



Fundasaun Mahein (FM), May 30th 2018

Press Release

Observation Report for Parliamentary/Early Elections 2018 May 12th 2018

During the Early Election (EA) period May 12th 2018, Fundasaun Mahein (FM) observed that the election period was relatively peaceful, and that electoral officials conducted the process more effectively. Voters were able to participate freely and safely, due to the highly visible presence of the National Police of Timor-Leste (PNTL). However, FM also noted some issues during the electoral process.

Regarding electoral security, there was good coordination between the PNTL and F-FDTL, despite the process for the F-FDTL's involvement still being unclear. The F-FDTL's involvement in internal security operations requires a Ministerial directive, delineating roles and responsibilities between security actors, yet information on this matter has not been made available yet. Despite this, FM's observed that F-FDTL members conducted themselves professionally and within electoral procedures.

The issue of Martial Arts Groups (MAG's) potentially being mobilized in support of the political parties was also of concern, despite their activities being banned under Law No.5 2017, in particular under Article 5 which prohibits their involvement with political parties.

The live transmission on national television of FRETILIN and AMP campaign activities provided the parties with a different medium to present their programs to the public. However, this devolved into personal attacks and criticisms of political opponents based around conflict between the old leaders. This fed into perceptions that the election was a conflict between old leaders representing the armed and diplomatic fronts of the resistance. FM consider this narrative to have been further spread and supported on social media by party supporters. CNE did call on the leaders of FRETILIN and AMP to stop these verbal attacks, yet this continued until the end of the campaign period.

Some FM electoral observers also experience difficulty voting on May 12, with one voting centre not allowing FM observers to vote and another voting centre permitting FM observers to vote. This was due to confusion over the voting lists provide by STAE. FM considers this a case of some electoral officials not understanding the role of electoral observers, and their right to vote at whatever voting centre they may be monitoring within the national territory.

The election result shows that AMP is a minority alliance with 34 Parliamentary seats out of a total of 65. This result allows AMP to form a government by itself. There is however ongoing public discussion as to whether this will be accepted as a majority, and that MP's from other parties may not participate in the new Parliament. FM is concerned this may occur, undermining good governance under the VIII Constitutional Government.

Recommendations

1. Recommend to all state organs that under Article 150 of the Constitution as members of the National Parliament (MPs), Prime Minister, Prosecutor General and Ombudsman for Human Rights (PDHJ) practice their competencies in the case of a Veto by the President of the Republic under Article 95 of the Constitution regarding the issue of a 2/3 majority to forming the VIII Constitutional Government.
2. Recommend to political party leaders strengthen good communication to ensure peace and stability during the formation of the VIII Constitutional Government.
3. Recommend that the public accept the election result that was recently announced
4. Recommends that STAE needs to pay attention to the failures identified in order to improve their service in subsequent elections.
5. Recommends that the security forces continue work independently to provide security for the induction ceremony of the 5th Legislature MPs and the formation of the VIII Constitutional Government.

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