



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE
FRETILIN

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Renewed media beat-up on FRETILIN

Timor-Leste society is again reeling – because of high-handed political decisions by its unconstitutional Prime Minister Jose Alexandre Gusmao and its new President Jose Ramos Horta. But the international media, particularly in Australia and the United States, can only blame FRETILIN.

“Without any evidence, ABC TV News reported that FRETILIN youths were behind the outburst of violence in Dili and Baucau in the last two days,” said FRETILIN Vice President and parliamentarian Arsenio Bano. “This violence flows from the perception that the elections have not yet resolved the political crisis, and that might, rather than the rule of law, is right.

“Yes, FRETILIN members are strongly protesting at the refusal of the President to ask the largest single party or alliance voted into the new parliament to form a government. But this is political protest and not violence against people or property,” said Mr Bano. “We strongly condemn the violence, and in particular, see the burning of the Customs House as criminal opportunism to destroy incriminating records”.

Mr Bano pointed to *Time Magazine's* report from Dili on August 6, 2007, which continued to use Vicente 'Railos' da Conceicao as a credible source on violence in Timor-Leste, without a touch of irony. “This exposes *Time* for its blatant bias against FRETILIN, which is a disservice to the international community and to journalism,” said Mr Bano.

“Railos is a civilian – is not and never was a colonel, but was once a sergeant - who is actually still armed, and leads an armed group, and who worked for the election campaigns of Ramos Horta and Gusmao. But *Time* allows Railos to allege without any proof at all that FRETILIN has an armed group which aims to assassinate political figures”.

The UN Special Commission of Inquiry into last year's violence recommended that Railos be tried for serious crimes relating to May 23-26 2006 in the Dili area, but he has not been brought to justice. His is a case of blatant impunity.

Time recycled the wrong information about the FRETILIN figure, Rogerio Lobato, who was tried and jailed – not for arming a political hit squad – but for arming civilians as police, and for four cases of manslaughter relating to the deaths of four members of that armed group of civilians when they attacked the Timorese Army headquarters on May 24, 2006. When they made that attack none other than Railos led them.

“Now that is amazing spin, but it isn't credible,” said Mr Bano. “Instead *Time* whitewashes the complex currents behind the political violence in Timor-Leste so that only FRETILIN gets blamed”.

FRETILIN won more votes than any other party or alliance in the parliamentary elections, despite the massive media attack it suffered, including from the international media, and the bitter and venomous campaign against it by Gusmao.

“It is a widely held view that the unconstitutional Prime Minister is a divisive force in our society,” argued Mr Bano. “Many regard him as having few ideas for a national development program. Some of his ideas include a high-tech high cost military and a wall of hotels along the Dili foreshore. He has also shown disdain for prudent management of our petroleum fund and flippancy for national indebtedness during the campaign.

“FRETILIN in contrast promoted the idea of an inclusive, unifying government with pro-people policies, one where the Prime Minister would be neither FRETILIN nor Gusmao, but this was rejected out of hand especially by Gusmao.

“The 29% who voted for FRETILIN – and many more - can see what this means. FRETILIN will contest this outcome as a political opposition, and by legal action in our courts. FRETILIN strongly opposes all violent responses, and remains committed to restoring a normal stable life for the Maubere people.”

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