



Vote for FRETILIN!

2007 Parliamentary Elections

“Defending Timor-Leste’s independence”

Media release

20 June 2007

FRETILIN urges support for President’s stand on justice

FRETILIN today expressed support for President José Ramos Horta’s publicly stated position that amnesties should not be granted “for serious crimes or crimes against humanity” because it “would be inconsistent with international law”.

As the majority party in Timor Leste (East Timor), FRETILIN called on all parties to express their support for President Ramos Horta’s statements quoted in an AAP report of 15 June 2007.

FRETILIN parliamentary candidate Aniceto Guterres said today: “Like President Ramos Horta, FRETILIN believes the search for justice should begin with thorough investigations into crimes which lead to prosecutions, trials and sentencing. This is because respect for human rights and the rule of law is of utmost importance for our emerging democracy. Little countries like ours have always had faith in the international rule of law as the only safeguard for the small nations.

“FRETILIN is the only political institution that has consistently defended the right to justice for the victims of human rights abuses in Timor-Leste.

“It was FRETILIN who insisted that the legislation creating the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) and the Commission for Truth and Friendship (CTF) not include amnesties or immunities for people who committed serious crimes between 1975 and 1999. We were acting in keeping with our commitment to the principles of international rule of law. We resisted pressures by some political leaders, including some who are contesting these elections to ensure that justice and the rule of law was preserved.”

Guterres added: “The granting of amnesty should not be a pre-condition for cooperating with investigations. Amnesty is just a tool to be used in appropriate circumstances, say for example, where it can lead to the uncovering of the truth which is also essential to achieving justice and reconciliation.”

Guterres said that CAVR and CTF are only the beginning of the search for justice. FRETILIN will place high priority to and promptly initiate formal debate on the recommendations from the Final Report of the CAVR (“CHEGA!”).

He said: “The pursuit of justice is essential for this nation because even the crimes of 1999 have not been resolved satisfactorily. This has meant that people involved with the pro-autonomy militia now hold senior positions in some political parties or are candidates for the upcoming parliamentary elections. This means they could be elected to National Parliament, the supreme law making body of Timor-Leste. Voters must know where all parties stand on this issue.

“I challenge the other political parties to clearly state their position on this issue, as we have done. We have received some criticism but we have received much more support for our stand. It is the right thing to do and we will keep doing it.”

Regarding Timor-Leste’s relationship with Indonesia, Guterres said: “It is important to promote good relationships with our neighbours. This is something the FRETILIN government has always done. We will always place paramount importance on promoting good relations with the Indonesian state and people. However, this should not result in our nation doing things which result in justice not being pursued or the process of reconciliation between our nations neglected.

“When FRETILIN speaks about justice we are not talking about simple words or theories. We are committed to the process of justice, truth and healing which will lead to true reconciliation for the people of Timor-Leste who are an inspiring and proud people and who deserve the dignity of due process and the rule of law.

“We very much welcome the President’s recent statements of support for the primacy of justice and the rule of law in accordance with international law in relation to serious crimes or crimes against humanity.”

For more information, please contact:

José Teixeira (+670) 728 7080

www.timortruth.com, www.fretilin-rdtl.blogspot.com