

## 11,000 supporters at Fretilin Oecussi rally

From correspondents in Timor Leste



FRETILIN supporters at the Oecussi rally on Saturday 24 February.

Source: <http://timor-online.blogspot.com>

DILI, 26 February 2007

FRETILIN held a mass pre-election rally on 24 February 2007 in the district enclave of Oecussi-Ambeno on the western half of the island of Timor. The rally was attended by around 11,000 FRETILIN supporters who shouted "Viva Fretilin! Viva Lu'Olo! and Viva Alkatiri!" (Long live Fretilin, Long live Lu'Olo and Long live Alkatiri) when the Fretilin delegation arrived. The total population of the district of Oecussi-Ambeno is slightly less than 60,000 people.

The rally eclipsed the Baucau rally held on 27 January 2007 as Timor Leste's biggest public meeting since Fretilin supporters staged a counter-demonstration against coup plotters in Dili in June last year.

The rally was the first held by Fretilin since party president and guerilla fighter turned politician, Francisco "Lu'Olo" Guterres, announced that he would stand in elections for President of the Republic to be held in April.

Speaking on his return to Dili, Lu'Olo said (English translation from Tetum) "The rally was a success and demonstrates the great support that Fretilin has in Oecussi. We must never forget the people of Oecussi who suffered so much, as we all did, during the struggle for independence and who have always wanted to be a part of an independent Timor-Leste despite their isolation". Lu'Olo added that the huge turn out at Oecussi gave him confidence that he made the right decision in standing for President of the Republic.

Lu'Olo, having spent the entire 24 years of the independence struggle in the mountains and whose campaign slogan is "I shall be the President of all and a President for all", stated that "as President I will work tirelessly to strengthen the country's political and economic independence. To do this we must strengthen the country's institutions, particularly that of the judiciary and also focus on economic development at the grassroots level so that our people can be alleviated from abject poverty". Lu'Olo said that as President "I will promote the interests of youth and equality for women; I will work to protect the elderly and the most vulnerable communities; and I will promote housing, health care and pensions for veterans of the independence struggle".

Lu'Olo wished all the other prospective candidates the best of luck and was confident that the presidential elections would be peaceful despite the latest spike in violence which has resulted in the death of two Timorese nationals who were shot by Australian soldiers. A joint investigation is being conducted by the UN, the Australian army and the East Timorese government to ascertain the facts and circumstances that led to the death of the two Timorese nationals.

The presidential elections will take place on 9 April 2007, with several prominent East Timorese politicians, including current Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta, having announced their intention to contest the election. Under the Constitution, each prospective candidate will need to obtain the support of at least 5000 voters to be eligible to stand in the election.

An English translation of Lu'Olo's announcement of his candidacy for President of the Republic, and also a short biography are available from [www.timortruth.com](http://www.timortruth.com).



Above: Party General Secretary, Mari Alkatiri (blue shirt and scarf) speaks to supporters in Oecussi.

Source: <http://timor-online.blogspot.com>



Supporters gather in their thousands at Oecussi (left) and party president and presidential candidate, Lu'Olo, having a good time at the rally (pictured right with scarf)

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