



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE

FRETILIN

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Ramos Horta and Gusmão manipulate state television

Fretilin, the largest political party in Timor-Leste (East Timor) today accused Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta and President Xanana Gusmao of manipulating state owned television to promote the presidential campaign of Ramos Horta.

Fretilin-backed presidential candidate Francisco Guterres Lu Olo, said Gusmao, Ramos Horta and Dili Bishop Alberto Ricardo da Silva appeared together on TVTL television to deliver an easter message.

“As a presidential candidate Ramos Horta should not be giving a nationally televised ‘Message from the Prime Minister’ three days before the election on 9 April (Monday)” said Lu Olo who is president of the national parliament.

“The program was structured so as to give the impression that Gusmão and the Church endorsed Ramos Horta’s presidential campaign”.

In a statement made this morning Lu Olo said the use of government resources was an abuse of power by Ramos Horta and added that it was the latest in a series of actions by Gusmão to facilitate a job swap between Gusmão and Ramos Horta.

“Firstly, Gusmão announced that he will lead a new party which has deliberately been given the name CNRT in order to mislead and deceive voters. He is immorally trying to capitalise on the achievements of the National Council of Timorese Resistance which was also known as CNRT.

“Secondly, Gusmao has begun making media statements promoting his party and also himself for the position of prime minister when he is still President of the Republic.”

“Thirdly, on 4 April (Wednesday) Gusmao attended Ramos Horta’s election rally in Dili and openly declared his support for Ramos Horta’s bid to become President of the Republic. This is a blatant attempt by Gusmao to try to hand pick his successor.

“If the intention was to deliver a holy Easter message of peace and conciliation from the nation’s leadership they should have invited me in my capacity as president of the national parliament to join them in addressing the nation,’ Lu Olo said.

Late last night Lu Olo sought and received approval from TVTL to deliver a message in his capacity as president of parliament. It is expected to be broadcast this evening.

In the pre-recorded message Lu Olo warned against “politicians who abuse their functions as leaders of state to use and abuse the state-owned media.”

“They pretended to appeal for peace and tranquility for the elections, but they did it in an unconstitutional manner designed to project and clean up the image of a certain candidate.

“I’m very sorry that this incident occurred in a state based on the rule of law and democratic principles.

“I appeal to national and international journalists not be influenced by these manoeuvres which have damaged the electoral process. We want journalists to be impartial and transparent for the cause of the Timorese nation.

“I urge national and international observers to follow carefully the elections with a full sense of responsibility.”

Lu Olo appealed to people not to use violence, to avoid provocations “and if you find people using violence to disrupt the election you should inform the police.

“Let’s show to our children and the world that we are a people who love peace and prosperity.”

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