

Francisco Guterres Lu Olo for President

“I shall be a President of all and for all”

Media release

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Call to investigate suspected killer's election role

A disgraced Timor-Leste (East Timor) army sergeant recommended for prosecution in connection with the shooting deaths of several people, has emerged as a prominent member of Jose Ramos Horta's presidential election campaign team.

Vicente da Conceição (alias Railos) is a principal campaigner for Ramos Horta in Liquiça. Amongst the campaign activities which he has undertaken include being seen by FRETILIN local militants in the Suco of Vatuboro meeting with local voters and promoting Ramos Horta, District of Liquiça, he helped to mobilized villagers in the Liquiça district for Ramos Horta's campaign rally in Liquiça town on the 24th of March 2007 and held a rally in support of Ramos Horta's candidacy in Fatukesi on Good Friday, which was witnessed by FRETILIN militants.

In recent weeks Railos has moved openly around Dili an around Eremera and Liquiça Districts in a white Pajero 4WD (registration number 15-013) since the first round campaigning began, accompanied by a uniformed Timor-Leste National Police officer.

FRETILIN-backed Presidential candidate Francisco Guterres Lu Olo today called on Ramos Horta to explain his close connection with Railos and foreshadowed an investigation into Ramos Horta's apparent interference in the prosecution investigation into Railos.

Railos, who was dismissed from the Timor-Leste army (F-FDTL) in 2004 for misappropriation of funds, was recommended for prosecution by the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry last October.

The UN Commission recommended Railos be prosecuted for his role in leading an attack on an F-FDTL barracks at Taci Tolu/Tibar on 24 May 2006 in which as many as nine people were killed, and for “the illegal possession, use and movement” of weapons.

Railos is known to have visited the office of the Prime Minister as late as last Monday (April 23), though in the absence of Ramos Horta. Timorese journalists report that Railos met with the Prime Minister's United Nations-funded “Advisor on Investment”, Chris Santos – an Australian national. Santos has refused to comment to journalists on the reason for the visit or the substance of the conversations between himself and Railos.

There is believed to be an outstanding arrest warrant issued against Railos but strangely it has not yet been executed.

Lu Olo said today that if elected he would move to have a joint parliamentary and presidential commission investigate political interference with the Prosecutor General's Office in relation to investigation process involving alleged crimes committed by Railos.

"I am concerned about statements made to the press by the Prosecutor General regarding the investigation process into Railos," Lu Olo said.

Lu Olo referred to a report in the Dili newspaper *Jornal Diário* on Wednesday 25 April quoting the Prosecutor General as saying that Railos would be called before the Prosecutor who has carriage of the investigation to give a statement with respect to the allegations against him, but that this would only occur "after the Presidential elections".

Earlier this month on 16 April Jornal Diário also reported comments by Ramos Horta, in response to a reporter's question, which suggested that Railos could not yet be called before the prosecuting authorities because he was undertaking work as a mediator with army mutineers – the so-called petitioners.

Jornal Diário quoted Ramos Horta as saying in reference to Railos: "The Prosecutor General of the Republic is the one who knows about this case because of this Railos is currently strongly supporting attempts to hold dialogue with the petitioners. I have contacted Railos and all the others who know that he will be speaking with the petitioners and help in the dialogue with the F-FDTL."

Then on 24 April Ramos Horta announced that if elected President he would order the Prosecutor General to re-open his investigation of events in May-June last year.

Lu Olo said today: "In light of recent statements by Ramos Horta declaring his intention to intervene with the Prosecutor General's investigation into a criminal case, which also involves Railos as the principal witness, I have to ask why Railos will not be called for questioning until after the election? Has the Prosecutor General been under any other pressure from my opponent when exercising his function as Prime Minister – or been subject to pressure from anyone else – to delay bringing Railos before the prosecuting authorities for questioning?"

Lu Olo stressed he was not alleging improper conduct by the Prosecutor General. "The Prosecutor General has proven by his public statements in recent days that he understands the independence of his office in this case. However, we all know pressure can be brought on the Prosecutor General in all sorts of ways, for example by the statements by my opponent declaring his close relationship with and trust in Railos.

"We are also entitled to ask whether this has anything to do with Railos being a principal campaigner for my opponent in the Liquiça and Ermera districts.

"I believe we have gone nowhere near the roots of this issue. For the sake of the future of our justice system, we have to find answers to this sordid affair. It seems one man has been put above the legal process and the law.

"It becomes clearer to us all each day what sort of justice people can expect in Timor-Leste if Ramos Horta were to be elected President. It would be a system of selective justice, just as it was in Suharto's time, when the President would say who would or would not be investigated or prosecuted. I for one will struggle to prevent our nation from returning to that time in our history," said Lu Olo.

Lu Olo has previously called on his opponent to "respect the Constitution and laws of Timor-Leste" by respecting the independence of the justice institutions, especially the courts and Prosecutor General.

"The Prosecutor General, his deputy and others in our justice system have shown great maturity and courage in defending their institutional independence against attacks on it by my opponent. They have shown themselves to have a deeper understanding and commitment to our constitution and laws than my opponent has shown," said Lu Olo.

"I want them to know that as President I will move quickly with the Parliament, government and development partners to adequately fund and strengthen the courts and the Prosecutor General's Office.

“Only by showing such solidarity will we guarantee the independence and transparency of these institutions so vital to our nation’s future. It is fortunate that my opponent has made these ill informed comments because it has enabled all concerned to know every clearly the differences between myself and my opponent.”

Lu Olo said he was happy with the support given to his statements by members of parliament including Vicente Guterres (Christian Democratic Party/Christian Democratic Union) and the Deputy Provedor (Ombudsman) for Human Rights and Justice, Silverio Pinto.

“It seems everyone except my opponent understands that the independence of the Prosecutor General and his Office is a central pillar of our justice system,” said Lu Olo.

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