



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE FRETILIN

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Former guerrilla fighter Lu'Olo launches presidential campaign

Francisco "Lu'Olo" Guterres, a freedom fighter who became President of the National Parliament of Timor-Leste (East Timor), today 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.

Lu'Olo, who is now also president of Fretilin, 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 reflected on the political and constitutional crisis which had engulfed the tiny nation for the past year and promised that if he became President he would "work together with all State institutions and society to explore all possible avenues to reach consensus in accordance with the State's guiding principles and practices, to deepen the culture of democracy and peace [and] to build and consolidate a more just, balanced and equitable society".

Lu'Olo vowed he would not allow the constitution and laws to be manipulated in his favour or in favour of others and promised he would never be a source of conflict himself.

He added: "I shall never confuse my role as President of Fretilin with the Office of President of the Republic" and assured the crowd he had full knowledge of the competencies which the constitution and laws attribute to the office of President.

Lu'Olo promised to work to free Timor-Leste from poverty and illiteracy, to promote equality between men and women, to uphold democracy and to encourage a climate where peace becomes the culture of all Timorese.

He said he would work to build a quality education system free for everyone, a free health system and a decent life for war veterans and the elderly.

Speaking from Dili, Jose Manuel Fernandes, who is the official representative of Lu'Olo pursuant to the electoral laws and also Fretilin Deputy Secretary General said Fretilin is proud to support Lu'Olo who has all the credentials to become President of the Republic.

"He is a former freedom fighter, a political leader, a family man, a devout Catholic, the President of the National Parliament and above all a man of the people and from the people who came from humble beginnings," Fernandes said.

Fernandes said "Lu'Olo has gained invaluable experience in his role as President of the National Parliament which would serve him well if he was elected President. The National Parliament under Lu'Olo's leadership continued to function during the recent crisis despite concerted efforts by some opposition parties to dissolve it."

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For photos of the launch of Lu'Olo's presidential campaign in Ossu please email fretilin.media@gmail.com