



Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Prime Minister's Office

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Prime Minister Da Silva visits victims of violence in Ermera district

Timor-Leste (East Timor) Prime Minister Estanislau Da Silva has visited hundreds of victims of recent violence in Ermera district southwest of Dili and promised measures to boost security in the lead-up to the June 30 parliamentary election.

Da Silva, a leader of the majority Fretilin party, said the attacks on people and property in Ermera followed the May 9 presidential election and were aimed at intimidating the Ermera community.

"It is important for the government to know what is happening in Ermera district so we can take concrete measures to restore security and allow election campaigning to take place peacefully," he said.

"The government will also make efforts to arrest the perpetrators of these attacks and bring them to justice.

"The Fretilin government will not tolerate violent behaviour of any kind."

During his weekend Saturday visit to Ermera, Da Silva visited 70 people from the suco (administrative region) of Orahu who have taken refuge in government buildings in the district capital of Gleno.

"Their homes were torched by agitators that want to create instability in the area to prevent people from participating in election campaigning and the 30 June parliamentary elections," Da Silva said.

He also visited about 200 people sheltering in coffee plantations in the suco of Poetete after their houses were burned or their families subjected to intimidation.

Da Silva said Ermera district had been the target of anti-government activities for the past year.

"In early May 2006, a police officer was killed in Gleno when supporters of the army petitioners attacked members of the Rapid Intervention Unit who were protecting the Secretary of State for Region III on an official visit to Gleno," he said.

"In February 2007, Valente Soares, a 24-year-old orphan, and caretaker of Fretilin's Ermera headquarters was murdered.

"Incidents of harassment and intimidation of the local population have increased recently."

Attached below are pictures of Da Silva's visit to Ermera district.

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Left: Timor-Leste Prime Minister Estanislau Da Silva (blue vest) talks to victims of violence in Orahau suco, Ermera district, west of Dili.



Left: Da Silva (blue vest) examines property damage in Orahau suco, Ermera district.