

# Lu'Olo's presidential campaign launch a huge success despite heavy rain

From correspondents in Timor Leste



FRETILIN supporters gather in their thousands to support local hero Lu'Olo's bid to become President of Timor-Leste in Ossu, Viqueque district on 23 March 2007

Source: Department of Information and Mobilisation of Fretilin

DILI, 25 March 2007

A former freedom fighter who is now President of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste (East Timor), Francisco "Lu'Olo" Guterres, on 23 March 2007 launched his campaign to become President of the Republic at a rally of 10,000 supporters who gathered despite heavy rain in the town of Ossu, southeast of Dili.

Ossu is Lu'Olo's birthplace and the region where he first served his people as a young freedom fighter when he retreated to the mountains with Fretilin forces after the Indonesian invasion in 1975. He fought in the mountains throughout the entire 24-year occupation and was the most senior Fretilin official in Timor-Leste when the Indonesian army left in 1999.

At the rally, Lu'Olo, who is also the president of Fretilin, delivered a speech based on his election promises which were released to the public on 22 March 2007. He said that if elected president of the republic on April 9 he would "be the President of all and a President for all".

Lu'Olo said that he would be a President who would work to resolve the current crisis and establish peace and stability in Timor-Leste. He added that he did not want to be a President that incited divisions between people from the west of the country, Loromonu, and people from the east of the country, Lorosae- divisions that do not exist in East Timorese society.

Lu'Olo said that when Fretilin began to govern, the country had no money and that this had made development difficult. However, now the government had money flowing from the petroleum fund, the opposition forces were trying to bring the government down by wrongly accusing the ex-prime minister and party Secretary General Mari Alkatiri of distributing weapons (the East Timorese prosecutor general recently confirmed that there was a lack of evidence to support the allegation that Alkatiri had armed a hit squad to eliminate political opponents).

Lu'Olo said that he had full knowledge of the competencies which the constitution and laws attributed to the office of President and that he would not be a source of conflict himself.

During the rally Lu'Olo and Alkatiri released pigeons into the sky to signify peace and stability for Timor Leste.

On Fretilin supporting his candidacy, Lu'Olo said that after Timor-Leste had voted for independence in 1999 he planned to leave public life and come back to Ossu to work in agriculture to support his family. However, he decided not to take this path because the party had requested him to join National Parliament as a parliamentarian. He was now launching his bid to become President because the party had requested him to do so and he called on his colleagues to assist him to successfully fulfil his role as President of the Republic.

The Ossu crowd, as expected, was jubilant that one of their own was bidding to become the second President of the young Republic after the restoration of independence on 20 May 2002. When the trucks rolled into Ossu at the start of the day, the packed passengers continuously shouted “Viva Lu’Olo, Viva Fretilin”. At the rally, supporters sang and danced and at one stage they broke through a makeshift barrier to get closer to the stage from where Lu’Olo delivered his speech. The onset of rain did not stop the festivities.

After the rally, the town of Ossu held a lunch in honour of their local hero at the marketplace which was attended by more than a hundred people.

Speaking after the rally, Lu’Olo said (Tetum translation to English) “I am extremely pleased with the turn out today, especially with the presence of so many young Fretilin members who are so important for the future of our country and party. I am honoured to have their support and the support of the people of Ossu”.



Above: Party president and presidential candidate Lu’Olo gets ready to release his pigeon which symbolises peace and stability for Timor-Leste

Source: Department of Information and Mobilisation of Fretilin



Supporters listen to Lu'Olo delivering his speech (left) and Lu'Olo (sitting down with black shirt) relaxes after the rally at a lunch held in his honour at the Ossu marketplace with party Secretary General Mari Alkatiri (mobile phone) and two senior Fretilin officials, Gregorio Souza (striped shirt) and Adriano Corte-Real (Fretilin hat) (right).

Source: Department of Information and Mobilisation of Fretilin