

Polity IV Country Report 2007: East Timor

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2006</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2007</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>5</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change	Polity:	7	7	0	Democ:	7	7	0	Autoc:	0	0	0	Durable:		5		Tentative:		Yes		<p style="text-align: center;">Authority Trends, 2002-2007: East Timor</p>
Score:	2006	2007	Change																						
Polity:	7	7	0																						
Democ:	7	7	0																						
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Durable:		5																							
Tentative:		Yes																							
SCODE	ETM	CCODE	860	Date of Report	1 November 2008																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	2	4	7	2	3																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date			Begin Date																						
			20 May 2002 (Ind.)																						
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution																									
2002																									
Executive(s)																									
President Jose Ramos Horta (Fretilin); directly elected, 9 April and 8 May 2007, 21.8% and 69.3%																									
Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao [formerly used the name Jose Alexandre Gusmao] (Fretilin); leader of majority party appointed by president, since 8 August 2007																									
Legislature																									
Unicameral:																									
National Parliament (varies between 52 and 65 seats; proportionally elected; most recent elections, 30 June 2007)																									
Revolutionary Front of an Independent East Timor (Fretilin): 21																									
National Reconstruction Congress of East Timor (CNRT): 18																									
Timorese Social Democratic Association/Social Democratic Party (C-ASDT/PSD): 11																									
Democratic Party (PD): 8																									
Other parties: 7																									
Judiciary																									
Supreme Court of Justice																									

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Transitional or Restricted Elections (7)

In 1859 a treaty was concluded between Portugal and the Netherlands to divide the island of Timor in two parts, East and West, with Portugal administering East Timor. Following global decolonization and the ouster of the autocratic regime in Portugal, Portugal's government drew up plans in June 1975 for a three-

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

year period of transition to independence in East Timor, to end in October 1978. After an attempted coup in August 1975 by the Democratic Union of Timor (UDT), favoring integration with Indonesia, a civil war began with the pro-independence Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin). By October 1975, Fretilin had gained advantage over the pro-Indonesian alliance between the UDT and the Apodeti and on 28 November 1975, Fretilin unilaterally declared the independence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. However, on December 7, 1975, Indonesian forces mounted a full-scale invasion and on 17 July 1976 East Timor was annexed to Indonesia. Guerrilla resistance by Fretilin's armed wing, the East Timor National Liberation Armed Forces (Falintil), continued until June 1991 despite the superiority and brutality of the Indonesian forces.

In January 1999, following the forced resignation of Suharto, Indonesia's President B.J. Habibie proposed a referendum for East Timor to choose between "special autonomy" or independence. In the run up to the referendum, pro-Indonesian militias backed by elements of the Indonesian army mounted a campaign of violent intimidation in East Timor. The UN-sponsored referendum took place on 30 August 1999, with over seventy-eight percent of votes cast for independence. The pro-Indonesian militias then unleashed a campaign of indiscriminate violence and destruction resulting in the forcible displacement of over 250,000 people to West Timor and the deaths of over 2,000 people before the violence was brought to an end in September 1999 by an Australian-led peacekeeping force (INTERFET).

INTERFET was replaced in February 2000 by a UN force under the control of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and in July 2000 a transitional government was formed to pave the way for independence, composed in equal parts by UN personnel and native Timorese. This government wrote and promulgated a new constitution, leading to a presidential election on 14 April 2002, electing Fretilin leader Xanana Gusmao with nearly 83% of the votes cast. East Timor became an internationally-recognized independent state only a month later, on 20 May 2002.

Gusmao faced his first major crisis in February 2006, when discontent over alleged discrimination within the military between soldiers from the eastern and western halves of the country led to a crisis of executive power. Some 600 soldiers abandoned their posts in February and, after refusing to return to their barracks, were dismissed by Prime Minister Alkatiri on February 17. This dismissal sparked a series of protests, beginning in earnest in April 2006, in and about the capital city of Dili. The protests became increasingly violent in May, leading to the defection of a few military leaders and, ultimately, a multinational intervention by the Australian Defense Force (Operation Astute). Investigations into the crisis implicated Alkatiri's involvement in activities that led to a worsening of the crisis, as well as the assassination of several political rivals. Alkatiri was forced to resign on 26 June, despite having received a vote of confidence from Parliament and Jose Ramos Horta was appointed to replace him.

On 9 April and 8 May 2007 East Timor held its second presidential elections. President Gusmao declined to run for a second term, endorsing then-Prime Minister Horta. Running as an independent, Horta came in second to Fretilin candidate Francisco Guterres in the first round of voting, in which there were allegations of inconsistencies in vote counting, missing votes, and campaign violence. After an appeals court confirmed the results, a runoff election took place on 8 May 2007. Horta won with sixty-eight percent of the vote, and appointed former President Gusmao to the post of prime minister on 8 August 2007. Both Horta and Gusmao survived assassination attempts on 11 February 2008; the apparent coup attempt was led by Maj. Alfredo Reinado who was killed during the attacks.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

As head of state, the president appoints a prime minister, upon recommendation of the legislature, to be the head of government. The unicameral legislature comprises eighty-eight seats; Fretilin gained fifty-five seats in initial legislative elections, but its hold was reduced to only twenty-one seats following elections on 30 June 2007. The new government was created by a CNRT-led coalition after it won eighteen seats in the 2007 election.

East Timor's military lacks professionalism, has been prone to overreaction, and is riven by internal divisions. These divisions led to a strike in February 2006 and the mass dismissal of a third of the police force. This dismissal created a serious crisis and rampant violence in the capital Dili, leading to the forced resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri who was held responsible for the crisis. He was replaced on 8 July 2006 by Nobel laureate and Foreign Minister Jose Ramos Horta, who went on to win the 2007 presidential election. Negotiations with rebellious factions of the police continued through 2006 and into 2007. The judiciary is somewhat independent but lacks qualified and experienced justices.

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Political Participation: Factional Competition (7)

Factionalism in East Timor became evident in the 2006 political crisis that divided the country's military. In February 2006, citing discrimination of soldiers from the western part of the country, soldiers from that region left their barracks on strike. They were joined by other members of the military in the coming weeks, eventually leading to mass protests and violence when Prime Minister Alkatiri ordered them dismissed from the service. Opposing factions were initially characterized by support for Alkatiri, Prime Minister and Secretary General of the Fretelin party, and support for President Gusmao. These personalities symbolized the divide between the western and eastern halves of the country, the identities associated with much of the historical discord in the country. Although the initial crisis came to a head in May 2006 and ended with Alkatiri's resignation, polarization of the country's populace and military has remained, and was responsible for the campaign violence that marred both presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007. The primary factions are now led by the supporters of the Fretelin party, led by Alkatiri, and supporters of the CNRT, led by Prime Minister Gusmao.

Participation in East Timor is also largely defined by its recent past. During the 1999 violence much of the territory's infrastructure was destroyed, over a quarter of the population was displaced and the largely Indonesian civil service had fled. With UN assistance, over 200,000 of an estimated 260,000 refugees returned and public services were restored to a country of 740,000 that was one of the poorest in the world. Schools and hospitals were rebuilt and a new judiciary and police were established, although the institutional structure was severely weakened by a shortage of trained and experienced personnel. Social and political divisions continue along "east-west" identities; this split was further exacerbated by the police strike and mutiny in 2006. Although Fretelin remains the symbolic party of independence, it lacks internal cohesion and is riven by internal rivalries. Opposition parties are small, personalistic, and fluid.