



Vote for FRETILIN!

2007 Parliamentary Elections

“Defending Timor-Leste’s independence”

Media release

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Group falsely claims to represent FRETILIN

Supporters of CNRT, the political party led by former president Xanana Gusmao, are breaking the Electoral Law and seeking to trick voters by falsely claiming to represent FRETILIN.

FRETILIN today denounced the so-called “FRETILIN Mudanca (reform) group” and said its false claim to represent FRETILIN was creating widespread anger among FRETILIN supporters.

“The Mudanca Group has broken the Electoral Law and violated the Code of Conduct, by participating in the election campaign of CNRT, the party led by Jose Alexandre Gusmao, ex-President of the Republic,” said Arsenio Bano, a FRETILIN Central Committee member and a FRETILIN parliamentary candidate in the June 30 elections.

FRETILIN lodged a formal complaint with the Electoral Commission on 31 May.

“Campaigning for CNRT, while using the name and symbols of FRETILIN, is in breach of the Electoral Law,” said Bano. He pointed in particular to Article 64 of the law, which says:

Whoever during an election campaign uses the name of a candidate or the symbol of any party with the intention of causing prejudice or injury is liable to imprisonment of one month or a fine of between \$50 and \$150.

“The so-called ‘FRETILIN Mudanca’ group is not registered with the Ministry of Justice under the Electoral Law,” Bano continued. “Therefore, it has no legal standing as a party, and no right to participate as such in the campaign”

“The Group is acting outside FRETILIN, and contrary to the rules governing the behaviour of party members under the statutes of our party,” he continued. “Some Mudanca individuals are candidates on the CNRT list, but continue to identify publicly as members of FRETILIN, in a blatant attempt to manipulate or confuse the electorate.”

“This sort of political manouvre is a gross attack on the principles of democracy. But it is particularly serious in a country where nearly half the voting population is illiterate,” said Bano.

Bano continued:

“They have absolutely no right to use our Party’s name. FRETILIN, the historic party of independence, survived only by maintaining its principles of organisation. Of these, party democracy and discipline, which requires our members to follow the decision of the majority of members, has always been one of the most important. Whoever steps outside the structures and rules of the Party, and campaigns against us for another party, loses the right to claim to be a member. This is the same for all democratic parties, all over the world.”

“No individual member or group of members can stand above the party,” he said.

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