

**Report of the
Solidarity Observer Mission for East Timor
(SOMET)**

**On the first round of the
Timor-Leste 2007 Presidential Elections**



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Executive summary

The 2007 Presidential election is the first national election conducted by the independent state of Timor-Leste. Twelve observers from the Solidarity Observer Mission for East Timor (SOMET) visited 52 polling stations in the districts of Dili, Liquica and Ermera during the first round of voting on 9 April. SOMET finds the elections to be free and fair. We believe the results reflect the wishes of the citizens of the country.

While the majority of both polling staff and voters were familiar with voting procedures, we observed a number of minor irregularities. Infractions of the measures to prevent double voting were the most prevalent and serious technical violations.

Candidate and party agents and ‘party observers’ were a dominant feature of many polling stations. We observed many more agents than were legally allowed, and they often engaged in inappropriate actions and/or concealed their identities.

Polling station staff did a laudable job in making the counting process transparent. However, we noted several violations of regulations, such as sensitive materials left unguarded and improper or inefficient counting of ballots. In many cases, we also witnessed confusion about the criteria for declaring ballots invalid.

We also observed several infractions of the previously announced procedure for the deployment of police and international military forces near polling stations.

On the basis of our observations, the SOMET mission recommends improvements in eight areas.

1. Future elections should be administered by an independent agency, outside the jurisdiction of any Government ministry.
2. We recommend a clear and consistent regulatory framework for elections. Any amendments to laws, regulations, codes of conduct or training materials and instructions should be made in good time, be internally consistent and be communicated to all involved in the electoral process.
3. We recommend that provisions be made for absentee voting for hospital patients, prisoners, the home bound and Timor-Leste citizens abroad.
4. We recommend that the rights and privileges of candidate and party agents be legally regulated; that their numbers be limited to one per candidate per polling station at any one time; that polling center staff be empowered to enforce regulations relating to agents; and that the anomalous positions of ‘party observer’ and ‘livre access’ be abolished.
5. We recommend that polling stations have more and adequately paid polling staff. Further instructions and training should focus on key tasks, such as checking voters’ fingers for ink, providing guidance to voters and safeguarding sensitive materials.
6. We recommend that all counting of ballots be done according to the counting regulations. Ballots should be accepted as valid if the intention of the voter is clear.
7. We recommend that police and military forces abide by transparent regulations governing their deployment.
8. We recommend that all commentators accurately represent the election process, especially after the voting.

Finally, we remind all officials involved in administering elections that international and national observers should have free access to all polling stations.

Solidarity Observer Mission for East Timor (SOMET)

The Solidarity Observer Mission for East Timor (SOMET), a non-partisan observer mission for the 2007 elections, observed the 9 April 2007 Presidential elections in three districts of Timor-Leste. This report details our observations from this first round of the elections and makes recommendations for future improvements of electoral practice. SOMET will continue to observe and report on the second round of the Presidential elections on 9 May and on the Parliamentary elections to be held on 30 June 2007.

On polling day SOMET dispatched twelve accredited, nonpartisan observers to 52 polling stations in Dili, Liquiça and Ermera districts to observe the voting and tabulation process. Our observers, of eight different nationalities, were Ernest Chamberlain, Christian Donn, Craig Hughes, Jaana Karhilo, Ruby Rose Lora, Catharina Maria, Joerg Meier, Veronica Pais, Charles Scheiner, Susan Severin, Santana Soares and Jill Sternberg.

SOMET was created by the international solidarity movement for Timor-Leste in response to requests from several civil society organizations in Timor-Leste to work in partnership with nonpartisan Timorese and other international observers to support an election process which is transparent, free and fair. All SOMET observers follow a code of conduct that stresses our non-partisanship and neutrality. We act in an independent manner, not supporting any parties or candidates. Nonpartisanship does not, however, mean indifference or passivity towards injustice or towards violations of any individual's basic human rights.

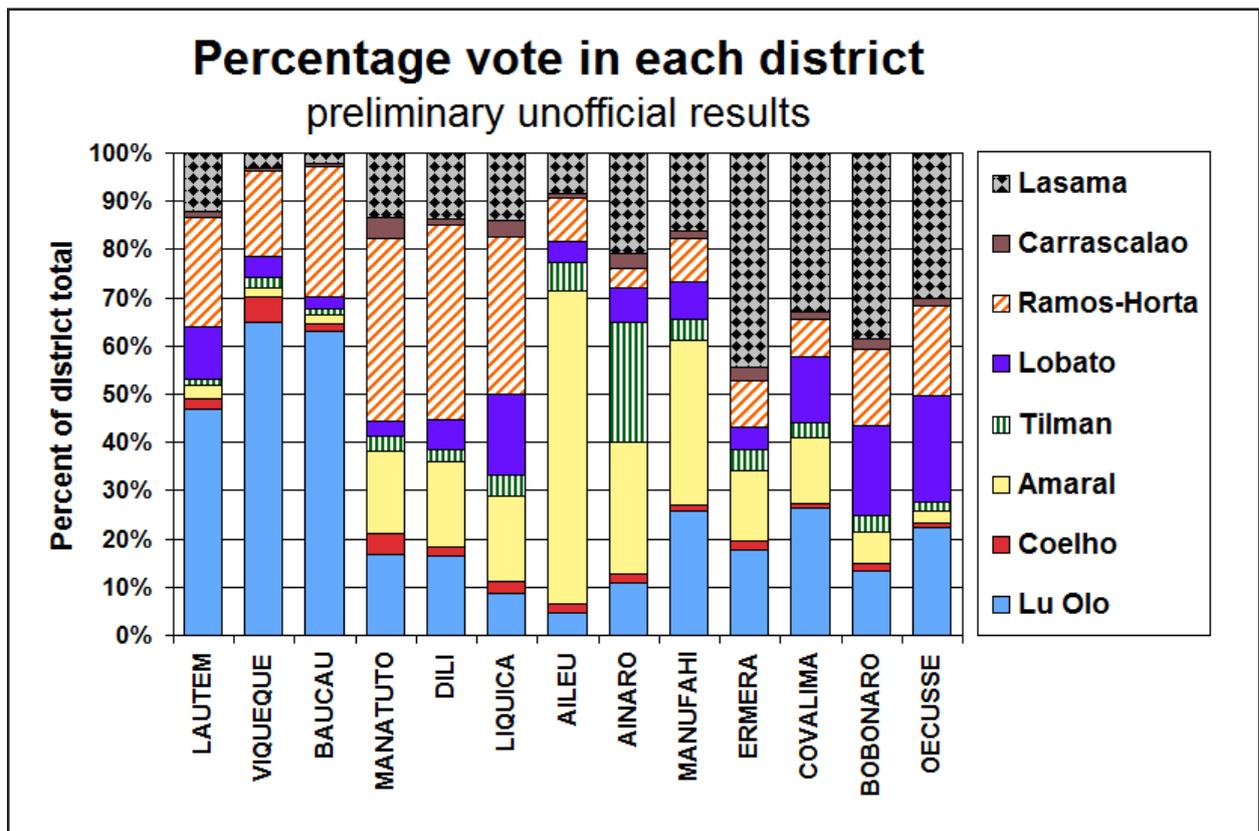
SOMET is a grassroots project of the U.S.-based East Timor and Indonesia *Action Network* (ETAN), Stichting Vrij Oost Timor (VOT) of the Netherlands, Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID) and the Asia Pacific Solidarity Coalition (APSOC) based in the Philippines, and World Forum for Democratization in Asia (WFDA). In Timor-Leste, SOMET cooperates with Asosiasaun HAK, Timor-Leste NGO Forum, La'o Hamutuk, FOKUPERS and Bibi Bulak.

Election history and context

After more than four centuries of autocratic rule from afar, the people of Timor-Leste have only been able to participate in democratic elections for less than eight years. During their first three national votes – for independence, the Constituent Assembly, and President, the results reflected the will of the voters. Despite an Indonesian-led terror campaign, determined Timorese voters went to the polls in 1999 to reject autonomy as an Indonesian province. Despite inexperience with free elections and parliamentary procedures, Timorese calmly and deliberately chose their Constituent Assembly (Parliament) in 2001 and President in 2002. These three national elections were conducted by the United Nations, in consultation with Timorese leaders.

The 2007 Presidential election is the first national election conducted according to Timor-Leste's own laws. Once again, Timorese voters have shown their understanding of and commitment to peaceful democratic processes, notwithstanding the crisis which began last year and the many dire warnings and threats of violence. Once again, Timor-Leste's electorate has refused to be intimidated from exercising their franchise. Although there were some relatively minor irregularities in many aspects of Monday's voting, by and large the process went smoothly, and we believe that the final results will reflect the wishes of the citizens of this country.

As in many parts of the world, politics here sometimes diverges from substantive discussions of policies and programs into charges and counter-charges about personal conduct of candidates or unfair campaign practices. We are hopeful that, as Timor-Leste's politicians gain more experience with democratic elections, future campaigns will include more proposals for and critiques of future and past government programs. As this country moves toward the future, it is important for the voters to decide in what direction it should go, not only who will lead it there.



We are both encouraged and concerned by the wide variations in poll results among different areas of the country. Regional and ethnic differences are clearly shown in the election results. With four candidates each winning at least three districts, the first choice of voters in approximately half the districts will not be in the second round. We urge all candidates, winners and losers alike, to continue their campaign practices of appealing to the entire population, and not try to exploit local differences to further polarize this diverse, small nation.

However, vote patterns also indicate that the great majority of voters clearly understood what they were choosing and felt free to express their opinion through the ballot. The relatively small numbers of invalid ballots demonstrate that few voters cast ballots in error. Democratic practices are already well-established in Timor-Leste's population.

In this first national election conducted by Timor-Leste authorities, many regulations and procedures had to be created. In spite of some confusion in the rules and gaps in enforcement, we congratulate all involved in designing and conducting the process. However, since this is the first of three elections in 2007, and the first of hundreds in a long future for democracy in Timor-Leste, we are suggesting a number of changes and additions which could make future elections proceed smoothly, with their results more readily accepted by all participants. In particular, we encourage the appropriate authorities to be pro-active and efficient, and avoid last-minute amendments and impromptu extra-legal procedures which led to controversy and confusion about procedures for this election.

The next round of the Presidential election is three weeks away, with the Parliamentary elections following less than two months after that. We encourage authorities, voters and campaigners alike to engage quickly and seriously in the upcoming elections, both to repair identified deficiencies and to continue to involve the citizens in this exercise of democracy. Many of these are easy to remedy, including last-minute changes regarding ballot symbols, party agents, and other items, as well as unclear procedures or inadequate training for identifying null ballots, counting processes, punching registration cards and checking ink on fingers. They should be dealt with quickly and unambiguously to maintain the momentum toward free and fair elections for next month's runoff.

Electoral regulatory framework

The mechanisms for the presidential elections consisted of laws, regulations, codes of conduct, training materials, instructions for staff and procedural guidelines, many of which had omissions and contradictions, and were created months or even weeks before the elections. These were implemented by the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE) and supervised by the National Electoral Commission (CNE), which was established only three months prior to Election Day. In this context, we are impressed by how well the election process went. Although our overall observations are positive, some weaknesses caused confusion and difficulty before, on, and after 9 April, or made the process less free and fair.

STAE is a Government agency, within the Ministry for State Administration. As a result, it is subject to political pressures from office-holders, making it difficult to conduct an impartial election without undue influence from parties currently in power. This manifested itself in several areas, most obviously in the extra credentials given to Government officials and the majority party.

1. **The regulatory framework was unstable until just before Election Day.**

The regulatory framework for Timor-Leste's first Presidential election had to be created from scratch. This challenging task was made more difficult by the combined effects of last-minute guidelines, legislative inexperience, unclear procedures and partisan influence. The *Law on the Election of the President of the Republic* was finalized only thirteen days before the election. The *Regulation on the Polling and Result Tabulation Procedures for the Election of the President of the Republic* was finalized shortly before the election. As the fifth pre-election report by the UN Electoral Certification Team stated, delays in finalizing legislation "compromised, to a greater or lesser extent, every activity the planning and execution of which depends on knowledge of the legal framework for the elections."

2. **Final ballot format came late.**

The decision to display symbols on ballots was made only days before the election. Article 38 of the December 2006 *Law on the Election of the President of the Republic* specified that each ballot would have the names and color photographs of candidates. However, the amended Law passed on 26 March 2007 added symbols. Two days later, CNE announced that it had approved each candidate's ballot symbol. Although STAE and other authorities managed to print and distribute the ballots in time, the lateness of this change made their task, as well as voter education, unnecessarily difficult.

3. **Timorese citizens who were abroad on Election Day could not vote.**

Article 47.1 of the Constitution of RDTL states that all citizens 17 years old and older are entitled to vote.

4. **Prisoners were not allowed to vote.**

Although Article 5 of the *Law on the Election of the President of the Republic* unconstitutionally barred sentenced individuals from voting, there were no provisions to enable incarcerated individuals pending trial or sentencing to vote. Neither the law for a specific election nor the absence of special voting procedures should violate the Constitution.

5. **Disabled voters were insufficiently provided for.**

Although Article 7 of the *Regulation the Polling and Result Tabulation Procedures for the Election of the President of the Republic* stated that polling stations were not allowed in

hospitals, no alternative provisions were made for hospital patients to vote. Staff at the Dili National Hospital told SOMET that patients informed them that they would like to vote, but could not. People with physical disabilities who could not travel to polling stations also had no way to vote.

6. Government officials were issued “Livre Access” passes without conditions or legal basis.

STAE granted approximately 100 “Livre Access” (free access) passes to Timor-Leste government officials. This does nothing to enhance the electoral process and brings a risk of undue influence or intimidation of voters.

Election process

The voting we observed took place in a peaceful manner. We did not witness any incidents of violence or obvious, overt intimidation. The clear majority of voters we interviewed felt comfortable about voting, and none reported having been threatened with violence or offered gifts to induce them to vote for a particular candidate. However, several voters reported having witnessed threats or violence against others during the campaign, but they were not deterred from casting their ballots.

A few days before the election, we learned that around 100 election workers were threatening to strike, asking for more than the allotted \$10/day. Voting officials were able to convince them to work, and polling centers we observed had at least the minimum required three staffers, and most had all five. They were stretched at times to handle the incessant stream of voters during peak hours, the zealous candidate and party agents, and the numerous, sometimes boisterous, spectators, but they worked hard and seriously throughout the long day.

Most of the polling stations we observed opened on time and according to proper procedure. Staff paid positive attention to the special needs of the pregnant, disabled, elderly, sick or those with children, and allowed them to vote ahead of others in the queue. At one polling station, we observed a visiting STAE official reminding polling staff of their duties towards the vulnerable, but at most polling centers this was already taken care of.

Although concerns about insufficient supplies of ballot papers had been reported prior to polling day, our teams did not observe problems in this regard. One UNV informed us of back-up measures in place in case of shortages, and at one polling station we witnessed the arrival of a CNE official, accompanied by UNPOL, delivering more ballot papers.

As in previous elections, the citizens of Timor-Leste overwhelmingly cast their ballots before noon. Despite long queues, particularly in Dili, the voters were patient and, for the most part, familiar with the process. The polling centers we visited in the afternoon no longer had large numbers of voters but staff reported a high turnout for the day.

Role of UNVs

UNDP and other UN bodies have written much about the hundreds of United Nations Volunteers and international electoral experts who came to Timor-Leste to assist STAE, CNE and others in training and preparations for this election. Prior to the election, informed sources told SOMET that some UN Volunteers were not respectful of their Timorese counterparts, or were not experienced or knowledgeable about election mechanisms in Timor-Leste. We do not know how widespread these problems were, but did not witness them on Election Day. In fact, we only saw two UNVs in the more than 50 polling stations we visited.

Our Observations on Election Day

Party agents

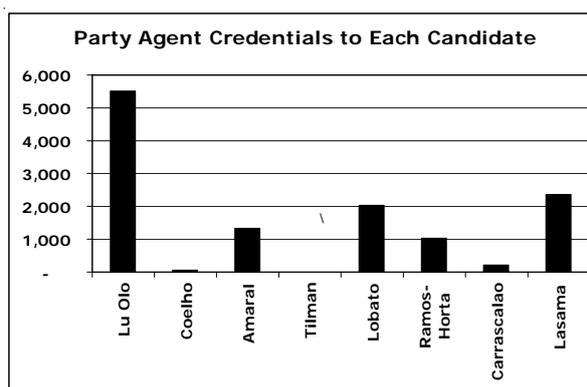
Party agents were the dominant feature of many polling stations SOMET visited. We observed many more agents than were legally allowed, and they often engaged in inappropriate actions and/or concealed their identities. In this report, we use “party agents” to include candidate agents, party agents, and party observers (“fiscais electoral”, sometimes translated as “delegate” in election law and regulations, and “observador partido”) except where otherwise specified.

1. The position of Party Observer was without legal basis.

STAE distributed many anonymous credentials for ‘Party Observer’ days prior to the election, although there was no provision for this in the regulations and no guidelines or code of conduct defining their rights and responsibilities. This added to the large number of party agents in the polling stations. The role of party agent – safeguarding the rights of their candidate – is incompatible with being a nonpartisan observer, as stated in the *Code of Conduct for Delegates of Candidacies and Delegates of Political Parties or Party Coalitions*.

2. Party agents were present in high numbers.

Party agents had a heavy presence in most polling stations and SOMET observers witnessed many more party agents than legally allowed. Article 34 of the *Law on the Election of the President to the Republic* established the right of party agents to monitor the polling and counting processes. The *Code of Conduct for Delegates of Candidacies and Delegates of Political Parties or Party Coalitions* specifies at most one agent per candidate per polling station at one time. STAE accredited 12,573 agents from thirteen different factions, supporting the eight presidential candidates. Fretilin had 5,525 accredited agents (although there were only 705 polling stations), while the Democratic Party had 2,356 and others had fewer. At one polling station in Comoro, Dili, we observed 13 agents from Fretilin at the same time. In Balide, Dili we observed 11 agents from PSD and 10 from ASDT, and several other stations had more than 30 party agents. Polling staff were often unable to control the number of party agents because of inconsistencies in training materials, undefined enforcement mechanisms, and reluctance to confront numerous, persistent agents.



3. Party agents were not easily identified.

STAE-issued identification credentials for party agents did not contain their photographs. STAE did not allocate sufficient staff to prepare photo credentials for the unexpectedly large number of party agents. STAE printed a number for each faction on the credentials, but did not explain this system. As a result, observers could not quickly and definitively identify agents’ affiliations. Some party agents refused to tell observers which party or candidate they represented; some concealed their credentials; and some told us they were afraid of other parties’ agents knowing who they were working for.

4. Party agents were proactive about engaging voters.

Agents directed voters through the voting process, often speaking with voters who appeared to need guidance. They often positioned themselves close to the voting booths.

5. Government officials present in polling stations.

We encountered at least one high-level government official acting as party observer.

6. Inappropriate observer behavior.

We observed one polling center where national NGO observers acted in a manner that appeared to intimidate voters. The observers stood in a line down the middle of the polling station, and an observer sat next to the Identification Officer as he conducted voter intake.



Voting process

The majority of both polling staff and voters were familiar with voting procedures. Overall, the polling staff did their jobs competently and with confidence, although their training and performance could be improved in certain areas. SOMET was heartened to note that many women were included and some stations had 50-50 gender balance. On the whole, staff were able to ensure the right of individual voting, the secrecy of the ballot, and the overall integrity of the process. However, we observed a number of minor irregularities during voting and a few problems with potentially serious consequences. Infractions of the measures to prevent double voting were the most prevalent and serious technical violations of the voting process that SOMET observed.

1. Queue control.

The polling station queue controllers were able to ensure an orderly wait and entry for voters in most places, but we did witness disorderly scenes at some of the biggest polling stations during the morning hours. Candidate agents sometimes stepped up to assist in organizing the lines; in one instance the police (PNTL) participated in crowd control. Despite staff efforts, we observed as many as twelve voters inside a polling station at one time. The greatest number of voter complaints brought to our attention was about the long, hot wait of up to 2½ hours in the sun. In several instances we observed gender segregation in the queues, and in one location women were asked to leave their handbags outside the polling station while they voted. At another location male voters were patted and checked for weapons.



2. Registration procedures.

On the whole, polling staff were proficient at keeping a record of incoming voters and checking for appropriate voter identification documents. We did witness two instances of procedural problems which might have compromised the accuracy of the voter record (Acta). In one polling station two staff members were recording incoming voters, which resulted in some voters receiving their ballot papers without being recorded or noticed by either worker. In two other cases mistakes had been made in the record-keeping, and polling station staff were busy re-transcribing the list during our visit.

3. Perforation of identification documents.

Some poll workers were confused by rule changes regarding punching of the newer, plastic voter registration cards. We observed one instance where holes were punched into registration documents outdoors instead of in the polling station, and another in which passports were perforated. At one polling station several voters went through the voting process without having their cards punched at all, and at another the presiding officer told us they were punching only old registration cards.

4. Checking fingers for ink.

According to the regulations, the index finger of each voter was to be marked with indelible ink after the ballot was cast and each incoming voter in turn was to be checked for pre-existing ink before being given a ballot. All of our observers in Dili and Liquica saw locations where the hands of voters were not being systematically checked for ink before they voted, which happened in the vast majority of polling stations where we observed

voting. While this could have had serious consequences, we did not observe instances of double voting.

5. Marking fingers with ink.

We also observed isolated instances of people exiting polling stations without having their fingers inked. This problem was not particularly widespread but did take place in four of the polling stations we observed in Dili. We also observed one case of youth attempting to wash the ink off their hands outside a polling station.

6. Guidance to voters.

A troubling observation was the occasional passivity of polling staff in providing guidance to individual voters. The latter were sometimes confused about how to mark the ballot paper, where to mark the ballot paper, where to deposit the completed ballot and where to exit the polling station, indicating a need for further voter education. We observed many cases where the party agents were happy to step into the breach and provide instructions that should have come from the polling staff. On the other hand, several polling staff we interviewed reported having received no instructions on the precise role and responsibilities of the party agents during the voting process.

7. Checking polling booths.

We encountered a few cases where the polling staff did not routinely check polling booths to make sure they were free of extraneous items. In one instance we observed a piece of paper with a candidate's name on it in a booth at the end of voting. Nobody knew who had put it there or how long it had been there. In two other cases, ballot papers were found on the floor underneath the polling booth, and staff were unsure about whether to put them in the ballot box for further processing.

8. Wearing visible credentials.

Polling staff were willing to identify themselves and their roles when asked by the observers, but they sometimes wore their credentials in shirt pockets where they were not visible. We also observed staff who had taken off their distinctive staff shirts by the time the counting began, making it difficult to tell who had what role in the polling station. Other non-voters present in polling stations did wear credentials, with only one observed exception of a high-ranking official involved in the elections who said he had forgotten his at home. We also observed party agents whose credentials were not visible.

9. Voter access to polling stations.

The vast majority of polling stations we visited were set up to allow easy access to voters. However, as the voting slowed down, staff started taking liberties, such as blocking a polling station entrance in order to take a lunch break or sleeping on a table. Luckily these were isolated instances at polling centers with multiple polling stations, so voters had the opportunity to cast their ballots during all voting hours.

10. Observer access to polling stations.

In only one polling station were we not allowed to observe the polling booths which were in a separate room where only the voters were given access.

Counting process

Counting ballots is one of the most sensitive and complex parts of the electoral process, which must be done with as few flaws and ambiguities as possible to ensure the integrity of the election and public confidence in the results. Although the polling center staff we observed did a conscientious and impartial job during counting, often working late into the night in difficult conditions, we observed a number of violations of regulations, questionable practices, and inconsistent procedures. SOMET believes that both the regulations and the training should be more thorough and specific to avoid potential problems in the future.

1. Counting outdoors.

In some cases, ballots were moved outside the polling station (outdoors) in order to count in front of anyone who wished to witness the counting. While this effort at transparency is laudable (and consistent with practices during the Timor-Leste local elections during the last few years), it is not in the regulations and may unnecessarily endanger the integrity of the process.

2. Guarding sensitive materials.

In two cases, a full ballot box was left unattended between the close of voting and the beginning of counting.

3. Spectators.

In many polling centers we observed, large numbers of spectators gathered around the counting process, either inside or outside the room. Although poll workers often managed this appropriately, without clear regulations practices varied from one center to another. When a noisy group gathered at the windows, the situation became increasingly disorderly. In one case, the police had to be called to break up a drunk and boisterous crowd inside a polling station.



4. **Counting consecutively.**

In some polling centers with multiple stations, the stations were counted one after another. While this allowed party agents, observers and spectators to watch more than one station, it often caused counting to go late into the night, with the third room being started about five hours after the close of voting, in violation of regulations. It also resulted in an even larger number of observers and party agents attending the counting, which may have hindered its efficiency.

5. **Counting in the dark.**

When counting went past 6:30 pm, darkness often made it impossible for observers and party agents to verify the poll workers' interpretation of each ballot, and supplied lanterns were inadequate. In some cases, party agents insisted on standing right behind the counters, as this was the only place they could see the ballot, and in others, improvised or borrowed lighting helped illuminate the room. Faster counting, earlier closing, and better lighting would all help alleviate this situation.



6. **Counting out of the ballot box.**

In some polling stations, ballots were unfolded and counted one at a time directly out of the ballot box, rather than all being unfolded face-down prior to examining each one. Although poll workers may have believed that this saved time, in fact it did not and it compromised the process by providing information about the preferences of voters who voted later or earlier in the day.

7. **Confusion about null ballots.**

In many cases, there was confusion or disagreement as to whether a ballot should be labeled invalid (“nulu”). We also observed some ballots where the voter had made multiple holes by punching a folded ballot; this likely indicates that the poll worker who handed the blank ballot to the voter folded it incorrectly. Some torn ballots were rejected as null even when the paper was torn by polling staff during separation from the ballot pad or while being unfolded prior to counting. Confusion over null ballots prolonged the national-level certification by CNE, emphasizing the need for clear standards and effective training in this area.

Security forces

Thanks to responsible behavior by citizens and partisans alike, Election Day was largely free of violence. In most cases, security forces behaved appropriately, although there were a few cases where PNTL (Timorese police, currently under UN command) and UNPOL (United Nations police) came closer than 25 meters from a polling station while voting was in process, and one where they brought a weapon inside a polling station.

We have been informed that UNPOL/PNTL were directed to move closer when the counting started, a last-minute order because UNPOL had not anticipated that the public would be interested in the counting process. However, the 25-meter rule in the election law does not lapse when counting begins.

In two polling centers in areas where conflict was anticipated, we observed soldiers from the Australian Defence Force-led International Security Forces (ISF), in full uniform and with weapons, patrolling immediately outside the voting stations (much closer than 25 meters, clearly visible through the windows) or intermingling with voters waiting in line. Although the soldiers were courteous, they told us they had been requested to do routine patrols of these stations,



although they would not say whether it was Australia, UNMIT or RDTL who had made the request, even after radioing for clarification. According to UNMIT briefings, ISF's assignment was to be available for backup in an emergency situation beyond the capability of UNPOL/PNTL to handle; no such situation existed. SOMET's repeated requests for clarification of ISF orders for that day have not been answered.

Reporting election results

During the days after the election, unofficial and partial results circulated widely without context or explanation, often accompanied by exaggerations of relatively minor irregularities or correctable data entry errors. Because voting patterns varied widely from district to district, this led to misinterpretation when the results included or excluded certain areas. In the rush to report results, both Timorese and international media failed to explain that incomplete figures were not accurate predictors of the final outcome, leading to allegations or fears of manipulations when the totals changed as results from more districts were included.

SOMET Recommendations

On the Regulatory Framework for Elections

1. Future elections should be administered by an independent agency which is not under the jurisdiction of any Government ministry.
2. All amendments to the laws and regulations pertaining to elections, including the ballot content, should be made well in advance of the election period. For elections after 2007, this should perhaps happen before the date of the election is announced.
3. The authorities making such amendments should ensure that the election laws, regulations, codes of conduct and training materials are consistent.
4. Such amendments should be communicated clearly to all officials and polling staff involved in running the elections.
5. Ad hoc extra-legal procedures regulating election related issues should be avoided.

On Absentee Voting

1. The relevant authorities should make legal provisions and practical arrangements so that Timorese citizens who are abroad on Election Day can vote.
2. The relevant authorities should set up a mechanism to enable voting for people who are disabled, home bound, hospitalized or otherwise cannot travel to polling stations.
3. The authorities should make provisions so that prisoners, who are constitutionally entitled to vote but prevented from going to polling centers because the State has incarcerated them, can vote.

On the Role of Candidate and Party Agents

1. Agents should only be accredited according to consistent, transparent rules based on legal regulations, applied to all and in force well before Election Day.
2. No “Livres access” (free access) passes should be issued to government officials.
3. The “Party Observer” position should not exist; party agents can represent party interests.
4. High-level government title-holders should not be given accreditation as candidate/party agents.
5. Appropriate training materials should be provided to candidate/party agents in advance of elections.
6. There should be a clear procedure whereby each accredited candidate/party agent receives credentials, signs for the receipt of credentials and agrees to the appropriate code of conduct.
7. Candidate/party agent credentials should include their photograph, name and indication of candidate/party affiliation, and they should wear it visibly at all times in the polling station. Administrative staff must be sufficient to issue credentials efficiently.
8. Legal regulations (in addition to a Code of Conduct) should define the rights and privileges of candidate/party agents, including their non-intervention unless they observe unfair or incorrect practices in the polling station. They should not communicate with voters inside the polling station.
9. There should be clear legal regulations limiting candidates/parties to one agent in a polling station at any one time, as well as an enforcement mechanism for such rules.
10. Polling station staff should understand their right to enforce the appropriate role of candidate/party agents, and be empowered to expel agents who interfere with the voting process.
11. Polling stations should maintain a register of candidate/party agents who enter the polling station. This task needs to be integrated into the responsibilities and training of polling center staff.

On Polling Center Staff

1. More polling staff should be assigned to each polling station.
2. Because of the long hours and strong commitment required of polling staff, they should receive increased compensation. Brigadas, who have to accompany the ballots to the district center, should be paid for an additional day.
3. All polling staff should receive clearer instructions and further training in:
 - o Keeping a uniform record of incoming voters
 - o Observing a uniform practice in perforating identification documents
 - o Checking incoming voters' fingers for ink
 - o Providing guidance to voters on the voting process
 - o Checking polling booths regularly
 - o The role and responsibilities of candidate/party agents
 - o Safeguarding sensitive materials
 - o Counting ballots according to specified procedures
4. If the practice of punching holes into voter identification documents is a necessary additional safeguard against double voting, the process should be uniform.
5. Polling staff should ensure that all accredited individuals within polling stations wear their badges visibly at all times.
6. All polling staff should be provided with adequate backup and supervision.

On the Counting Process

1. All counting of ballots should be conducted according to the counting regulations.
2. Each polling station in a polling center should proceed with its counting simultaneously.
3. Counting done by polling stations should take place inside the polling station.
4. Polling stations should be provided with adequate lighting.
5. Ballots should be accepted as valid if the intention of the voter is clear, even if they contain extraneous marks or tears.

On the Proximity of Security Forces

1. The police (UNPOL/PNTL) should follow the regulation on staying 25 meters away from polling stations during polling and counting unless requested otherwise by the brigada. If police are expected to be deployed closer during counting, the regulation should be amended.
2. The International Security Forces and other military forces should stay out of sight of polling stations except when called to back up police in an emergency.

On Reporting Unofficial Results

1. CNE spokespeople, journalists, candidates and others should explain the process and context of partial election results or observed irregularities during tabulation, rather than hastily feeding unjustified speculation and uncertainty about the integrity of the election.

On the Role of Observers

1. International and national observers should have free access to all polling stations.