



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE
FRETILIN

Presidential candidature announcement

by

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In April, a presidential election will be held in our country for the second time.

Timor-Leste is at a critical juncture. The current situation will demand from each and every one of us a greater commitment to building National Unity and achieving Peace and Development in a Democratic State abiding by the Rule of Law that we are determined to establish and consolidate. The People will once again be asked to decide. The key to the future of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste lies in their verdict.

Elections are the process whereby the People freely elect their leaders.

And the time has come for announcing candidatures to the highest office in the Nation,

It is healthy for a democracy to have a diverse range of candidates and I want therefore to extend a greeting to my fellow countrymen and women who have already announced their candidatures.

I have pondered carefully my own candidature; I have listened to fellow countrymen and women from various political quarters and religious creeds.

Throughout the twenty-four years of occupation, I was privileged enough to live side-by-side with our People and to feel their strength and their resolve to win. I lived with them and I suffered with them. Together we saw our heroes fall, one by one. Therefore, it is also on their behalf that I accept to be FRETILIN's candidate. I am fully aware that I come from a humble background, from people whom I learned to serve in moments of great need, with the same gratification and the same courage that they themselves taught me. As FRETILIN's presidential candidate, I return to my roots and I call to mind the pain and the suffering that we shared. And I shall always seek inspiration in the examples set by our heroes, from Nicolau Lobato to Nino Konis Santana.

I am a member of FRETILIN and I owe to the party much of what I have learned throughout my life. With FRETILIN, I learned to cherish pluralism, dialogue and tolerance.

I am aware that the President of the Republic, as an office held by a single person, is endowed with exceptional powers.

It is the President of the Republic's duty to facilitate the dialogue and to build bridges between the various forces in society, and to actively seek consensus around major national objectives with a view to ensuring social cohesion.

The Constitution also grants to the President of the Republic a range of powers to be used, under exceptional circumstances, to safeguard the Sovereignty and the Unity of the State.

Having pondered all this very carefully, I decided to announce my candidature to the office of the President of the Republic, as FRETILIN's candidate.

But my candidature is a candidature open to all, and it will welcome the support of any sector of East Timorese society.

I am a Catholic by conviction. But as regards religious beliefs and religious freedom, I shall do my best to foster the dialogue between the different options and alternatives, whenever necessary. I shall fight with all my strength against any form of extremism or fanaticism, regardless of its origin. And I shall wholeheartedly promote ecumenism.

I promise to be a President that will seek solutions for problems. I shall never be a source of conflicts myself.

I shall pay attention to all sectors of society. I shall work together with all the organs of sovereignty, in particular with the Government, as well as with organized civil society and with traditional society with a view to promoting youth and women; to fostering gender equality; to creating conditions for the protection of the elderly and the most vulnerable communities; to restoring veterans and former combatants to the dignity they deserve, by fulfilling their rightful aspirations to housing, health care and a honourable monthly stipend.

With the other Organs of Sovereignty, I shall strengthen our mutual solidarity and I shall not promote institutional conflict.

As regards our relations with other countries, I shall bear in mind that we live in a global world. In close coordination with the other Organs of Sovereignty, I shall encourage any diplomatic efforts aimed at fostering friendship and mutually advantageous cooperation between all the nations of the World. I shall draw on Timor-Leste's assets on the international scene to promote Peace in the region and in the World. I shall engage in initiatives aimed at establishing agreements with our neighbours, particularly with Indonesia and Australia, in areas of common interest, notably in the areas of regional and global security and defence.

As President of the Republic, I shall strictly abide by the powers granted to me by the Constitution and the law. In coordination with other Organs of Sovereignty, and while fully respecting their exclusive powers, I shall contribute to building up the multilateral, regional and international institutions of which we are members.

I shall pay particular attention and give a significant amount of my time to CPLP and to the buttressing of our Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

Our accession to ASEAN shall be one of my main priorities. And I shall give all my support to the Government in finding a formula to strengthen our relations with the members of the Asia Pacific Forum.

We shall pursue a One-China policy as an inalienable element of our Democratic State governed by the Rule of Law and, as President of the Republic, I shall always act accordingly.

With our closest neighbours, Indonesia and Australia, we must strive to reinforce our relations of friendship and cooperation and we must seek friendly ways to settle our disputes.

Timor-Leste, with its privileged geo-political location, where geography connects us to Asia and Oceania, and history and culture bond us to other continents like America, Africa and Europe, should always be a forum for the promotion of concord between peoples, a platform for the sharing of universal values and a meeting point for cultures.

As President of the Republic, I shall resolutely exert my influence to ensure that this vocation of ours may turn true.

In this decisive hour, I appeal to all my fellow countrymen and women, to my comrades-in-arms, especially to former combatants, to the members of clandestine organizations, to youth, to *buiberes* and *mauberes*, to intellectuals, to business people, to the organizations of civil society and to the ancient institutions of traditional society, to the Catholic Church and to all the religious creeds in our country, to come together and to help turn my candidature into a truly national presidential candidature. I shall never confound my role as President of FRETILIN with the Office of President of the Republic. I am a son of the common people. I shall continue to bow before the common people and I pledge to be their servant, always.

I appeal to all. Let us all honour our traditions, our culture, and our identity. For only thus shall we be able to address the momentous challenges that lie before us.

I shall be the President of all and a President for all.

A President who shall contribute to strengthening Peace and Stability.

A President who shall strive to bolster the Sovereignty of the State and the Authority and Powers of its Organs and Institutions.

A President who shall contribute to an increased capacity of the Judiciary.

A President who shall seek to strengthen and unite the institutions of Defense and Security.

A President who shall defend the rights and the freedoms of citizens and gender equality.

A President who shall ensure the safety of every citizen.

A President who shall seek to improve our relations with all the countries of the world.

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