The potential for conflict was real. Both parties possessed factions

in the armed forces and large youth support networks with longstanding antagonisms against each other. If either party were to cry foul, the other would be unlikely to surrender its claim to rule.

President Ramos Horta gathered Fretilin and the alliance at the end of July and urged them to form a unity government. But the parties still could not agree on who would be the prime minister. President Ramos Horta set a deadline for an agreement, saying he would appoint the prime minister if no deal was reached. In the midst of the dispute, Parliament convened its first session (without a prime minister) on July 30 and elected PD leader Fernando de Araujo Lasama the president of Parliament. The parties did not reach an agreement by President Ramos Horta’s Aug. 6 deadline, so he appointed CNRT leader Xanana Gusmão as prime minister.

Fretilin leadership said they would not accept the appointment because it was unconstitutional and they boycotted sessions in Parliament. While Fretilin leaders encouraged their supporters to be peaceful, protesters in Baucau and Viqueque (Fretilin strongholds) burned tires in the streets and torched government and international aid organizations’ buildings. Up to 600 houses and several schools were torched, and protestors threw rocks at U.N. vehicles and police. By late August, Fretilin announced that it would not attempt to challenge the appointment of Gusmão in court, and Fretilin members began attending parliamentary sessions.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2007 parliamentary elections were a technical success, but the real triumph of elections will be an effective government capable of addressing the problems of Timor-Leste. A complete and productive Parliament is essential for Timor-Leste to move forward from conflict and poverty.

The development of a democratic Timor-Leste depends also on the great will and energy of the Timorese people. Three rounds of elections showed the enthusiasm and dedication of the Timorese for a fair system of self-governance. Citizens should be vocal about their needs and hold politicians accountable for measurable improvements in the quality of life. More civic education and avenues for political participation are needed to cultivate peaceful advocacy. Youth, in particular, need to feel represented and included in the government and their needs addressed and energies utilized by new policies and programs.

Problems endure. Many of the parties, including Fretilin, claim to be the victims of external political domination while the politics of alliance building remain laden with secrecy. The tendency of this psychology to see political conspiracies everywhere does little to formulate institutional responses to the enduring problems of unemployment, hunger, illiteracy, or disease.

The political vacuum in Timor-Leste is serious. Historical loyalties have sustained the momentum this country

has needed up until the 2007 election, but the 2006 crisis and the postelection political divisions have shown the world that Timor-Leste requires more than history to drive its nation toward the future.

The parliamentary elections are only one example of the extraordinary strength and will of the Timorese people. Their history provides countless other examples and their future the promise of many more. The Carter Center is confident that their commitment to peace and democracy will bring a bright future. The following recommendations are based on the Center's history in Timor-Leste and the direct observation of the 2007 parliamentary elections. They are offered in the hope of contributing concrete and effective reforms in the conduct of future elections.

Election Law

- The multiple election laws should be reviewed for coherence and consistency and, ideally, codified into a single election law.
- Any significant change in election law or key procedures should occur well in advance of elections, especially if it concerns key elements of election day. Voters need to know what to expect on election day, and new procedures may create unnecessary confusion.
- The election management bodies, CNE and STAE, must be staffed by personnel who act in an impartial,



neutral, and transparent manner for the conduct of credible elections. CNE, not the Ministry of State Administration, should exercise administrative control over STAE.

- To secure their independence from potential political interference, CNE and STAE should have independent budget line items approved by Parliament.

Voter Registration

- The period for voter registration and effective public review of the provisional voter roll should be reviewed with consideration given to regular, periodic updating, either on an annual or a continuous basis.

Election Campaign

- More security officers should be placed strategically at campaign rallies and in districts with reports of consistent violence in order to discourage conflict. The presence of PNTL and UNPol officers at district administration centers and campaign rallies contributed significantly to a secure pre-election environment. Carter Center observers reported that police officers were quick to respond to complaints and irregularities, conferring with CNE and STAE officials as needed.
- All political parties should adhere to the published campaign schedule to avoid conflicts arising out of chance meetings between supporters of rival parties. Violence can be sidestepped and political participation increased if campaign events occur at the set time and place.

- Political parties and candidates should do more to encourage serious debate about policy and government plans. The parliamentary campaign focused on personalities, symbolism, and rhetoric rather than concrete policies, making it difficult to demarcate substantial differences between the major political parties.
- Political party leaders should consider how their rhetoric affects the actions of their members and should be held accountable for violating the code of conduct. Leaders need to also remember that their behavior sets the standard for their followers.
- District officials, church leaders, village leaders, and party leaders should organize dialogues about peaceful prevention and resolution of disputes. Party leaders need to hold their supporters legally accountable for violence and intimidation.

Election Procedures

- Voter education should include greater information about the roles of the CNE and STAE. UNVs were crucial to the wide reach of voter education campaigns. Carter Center observers found that while voters knew how to vote, they did not understand more complicated aspects of the election.
- The electoral calendar should be revised to allow voting materials to be delivered to polling stations more than one day in advance of voting. Election officials should also develop contingency plans for



distributing election materials in inclement weather. Without the United Nations, ballot boxes would not have arrived at polling stations. Helicopters were essential to reaching communities isolated by washed-out bridges and roads.

- Printed voter lists should be used at each polling station to safeguard against multiple voting and support the integrity of the vote.
- Vote counting should occur at polling stations immediately following the close of polls.
- International assistance should ensure that more capacity building, technical skills, and resources are provided to enable the Timorese to run future elections without the aid of the United Nations.

Specific Youth Recommendations

- Make a concerted effort to pass and implement youth-focused legislation. While the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport has developed a new policy toward youth, it has yet to pass Parliament. The National Youth Council, an umbrella organization meant to include former clandestine organizations and youth village representatives, could serve as a vital link between youth and public policy.
- Build rural programs for youth. One of the biggest challenges for any youth program is to create access for all geographic areas. Rural to urban migration remains high, leading to a brain drain in the districts. Providing

young people with the skills in order to stay in their districts is advisable rather than adding to the already inflated rates of urban unemployment. Providing work in the form of cash-for-work programs, however, only solves part of the problem. Without a considerable effort in civic education that builds a sense of belonging and meaningful participation, cash-for-work programs run the risk of creating a “floating mass” as in New Order-era Indonesia. Nonformal education programs leading to self-employment have already been identified by several national and international NGOs in rural areas as promising activities. With limited opportunities at the national level, more activities at local, rural levels would broaden the sense of youth representation.

- Establish political literacy policy and programs. There is a clear need for civic education policy that encourages youth to become active citizens in order to foster a sense of belonging in the wider community. Policy-level input into school curriculums on civic education is also a priority. Programs with political parties on how better to engage with the youth would also be advisable. Programs focusing on what it means to represent and be represented and how to be accountable for the ways they represent groups are vital.
- Introduce women’s leadership programs. The national youth policy does not highlight women’s



leadership as a core element.

Women's leadership programs, as already defined by several national and international NGOs in rural and urban areas, would assist in the breaking down of militarized cultures. Programs strengthening the leadership roles for women in the security forces are also advisable.

- Build more media programs for youth. Several radio stations in Dili and in the districts are successfully run by youth volunteers. The media is not only important as a tool for democracy in relaying information about civic rights, responsibilities, and freedoms, it is also an important resource for young people to communicate their own ideas and

situation to the rest of the community.

- Introduce youth exchange programs. Indonesia shares a similar youth demographic profile with Timor-Leste, and there are many valuable lessons to be learned regarding how Indonesia is managing this challenge. Indonesia remains linguistically and culturally relevant and an economically viable place to learn skills and trades. A number of youth groups in Dili have already conducted their own community fund raising to take part in several exchange programs; these activities should be supplemented with public and other resources.



APPENDICES

Acknowledgments

List of Abbreviations

Letter of Invitation

Delegation List

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Observation Forms: Pre-election, Poll Opening, Polling, Closing and Counting

The Carter Center Delegation Announcement of June 21, 2007

The Carter Center Preliminary Statement of July 3, 2007



Acknowledgements

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The Carter Center particularly wishes to thank Jeff Carter, who co-led the observation delegation with David Pottie, associate director of the Democracy Program. The Center also fondly acknowledges our long-term observers who volunteered their time and expertise to the project. These delegates traveled throughout the territory to monitor the campaign period leading up to the parliamentary elections. These dedicated volunteers were Angie Bexley, David Hicks, Maxine Hicks, Dwight King, Fred Rawski, Teresa Reimers, Ricardo Rodrigues, and Elizabeth Traube. We also extend a thank-you to Dorcha Lee, who served as a short-term observer for the mission. Special thanks go to John MacDougall, who traveled to Timor-Leste ahead of the delegation and whose political analysis during the election period was crucial to the success of the mission.

We would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of field office director Samantha Aucock, who managed the Center's field operations. She worked extremely long hours and performed logistical miracles to enable the Center to perform its work. The office also relied on the excellent work of local staff in Dili. In particular, Rui Hanjam provided valuable insight and support to the mission.

In Atlanta, Rachel Fowler, assistant director of the Democracy Program, was responsible for directing the Center's programming in Timor-Leste. Logistical support was provided by Program Assistant Tynesha Green. Project Assistant Laura Ertmer and intern Bradley Decker aided the mission both in Atlanta and in Dili.



List of Abbreviations

AD-KOTA/PPT	The Democratic Alliance of the Association of Timorese Heroes and Timor People's Party
APODETI	Timorese Popular Democratic Association
ASDT	Association of Timorese Social Democrats
Chefe de Suco	Village chief
CNE	National Election Commission
CNRT	National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste
EU	European Union
F-FDTL	Timor-Leste Defense Force
Falintil	Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor
Fretilin	Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste
GOITIL	Timor-Leste Independent Observer Group
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
ISF	International Security Forces
KOMEG	Coalition for Monitoring the General Elections
KOTA	Association of Timorese Heroes
LTO	Long-term Observer
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OJETIL	Organization of Youngsters and Students of East Timor
OPJLATIL	Organização Popular da Juventude de Loriko Assuwain de Timor-Leste
PD	Democratic Party
PDC	Christian Democratic Union
PDRT	Timor Democratic Republic Party
PMD	Millennium Democratic Party
PNTL	Timor-Leste National Police
PR	Republican Party
PSD	Social Democratic Party
PUN	National Unity Party
RENETIL	Resistencia Nacional Estudantil de Timor-Leste
STAE	Technical Secretariat for Election Administration
STO	Short-term Observer
UDT	Timorese Democratic Union
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDERTIM	Democratic National Unity of Timorese Resistance
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNPol	United Nations Police
UNV	United Nations Volunteer



THE CARTER CENTER

Invitation to Observe Elections



Handwritten signature and date: 7/5/07

REPÚBLICA DEMOCRÁTICA DE TIMOR-LESTE

MFAC/BA/074/07

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste presents its compliments to all Diplomatic Missions accredited to and with resident in Timor-Leste, United Nations and its agencies, and all International and Regional Organizations, and referred to latter's **Note: MFAC/BA/051/07**, has the honor to inform that the Legislatives Election will be held on 30th June 2007.

In this regard, the Ministry has further the honor to inform all that the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste will welcome all interested observers from all countries, agencies, and organizations to observe the democratic election in Timor-Leste. Our grateful to having them in the Presidential election and invite them once again to take a part in the Legislatives election.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Diplomatic Missions accredited to and with resident in Timor-Leste, UN and its Agencies, and all International and Regional Organizations, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Dili, 3rd May 2007



**All Diplomatic Missions accredited to and with resident in Timor-Leste,
UN and its Agencies, International and Regional Organizations
Cc: All Embassies of Timor-Leste**



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Observer Deployment Plan

Carter Center observer teams were deployed to the following district locations over the course of pre-election, polling, counting, and tabulation.

Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four	Election Day and Postelection
Aileu Liquiçá Dili Ermera	Manatuto Baucau Lautém Bobonaro Cova-Lima Viqueque Dili	Manatatu Baucau Lautém Cova-Lima Aileu Ainaro Manufahi	Manatatu Baucau Lautém Bobonaro Ermera Viqueque Liquiçá	Manatatu Lautém Bobonaro Viqueque Liquiçá Ermera Dili



May 25, 2007: Timor-Leste Political Party Accord

(Unofficial English translation from Tetum)

On May 25, 2007, following the signing ceremony of the Code of Conduct, the leaders of the 14 parties/coalitions participating in the parliamentary elections drafted and signed a “Political Party Accord.”

Political Party Accord

Political Parties participating in the 2007 parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste agree to sign an Accord as a commitment to regulate their actions in the campaign process until the Election Day on 30 June 2007 and the postelection period. This Accord is intended to be a complementary document at the initiative of Political Parties without any contradiction with the Code of Conduct as issued by CNE.

All Political Parties accept their responsibility to issue clear instructions to their members and supporters in order to respect this Accord and the Code of Conduct. Parties commit to denounce any of their members or supporters who violate this Accord.

In order to support and strengthen this Accord and the Code of Conduct, the Political Parties agree with following points:

- a) Political Parties who signed this document commit to respect and implement this Accord and Code of Conduct as issued by the CNE.
- b) Political Parties shall immediately notify the CNE, in writing, the details of any alleged violations, with copies to other Parties, UNMIT and election observer organizations. Should any serious case, which merits criminal prosecution, arise witness information shall also be submitted to relevant authorities so that legal measures and processes can be undertaken.
- c) Political Parties shall give due consideration to information provided by other Parties, the CNE, STAE, UNMIT, UNPOL, PNTL and election observers, and shall seek to resolve any allegations arising from their members and supporters through dialogue.
- d) Political Parties agree to meet jointly together at the national, district, subdistrict and village levels to discuss any reported violations and to prevent any further incidents. Such discussions shall not, however, replace any criminal prosecution, which may be required.

Therefore, all Political Parties who signed this Accord condemn all forms of violence, terror and intimidation as well as anybody who uses the opportunity of elections to address localized disputes under the guise of political affiliation or association which may



be associated with the campaigns, voting and announcement of results for the parliamentary elections.

Political Parties shall jointly denounce and condemn any irregularities or partiality of the organs administering and supervising the electoral process (campaign, election and counting of votes).

Political Parties leaders shall also provide guidance and instruction to party coordinators in districts, subdistricts, villages and sub-villages, to accept this Accord and also encourage an environment of peace, tolerance and respect for one another.

The Parties who signed this Accord reaffirm their belief in the basic principles of good governance such as inclusiveness, participation, transparency, accountability and other principles in accordance with the rules of a democratic State based on the rule of law.

The Parties or coalition that may be elected to government shall ensure a meaningful role for the opposition in Parliament as well as the participation of civil society in the political, economic and social development process of this country.

Political parties agree that, should they become opposition parties, they shall make constructive contributions with a view toward pursuing the process of developing public policies and legislation and that they shall strive to secure that the National Parliament, as a sovereign organ, shall respond to the needs of the people.

Political Parties hereby pledge that they shall not politicize State institutions such as the F-FDTL, PNTL and the Public Administration.

For one people, for one nation, for national unity, for democracy and the stability of national security, for peace and progress.



Observation Forms

TCC OBSERVATION FORM: PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION EAST TIMOR

June 30, 2007

Observer Team: _____

District: _____

Time of Arrival in District: _____

Suco: _____

Security and Election Materials

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Have UNPOL and PNTL helped create a sufficient security environment? | Y | N |
| 2. Have all election materials been delivered to the polling station? | Y | N |
| 3. Did Brigadistas place election materials in a secure storage space? | Y | N |

In the District

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Is there evidence of any activities of a political nature being conducted after June 27? If so, please describe: _____ | Y | N |
| 5. Were there voter and civic education programs in the district? If so, please describe: _____ | Y | N |
| 6. Have they been successful? If yes, please explain. _____ | Y | N |
| 7. Are there reports of activities by any non-political groups? If yes, please explain. _____ | Y | N |

General Mood

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 8. Has the campaign period been peaceful?
If not, describe incidents: _____ | Y | N |
| 9. Have there been instances reported of intimidation of voters? Please describe. _____ | Y | N |
| 10. Were parties able to campaign freely without interference from Suco Chief or others? | Y | N |
| 11. Do people seem to understand the purpose of the election? | Y | N |
| 12. Do voters understand the change in the location of the count process? | Y | N |
| 13. Are voters concerned about the count process? | Y | N |

Comments (please use backside if necessary):



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TCC OBSERVATION FORM: POLLING STATION OPENING

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION EAST TIMOR

June 30, 2007

Observers: _____
District: _____
Suco: _____
Polling station: _____
Polling center: _____
Arrival time: _____
Departure time: _____

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Did all polling officers arrive at 0600h?
If not, which were absent? | Y | N |
| 2. Were any voters already present? If so, approximately how many? _____ | Y | N |
| 3. If there were voters present, were they in a controlled and orderly queue? | Y | N |
| 4. Was UNPOL present? | Y | N |
| 5. Was PNTL present? | Y | N |
| 6. Did security personnel remain outside the polling station
(unless invited in by the Station Chairperson/President?) | Y | N |
| 7. Were all election materials delivered safely and securely? | Y | N |
| 8. Did all polling officers sign a Declaration of Secrecy? | Y | N |
| 9. Was the ballot box presented to you empty? | Y | N |
| 10. Was the ballot box properly sealed? | Y | N |
| 11. Did the Chairperson/ President allow the polling officers to place their votes before polling opened? | Y | N |
| 12. Did the opening of the polling station follow the electoral procedures? | Y | N |
| 13. Did polling begin promptly at 0700h?
If no, please check all the boxes that give applicable reasons: | Y | N |
| ☐ Confusion | ☐ Insufficient number of polling staff | |
| ☐ Insufficient materials | ☐ Electoral campaigns | |
| ☐ Late arrival of materials | ☐ Other (please list) _____ | |
| ☐ Infringement or obstruction of CNE authority _____ | | |
| 14. Were party agents present? If so, which ones? _____ | Y | N |
| 15. Were domestic observers present? If so, which ones? _____ | Y | N |

If you answered no to any questions, please explain why here:



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TCC OBSERVATION FORM: POLLING

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

EAST TIMOR

June 30, 2007

Observer: _____	Time of visit: _____
District: _____	Suco: _____
Polling Station: _____	Polling Center: _____

Outside the Polling Station

1. How long had the first person in line been waiting to vote? _____		
2. Approximately how many voters were waiting in line? _____		
3. Was the queue controlled and orderly?	Y	N
4. Were appropriate security arrangements in place?	Y	N
5. Did security personnel remain 25 meters outside the polling station (unless invited in by the station President/Chairperson?)	Y	N
6. Were PNTL performing their function? If not, please explain.	Y	N
7. Were security groups and/or other non-party groups (martial arts, youth groups, etc.) present outside or inside the polling station? If yes, please identify and explain: _____	Y	N
8. Were there any party or other political banners, posters, demonstrations, canvassing, or gatherings within 100 meters of the polling station?	Y	N
9. Are polling officials responsive to party agents' concern (if any)? If no, explain: _____	Y	N
10. Was the poll free of formal complaints to officials? If no, explain: _____	Y	N
11. Was the "no alcohol" rule enforced correctly?	Y	N
12. Did the polling station appear to be in an accessible place?	Y	N

Inside the Polling Station

13. Were all polling officials present and adequately performing their roles?	Y	N
If no, please check the polling officials that were absent:		
☐ Polling Station Queue Controller	☐ Ballot Paper Issuer	
☐ Identification Officer	☐ Ballot Box Controller	
☐ President/ Chairman		
Please explain if any of the above were not performing their roles adequately: _____		
14. Were there any female officials? If yes, how many? _____	Y	N
15. List parties with party agents present, note numbers of female and youth agents: _____ _____		
16. Did any party(/ies) appear to have more than one agent present in the polling station? If so, which ones? _____	Y	N
17. Were unauthorized people present inside the polling station? If so, who? _____	Y	N
18. Were other international or local observers present? If so, which countries / organizations? _____	Y	N
19. Were sufficient election materials present? If not, what was missing? _____	Y	N

Voting

20. Were voters checked for signs of ink on their fingers when entering the polling station?	Y	N
21. Did the identification officer record the voter registration/passport number of voter?	Y	N
22. Were there any problems concerning voter identification documents?	Y	N
23. When voter identification cards were presented, were they punched correctly? Please explain any other problems: _____	Y	N
24. Did the Ballot Issuer sign and stamp each ballot before handing over to voter?	Y	N



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25. Did the Ballot Box Officer mark the voter's finger with indelible ink?	Y	N
26. Were there sufficient ballots for the voters?		
27. Were some people unable to vote? If so, why?	Y	N
☐ No proof of identity ☐ Evidence that he/she already voted	☐ Other: _____ _____	
28. Were there any irregularities?	Y	N
☐ Under-age voting ☐ Foreigners voting ☐ Threats ☐ Eligible voters turned away	☐ Multiple voting ☐ Slow progress ☐ Others (please identify): _____ _____	
29. Did the polling officials appear to be impartial?	Y	N
30. Did the polling officials appear to be adequately trained?	Y	N
31. Were people with special needs dealt with correctly?	Y	N
32. Did you observe any disputes?	Y	N
If yes, please explain, including how they were handled:	_____	
33. Were party agents and /or observers able to observe the polling process adequately?	Y	N

General Assessment -- Please check the appropriate description of polling

34. Polling station functioned well, <i>no problems</i>	_____
35. Minor problems, <i>unlikely to impact on result</i>	_____
36. Significant problems, <i>potential for impact on result</i> . Give reasons:	_____
37. Serious violations, <i>should invalidate results</i> . Give reasons:	_____
38. Polling officials say the process is:	
☐ Going very well	☐ Satisfactory
☐ Unsatisfactory	
Agents of candidates say the process is:	
☐ Going very well	☐ Satisfactory
☐ Unsatisfactory	
Observers (if present) say the process is:	
☐ Going very well	☐ Satisfactory
☐ Unsatisfactory	
39. As an overall evaluation, was the secrecy of the vote assured satisfactorily?	Y N
40. Did the majority of the voters appear to understand the process?	Y N

Please write any additional comments on the back of the page.



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TCC OBSERVATION FORM: POLLING STATION CLOSING

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

EAST TIMOR

June 30, 2007

Observers: _____

District: _____

Suco: _____

Polling center: _____

Polling station: _____

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Were those that were queued up at 1600h allowed to vote? | Y | N |
| 2. Were any voters who arrived after 1600h stopped from voting? | Y | N |
| 3. Were all the correct procedures for closing the polling station followed? | Y | N |
| 4. Was poll closing peaceful and free of disruptive or violent incidents? If no, explain: _____ | Y | N |
| _____ | | |
| 5. Were all the unused ballots and canceled ballots counted and placed in sealed envelopes? | Y | N |
| Number of cancelled ballots: _____ | | |
| Number of unused ballots: _____ | | |
| Number of properly cast ballots: _____ | | |
| 6. Was the record of election operations (acta) filled out by polling stations officials before the ballots were transported? | Y | N |
| If no, explain what was missing: _____ | | |
| 7. Did the record include the serial numbers of the ballot box seals, names of election official, party/coalition agents present, and any complaints or objections? | Y | N |
| 8. Was the ballot box sealed with a third seal before being transported to the AAD? | Y | N |
| Ballot box seal number: _____ | | |
| 9. Were sensitive and non-sensitive materials parceled appropriately? | Y | N |
| 10. Were all polling officials present in the polling station during the closing process? | Y | N |
| 11. Were security personnel present at the polling center during the closing process? | Y | N |
| 12. Were the party agents and observers satisfied with how the officials handled the close? | Y | N |
| 13. What was the general mood inside the polling station? Please explain: _____ | | |
| _____ | | |
| 14. What was the general mood outside the polling station? Please explain: _____ | | |
| _____ | | |
| 15. Did everyone accept the change in the count procedures? If no, specify: _____ | Y | N |
| _____ | | |
| 16. Did party agents follow the ballot box from the polling station to the AAD (tabulation center)? | Y | N |
| List any other groups that also followed the ballot box: _____ | | |
| _____ | | |
| Comments (please use back of page if necessary): _____ | | |
| _____ | | |
| _____ | | |



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TCC OBSERVATION FORM: COUNTING			
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION			
EAST TIMOR			
June 30, 2007			
Observers:			
District:			
Time of visit (from/to):			
Date:			
Retrieval and Reception			
1. Was the retrieval of the ballot boxes completed on June 30th? If not, when? _____	Y	N	
2. Did the reception of the ballot boxes accurately follow procedures?	Y	N	
3. Did the reception team read out the security seals?	Y	N	
4. Have there been any reported incidents of new seal numbers that differ from the numbers on the acta? If yes, specify which party agents reported the incident.	Y	N	
5. Did the President/Chairperson sign the ballot box delivery form and attach it to the acta?	Y	N	
6. Was the information on the acta correct? If not, explain problems/errors:	Y	N	
7. Did the total number of used ballots match those listed on the acta? (Ex: Total number of ballots received at opening of the polling station = # of used ballots + # of cancelled ballots + # of registered voters)	Y	N	
8. If the discrepancy is more than 2%, did the Presiding Officer put the ballot box aside to be sent to CNE in Dili?	Y	N	
Mixing			
9. Did the count staff pile the ballots in bundles of 50s without looking at the ballots?	Y	N	
10. Were the rolls of 50 ballots from different polling stations mixed together before being put into the ballot box labeled, <i>Sidauk Sura</i> ?	Y	N	
11. Were these boxes sealed?	Y	N	
12. Did the reception process go smoothly? If no, specify:	Y	N	
Counting			
13. Were you able to observe all aspects of the count process?	Y	N	
14. Were all the ballot boxes received and processed before the count started?	Y	N	
15. What time did the count start? _____			
16. Did the CNE count all the ballots face down to confirm the total number of ballots in the box?	Y	N	
17. Did the CNE focal point read and separate the ballots into groups by category of valid ballots, null ballots, blank ballots, and contested ballots?	Y	N	
18. Did the total number of ballots of each of these categories equal the total number of ballots?	Y	N	
19. Did the officers fill in the counting form and sign it?	Y	N	
20. Were the decisions to invalidate ballots made in accordance with the rules?	Y	N	
21. What was the percent of invalid ballots? _____			
22. Are disputed ballot papers put aside for verification? Specify procedures used to resolve disputes:	Y	N	
23. Was the count a continuous process?	Y	N	
24. At the end of the count, did party agents sign the final acta?	Y	N	
25. If the count was not finished by 2200h, were the ballots placed in boxes and securely stored for the night?	Y	N	
26. Were the counting officials familiar with the procedures that they were required to follow?	Y	N	
27. Were party agents present throughout your time at the count? List which parties:	Y	N	
28. Were Timorese observers present throughout your time at the count?	Y	N	
29. Did the Presiding Officer of AAD (CNE commissioner) keep agents and observers informed of the counting process throughout?	Y	N	
30. Did polling officials respond to agents complaints? If no, explain:	Y	N	
31. Did unauthorized people enter the counting center at any time?	Y	N	



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32. Did PNTL and UNPOL provide adequate security at the AAD (tabulation center)?	Y	N	
33. Was the count process free of intimidation or incidences? If no, explain:	Y	N	
	Y	N	
34. Was the counting process hindered by any practical problems: insufficient space, material or power?	Y	N	
If yes, please identify and explain: _____			
35. In your opinion, was the count process transparent? If not, explain why:	Y	N	

36. What is your overall assessment of the counting process?			
☐ Good	☐ Minor problems	☐ Major irregularities	Specify: _____

37. What is the overall sense of party observers?	_____		

38. What is the overall sense of domestic observers?	_____		

39. Explain the mood/atmosphere at the end of the count process, e.g. tired, exhausted, frustrated.			

Comments (use full sheet if necessary):			



THE CARTER CENTER



The Carter Center Deploys Election Observers in Timor-Leste

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, June 11, 2007

ATLANTA...The Carter Center launched an international observation mission in Timor-Leste with the deployment of two teams of long-term observers in provinces around the country in early June. A field office in Dili will manage the Center's mission to monitor the parliamentary elections scheduled for June 30, 2007. This will be the first parliamentary election to be administered solely by the Timorese, who voted for independence from Indonesia in 1999.

In March 2007, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste issued an open invitation to interested countries, agencies, and organizations to observe and assist the electoral process. In a visit in April 2007, a Carter Center representative met with political parties, civil society, and domestic observers, all of whom encouraged international observers from the Center to help build confidence in the elections. The Carter Center welcomes this opportunity to assist the Timorese people in peaceful democratic elections and encourages all parties to participate actively and ultimately respect the will of the people.

The Carter Center conducts its activities in a nonpartisan, professional manner in accordance with applicable law and international standards for election monitoring set forth in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. It will remain in close communication with other international and domestic observer delegations. The Center will publish periodic statements on its findings and recommendations on its Web site, www.cartercenter.org.

The Carter Center has a long partnership with Timor-Leste. The Center monitored the public consultation for independence in 1999, the 2001 constituent assembly, and 2002 presidential elections. Throughout the world, the Center has observed 63 elections in 26 countries.

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THE CARTER CENTER



Timor-Leste parliamentary Election Democratic and Peaceful Preliminary Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, July 3, 2007

The majority of Timor-Leste voters participated in an orderly and peaceful June 30 parliamentary election. The administration of these elections was very well executed, bearing testimony to the hard work of election officials and the determination of Timorese citizens to ensure their country remains on the democratic path chosen at independence.

Key points:

- Polling stations were very well organized and electoral workers carried out their responsibilities competently and professionally. Carter Center observers report only isolated irregularities during the conduct of the poll and these are unlikely to affect the overall success of the vote.
- Witnesses (party agents) from more than two political parties and nonpartisan domestic observers were present in nearly all polling stations visited.
- Several instances of violence and incendiary political rhetoric marred an otherwise peaceful campaign but fortunately these negative practices did not appear to affect voter turnout.
- Although counting procedures were revised at a late date following the presidential election, shifting counting from individual polling stations to 13 centralized district locations appeared to be well implemented. However, the balance of important considerations involving the security and transparency of the counting process requires careful assessment before future elections.
- The Carter Center will continue to observe the district counting and national tabulation until complete.



Carter Center involvement in Timor-Leste began in June 1999 when President Jimmy Carter met with Timorese leader Jose Alexandre “Xanana” Gusmao, then under house arrest in Indonesia. The Center subsequently observed the 1999 popular consultation, the 2001 constituent assembly election, and the 2002 presidential election.

The Carter Center was invited by the National Electoral Commission (CNE) to observe the 2007 elections. Center observers visited 12 districts during the parliamentary election campaign and a 15-member delegation observed polling and counting in 8 districts. Observers met with political parties, election officials, civil society, and domestic observers, all of whom encouraged international observers from the Center to help build confidence in the elections.

The Carter Center conducts its election observation in accordance with the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and Code of Conduct adopted at the United Nations in 2005. The Center’s interest is in the integrity of the process and not in the outcome of the election. This statement is preliminary and further statements will be issued as necessary to complete our assessment.

Election Preparations

Despite significant logistical challenges, the administration of these elections has been a major success. The Carter Center congratulates CNE and the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE) for their successful organization of these elections with crucial support from the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and other international organizations and donors.

Campaign

The campaign period, although largely peaceful, was marked by a number of issues of concern to The Carter Center. Negative campaign practices, such as the use of incendiary political rhetoric, threatened to trigger more violence among political supporters and may have intimidated candidates and citizens from engaging in more vigorous debate. Personalities rather than party policies often predominated. Such practices limit rather than amplify the information available to voters.

Several instances of violence, including two deaths, and other acts of intimidation during the campaign period are deplorable and Timorese political leaders and supporters need to renew their established commitment to political tolerance.

Timor’s diverse linguistic composition and the large youth population compound the challenge facing civic education efforts to strengthen the foundations of democratic behavior in East Timor.



Security

Voter confidence and low incidence of conflict during both the campaign and on election day were partly due to the presence of impartial security officials at polling centers. Although observers did hear reports of Timor-Leste National Police members who were not impartial, such reports were not widespread. The presence of the police, with the assistance of international forces, was a strong deterrent to voter intimidation on election day. Remembering that political division within the security forces was a primary catalyst for the 2006 crisis, the Carter Center strongly encourages the donor community and the Timorese government to focus on the development of a professional and impartial police force.

Polling

The Center congratulates the Timorese people, election workers, security forces, party witnesses, and observers for elections that were peaceful, orderly, and in accordance with the established election procedures. Although figures are not available at this time, voter turnout appears to have been strong. Carter Center observers reported that an overwhelming majority of elections officials performed their responsibilities with impartiality and professionalism.

Young Timorese demonstrated their commitment to the democratic process, not only as voters, but as polling station officials, party agents, and observers from civil society organizations. Women were also present in good numbers in all of these capacities.

Most polling stations opened on time or with only a brief delay and followed correct procedures. Heavy rains in some parts of the country in the days before the elections presented serious logistical challenge for the delivery of election materials. With essential assistance from the UN and the International Stabilization Force election materials reached the polling stations. The polling stations were well organized and election officials appeared to understand the proper discharge of their responsibilities.

Polling officials examined the proper forms of voter identification in most cases; however, they did not always check fingers for indelible ink prior to issuing a ballot paper. Carter Center observers reported that polling station layout respected voter secrecy. Polling officials correctly applied indelible ink after voters deposited their ballot paper in the ballot box.

Candidate witnesses and domestic observers were present in most stations and provided good coverage nationally. The security presence provided by the UN, the international community and the national police was visible but not intrusive.



Ballot Collection and District Counting

Observed poll closings, sealing of ballot boxes with numbered ties, and the transport of election materials to district counting centers and counts were orderly and properly implemented. Polling officials were mostly well informed about appropriate procedures and the need to accommodate the dual imperatives of security and transparency.

Although the Center understands that Timor's political parties shifted the counting from polling stations to district centers in order to protect the anonymity of voters, this practice requires special care to ensure the counting procedure is accessible to party agents and observers. The procedure for mixing ballot papers from multiple polling stations and the simultaneous counting at multiple tables is difficult for party agents to follow. Party agents and observers in several districts were concerned that they could not follow the proceedings adequately. For example, on election night in Dili, party agents rightfully demanded closer proximity to the reception and reconciliation of ballot papers and STAE officials are to be congratulated for responding positively.

Given concerns expressed to us about the transparency of the entire electoral process, the Carter Center believes that all sides should strive to ensure the proper implementation of measures to check vote tabulation. STAE needs to ensure continued access to the district counting process and national tabulation so these can be cross-checked against the results collected by party poll watchers and observers.

Increased coordination between CNE and the media has also been a significant deterrent to postelection violence in Timor-Leste. Public trust in official sources of information is crucial to acceptance of election results. CNE now publicizes interim results of the count in both local print media and radio broadcasts. Through effective use of the media, Timor's media and electoral institutions will prevent misinformation from influencing public opinion.

The Carter Center hopes that Timorese political leaders will send clear, unequivocal public messages to remind their supporters to respect the electoral process. Any concerns or petitions arising from the election results should be resolved openly through the appropriate legal channels so that political parties, voters, and observers can accept the final results with confidence.

The Carter Center will continue to follow the ongoing tabulation process and announcement of official results.

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