



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE
FRETILIN

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FRETILIN demands a halt to inflammatory language

FRETILIN, the largest political party in Timor-Leste, today demanded that the National Congress of Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) stop using inflammatory language and behaviour in campaigning for the 30 June parliamentary election.

The party rejected allegations by CNRT and the President of the Republic Jose Ramos Horta that it was connected to the shooting death of Afonso "Kudalai" Guterres and another CNRT supporter on Sunday 3 June in Viqueque district east of Dili.

Arsenio Bano, a member of Fretilin's central committee and national political commission, said the use of inflammatory language by CNRT in a written statement yesterday (4 June) undermined the judicial process and the development of the rule of law in Timor-Leste.

"CNRT's accusations are completely baseless and defamatory and breach the electoral law and the election code of conduct signed by all political parties only last week," Bano said.

"We understand that people are upset by the death of Mr Guterres and we extend our condolences to the family of the deceased. The death of any East Timorese is a serious matter. However, it is completely irresponsible for a political party, in a democratic state based on the rule of law, to call the alleged shooter a murderer without a proper independent investigation and fair trial."

Bano said FRETILIN welcomed the decision to hold an investigation and would support the judicial process in fairly applying the rule of law.

Bano said the investigation needed to answer many questions about the incident.

Bano asked: "Were CNRT members carrying guns and, if so, who gave them the weapons? Had any of the CNRT members been previously involved in acts of violence and intimidation against people in Viqueque district? Did the people involved in the shooting incident have a history of personal conflict?"

"We also don't understand why people accompanying the CNRT party were seen on national television yesterday armed with long rifles in Viqueque district. Are they civil police? This needs to be investigated or explained to the public so as to prevent the spread of disinformation."

Bano said CNRT has used inflammatory behaviour since the start of the election campaign. He cited the use of the FRETILIN flag during CNRT rallies and direct personal attacks made against the FRETILIN leadership.

"We have complained to the National Electoral Commission about the misuse of our flag and we will consider defamation action against CNRT for linking FRETILIN with the shooting death of Mr Guterres," Bano said.

The President of FRETILIN Francisco Guterres Lu Olo also responded to a written statement by the President of the Republic Jose Ramos Horta issued soon after the CNRT statement yesterday.

"We call on the President to use more measured language when commenting on these incidents.

"As the head of state, it is the President's role to be the guarantor of national unity and independence and he has a duty to choose his words carefully. The President should promote the resolution of this issue through the proper legal channels.

"The use of similar irresponsible language last year by some of the nation's leaders destabilised an already delicate situation and incited violence."

For more information, please contact Arsenio Bano on (+670) 733 9416 (Dili)