



FRENTE REVOLUCIONÁRIA DO TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENTE
FRETILIN

Media Release
Wednesday 16 May 2007

Fretilin passes law to protect voters after the parliamentary election

Fretilin, the largest political party in East Timor (Timor-Leste), today passed an amendment to the electoral law for the parliamentary elections, which will reduce the risk of intimidation and violence of voters following the announcement of the election result.

Francisco Branco, a Fretilin member of the National Parliament and a member of the party's National Political Commission, said, "The amendment to the law means that the counting of votes for the parliamentary election will take place in district centres instead of at the polling booths in sucos."

The suco is the fourth tier of government administration and sits below the national, district and sub-district levels. A suco is a grouping of villages.

"The amendment will mean that no one will know how the people in each suco voted. This will reduce the risk of intimidation and violence for voters," explained Branco.

"This arrangement for counting ballots is similar to that taken in the 1999 independence referendum, where counting took place in Dili only".

Branco added, "It is quite clear that our members and supporters are under attack and intimidation in several districts following Jose Ramos Horta's victory in the presidential election. The Fretilin majority in the National Parliament has acted decisively to protect voters and help to ensure that a violence-free parliamentary election takes place on 30 June."

Branco also questioned the commitment of two opposition parties, PSD (Social Democrat Party) and PD (Democratic Party), to ensuring that the election is free of violence. PSD and PD members walked out of parliament in protest over the amendment to the electoral law.

For more information, please contact:

Jose Teixeira (+670) 728 7080 (Dili, Timor-Leste)

Paulo Araujo (+61) 424 413 525 (Darwin, Australia)