TIMOR-LESTE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

JULY 7, 2012

International Republican Institute

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I. Executive Summary

On July 7, 2012, the citizens of Timor-Leste went to the polls to elect the young country's third national parliament. The parliamentary elections followed a relatively peaceful and well-run two-round presidential election that concluded in April 2012. The parliamentary elections marked the third time voters went to the polls in four months, with 18 parties and three coalitions contesting 65 seats. Despite initial concerns that violence could upend Election Day due to Timor-Leste's historically fragile political stability, the International Republican Institute (IRI) can report that Election Day proceedings were conducted in a peaceful, open and transparent manner.

Building on its 30 years of experience observing more than 130 elections and with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), IRI planned an election observation mission consisting of three components: 1) a citizen election observation, 2) a core election observation of long-term observers and 3) a short-term election observation of 13 teams.

For the citizen monitoring effort, IRI partnered with the Timorese civil society group, *Observatorio da Igreja Para Os Assuntos Sociais* (OIPAS) to recruit and train 1,704 citizen observers to monitor opening, voting, closing and counting procedures on Election Day. For the core efforts, IRI deployed three observers to monitor and report on the pre-election environment in each of Timor-Leste's 13 districts.

IRI's core observers assessed Timor-Leste's robust campaign season, voter education efforts and training sessions for staff from the National Electoral Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE). Core observers interviewed approximately 300 parliamentary candidates, political party representatives, electoral officers, members of the media, citizen monitors and other international observers to ascertain Timor-Leste's preparedness and to identify potential issues ahead of Election Day.

Finally, on Election Day, IRI deployed 13 teams of short-term observers to observe and document the opening, voting, closing and counting processes at polling stations in each of Timor-Leste's 13 districts. In addition to observing Election Day procedures, the short-term teams interviewed Timorese stakeholders including election officials, political party representatives and voters to assess the general atmosphere and mood of the day's proceedings.

On July 8, 2012, IRI released a statement with its initial assessment of the elections.[1] Additionally, following the elections IRI briefed a number of local and international stakeholders on key findings from its mission. The findings and recommendations in this report are informed directly by the observations of IRI's short- and long-term observers as well as IRI's citizen election observation partner OIPAS.

IRI found the parliamentary elections were peaceful, well-organized and met international standards for open and transparent elections and the results were a legitimate representation of the will of the Timorese electorate. Despite logistical challenges posed by the country's underdeveloped infrastructure, which could have encumbered electoral administration bodies' abilities to deliver election materials and staff throughout the country, CNE and STAE administered a credible election process. Additionally, several legal amendments and technical changes did not seem to inhibit the electoral process in a way that questioned the legitimacy or fairness of the process or the results.

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[1] See Appendix E for a copy of IRI's preliminary statement

Voter turnout was relatively high on Election Day with nearly 75 percent of the electorate casting ballots. Though IRI often observed long lines of voters, especially in the morning, the behavior in and around the polling stations was calm and orderly. Generally, polling station staff members were well-prepared for their roles on Election Day and executed tasks with relative efficiency and ease. IRI's observers consistently noted the extensive presence of political party polling agents, citizen observers and international observers who further contributed to the atmosphere of transparency and inclusivity of the elections and likely served as a deterrent to fraud. Additionally, IRI observers were impressed by the notable participation of women as electoral officials.

Based on the findings in this report, IRI has developed a series of recommendations to inform and strengthen Timor-Leste's future electoral processes. Among them, the government of Timor-Leste should review existing campaign finance laws to craft legal provisions that better regulate campaign spending; STAE should further train polling staff on the importance of following standardized procedures on Election Day, including those related to the practice of inking voters' fingers and polling station closing and vote counting processes; and party agents should receive more formalized and uniform training on electoral procedures and their rights and responsibilities on Election Day.

II. Introduction

A. Purpose of IRI's Election Observation and Final Report

To promote the transparency of Timor-Leste's 2012 electoral process, IRI organized and deployed an international election observation mission to observe Timor-Leste's parliamentary elections on July 7, 2012. During the mission, IRI's delegation observed the electoral process to identify problems, potential issues and areas where efficiency gains could be made to strengthen Timor-Leste's elections framework. This report details the observations of IRI's delegation and staff during the pre-election period and on Election Day and subsequently offers recommendations based on those careful observations. To strengthen the young country's electoral mechanisms, IRI is providing specific, practical recommendations for consideration by STAE, CNE, political party leaders and civil society activists.

B. Methodology

IRI has maintained an office in Timor-Leste since 2000, making it the first international nongovernmental organization to work directly with Timorese political parties and the only organization to do so continuously since then. Given the Institute's longstanding history in Timor-Leste and nuanced understanding of the country's political development, IRI recognized the importance of peaceful and credible 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections.

After a comprehensive assessment, IRI identified a need for an enhanced atmosphere of transparency and credibility surrounding Timor-Leste's 2012 elections and began planning for and implementing several tools of electoral support. Prior to the parliamentary elections, IRI conducted numerous workshops for political parties, extensive radio and print voter registration campaigns through a local civil society group, sponsored a radio debate among the major political parties and compiled a political party platform booklet for citizens. However, the focal point of IRI's programming related to its election observation program.

1. Citizen Election Observation Mission

IRI partnered with OIPAS to implement a country-wide citizen election observation mission for both rounds of Timor-Leste's presidential election and the parliamentary elections. IRI trained 1,704 citizen observers in the election law, Election Day processes such as procedures for polling station opening, voting, polling station closing and ballot counting. On Election Day, IRI and OIPAS deployed observers to nearly every polling station in each of Timor-Leste's 13 administrative districts. To guide their observation efforts and assist in collecting reliable data, the citizen observers completed polling station checklists that were submitted to OIPAS's national office. The information in the completed checklists, as well as the observers' personal observations and reports, formed the basis of OIPAS's final report on the elections.

2. Core Observation Mission

IRI designed and implemented a core observation mission to assess the pre-election environment across the country by observing voting preparations, campaign strategies and other pre-electoral activities well in advance of parliamentary elections. Three weeks before Election Day, IRI's three

core observers each deployed throughout the country.[2] To thoroughly assess the environment in each district, the core observers interviewed hundreds of stakeholders across Timor-Leste, including political party leaders from nearly every party and coalition on the ballot, election commissioners, district administrators, observers, national police, international observers and United Nations electoral support personnel and civil society activists. The core observers also examined the practical application of the electoral law and performance of electoral institutions, researched voter registration and voter education efforts, witnessed campaigning and monitored media coverage of the elections. Additionally, the core observers completed a district report for each district in their assigned region as well as a comprehensive final report that summarized and analyzed the pre-election environment throughout their assigned region.

3. Short-Term International Election Observation Mission

IRI's short-term election observation mission was the cornerstone of its Election Day activities. On July 7, 2012, IRI deployed 13 teams; one to each of Timor-Leste's 13 districts, including the Timorese exclave district of Oecusse. These teams visited 110 polling stations[3] to observe opening, voting, closing and counting procedures, document the general atmosphere at each polling station and interview various stakeholders present on Election Day.

Prior to Election Day, IRI conducted two days of intensive briefings for the short-term observers, which included briefings by the U.S. Embassy, the USAID mission in Dili, CNE officials, political party representatives and former president of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta. IRI's mission was led by Frank G. Wisner, former U.S. ambassador to the Philippines, Egypt, Zambia and India. The mission also included Victor Ashe, former U.S. ambassador to Poland, a Spanish member of parliament and senior political party officials and civil society activists from Australia, Egypt, India, Spain, Uganda and the United States. Each delegate was paired with an experienced IRI staff member, constituting an observer team. Rounding out IRI's mission were the three core observers – two from the United States and one from Bangladesh – who also served as observers on Election Day.

In an effort to systematize the data collection process and maximize continuity across each team's observations, IRI's observers completed checklists customized for each phase of Election Day, including the opening, voting, closing and counting procedures. Utilizing cutting edge technology, IRI employed an interactive voice response system (IVR) to receive real-time data from observers throughout Election Day. After each polling station visited, observers completed a telephone survey that was immediately received and processed by IRI staff in Dili. Short-term observers also reported observations throughout the day to complement real-time data collection, as well as to provide security updates. Additionally, immediately upon their return to Dili, each team debriefed IRI staff to capture fresh impressions and observations. Based on this data, IRI shared information with other observer missions, including the U.S. Embassy and citizen observation partner OIPAS.

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[2] See Appendix B for regional assignments of the core observers.
[3] See Appendix D for a list of the polling stations visited on Election Day.

4. Other Data Collection Methods and Sources of Information

In addition to the formal data collection methods, this report is enhanced by the observations of IRI's staff in Dili, IRI's expertise in working with political parties and civil society in Timor-Leste, and perhaps most importantly, by IRI's assessment of the first round of Timor-Leste's 2012 presidential election (made possible with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy). IRI also noted reports and press releases from CNE, STAE and various other Timorese entities for details and confirmation of facts and election results.

III. History, Political Context and Prior Elections

D. *Pre-Independence Period and the Struggle for Independence*

A Portuguese colony for more than four centuries, East Timor, as it was then called, proclaimed independence from Portugal in 1975 as Portugal transitioned from an authoritarian dictatorship to a democracy. Nine days later, Indonesian troops invaded Timor-Leste, and for the next 24 years resistance groups battled the Indonesian army for independence and the right to self-determination. The Indonesian forces responded with a brutal campaign of pacification during which an estimated 100,000 to 250,000 Timorese lost their lives due to conflict or famine.

Due to mounting international political pressure, Indonesia allowed a United Nations supervised referendum on Timor-Leste's independence in 1999. Though an overwhelming majority of Timorese voted for full independence, widespread bloodshed and destruction at the hands of militia groups supported by the Indonesian military ensued. An estimated 1,000 Timorese were killed, more than 250,000 civilians were displaced from their homes and approximately 80 percent of the country's infrastructure was irreparably damaged. An international peacekeeping force brought the violence to an end and monitored the Indonesian withdrawal from Timor-Leste; the United Nations (UN) effectively administered the country for two-and-a-half years as it prepared for the restoration of independence.[4]

E. *Independence Restored*

In 2001, while under UN administration, Timor-Leste elected a Constituent Assembly to draft the country's first constitution. This body transformed into the National Parliament following the restoration of independence in May 2002, with Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (FRETILIN) leader Mari Alkatiri becoming prime minister. In April 2002, former commander-in-chief of the armed resistance Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão was elected president. The country began the long process of consolidating its political institutions at all levels. In an effort to decentralize the country's governance, Timor-Leste held *suco* (village) elections in late 2004 and 2005.

However, the young country descended into violence in 2006 as deep-seated political divisions erupted. These divisions were rooted in intra F-FDTL (Falintil-Timor-Leste Defense Force) conflicts and between F-FDTL and the Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL). Riots and armed conflict broke out leaving many dead and displacing about 150,000. Timor-Leste requested international forces to intervene and help restore peace and stability. The United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) was established to maintain stability, foster a culture of democratic governance and facilitate political dialogue aimed at national reconciliation. The anti-government protests and widespread violence led President Gusmão to assume emergency powers. Gusmão called for the resignation of Prime Minister Alkatiri, and after a month-long stand-off between the two political figures, Alkatiri acquiesced. Gusmão then selected Nobel Prize winner José Ramos-Horta, an important figure during Timor-Leste's fight for independence, to serve as the country's prime minister.

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[4] Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2012." Report on Timor-Leste (East Timor). 2012

F.   ***The 2007 National Elections***

The 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections, the country's first direct legislative elections since the 2001 Constituent Assembly, took place in a generally peaceful, though tense atmosphere as friction lingered from the 2006 crisis. Again, the UN provided substantial technical support to nascent Timorese electoral stakeholders and bodies as they planned and conducted the electoral proceedings. Ramos-Horta was elected to the presidency after a second round, run-off vote. In the parliamentary elections, FRETILIN won the largest number of seats; however, it fell short of securing an outright majority necessary to control Timor-Leste's 65-seat parliament. A newly minted party, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), led by then-outgoing President Gusmão, won 24 percent of the vote and 18 parliamentary seats (to FRETILIN's 29 percent and 21 seats). CNRT formed a coalition, the Alliance of the Parliamentary Majority (AMP) with three smaller parties to secure a 37-seat majority in parliament.

Political deadlock ensued when AMP and FRETILIN both claimed the right to control parliament based on separate constitutional provisions. After a five-week stalemate, President Ramos-Horta appointed Gusmão prime minister and granted parliamentary control to the AMP, thrusting the country into coalition politics for the first time. This move also prompted violence by some FRETILIN supporters in several districts and caused FRETILIN lawmakers to challenge the legality of the decision. Though FRETILIN continued to deny AMP's legitimacy to rule, the FRETILIN members took their seats in parliament and developed into a strong opposition party.

In 2008, a rebel faction of the security forces unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate President Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Gusmão. Since that failed coup attempt, the Timorese government has enjoyed one of its longest periods of post-independence stability. Nevertheless, Timor-Leste's history of politically motivated violence and instability surrounding elections shaped an environment of uncertainty ahead of the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections.

IV. The 2012 Pre-Election Framework and Environment

A. *Administrative Framework for the 2012 Elections*

1. System of Government

Timor-Leste is a representative democracy with both the president and parliament directly elected by Timorese citizens. The president is elected to a five-year term, though the office does have certain important powers, including veto power and the right to make certain appointments, it is largely a symbolic position. Timor-Leste's parliament is unicameral, consists of 65 seats and members are elected to five-year terms. The leader of the majority party or ruling coalition in parliament is the prime minster and thus the head of government. Members of the National Parliament are elected based on one national constituency (members are elected at-large and not by a certain district or sub-district) and through a closed-list proportional representation system by which voters cast their ballots for political parties rather than candidates. Parties wishing to contest the elections are responsible for submitting national lists of candidates to be elected. Seats in parliament are allocated to each party based on the D'Hondt method of apportionment (a highest averages method for allocating seats in the party-list proportional representation system), providing that the party meets the required national three percent threshold.

2. Electoral Law

The Timorese Constitution of 2002, the Penal Code, the Law of the Electoral Administration Bodies and the laws on the election to the National Parliament constitute the legal framework for the parliamentary elections. Relevant provisions are also found in the Electoral Law and in subsidiary electoral regulations and codes of conduct. The regulations include procedures for the presentation of candidacies for the election of deputies to the National Parliament, guidelines on electoral campaigning and on the voting, vote counting and vote tabulation processes. The codes of conduct regulate political parties and coalitions running for the parliament, the media, national and international observers, as well as political party polling agents. In May 2011, some of the electoral laws related to the parliamentary elections were amended ahead of the 2012 national elections. One significant change was the requirement that voters must vote in the *suco* where they are registered (whereas in the past, voters could vote in the polling station of their choice). Other notable changes included an increase in the mandatory representation of women candidates on the parties' candidate lists from one-in-four candidates to one-in-three. Additionally, the law increased the required number of polling station staff from five to 10 individuals.

3. Electoral Administration Bodies

Timor-Leste has two main institutions responsible for electoral administration: CNE and the STAE. The principal responsibilities of the CNE under the electoral law and regulations are to supervise all phases of the electoral process; to ensure the enforcement of the constitutional and legal provisions relating to elections; to ensure the freedom of electoral information; to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment of all candidates; to approve the codes of conduct for candidates, observers, party agents and media; to clarify the electoral process through the media; to ensure equal treatment for citizens throughout the electoral process; to ensure the equality of opportunity and freedom of the candidates' information; to examine and certify the party coalitions for electoral

purposes; to notify the public prosecutor of any electoral offence; and to prepare the provisional national results and submit them to the Court of Appeal.

Additionally, CNE's pre-election responsibilities include monitoring the activities of the STAE, receiving and handling electoral complaints, conducting civic education and monitoring the media. CNE satisfied its supervisory role during the pre-election period and, in IRI's assessment, acted independently and impartially.

STAE's pre-election responsibilities are to ensure the readiness of all polling stations and centers, including electoral staff, plan for and execute the logistical details for Election Day and conduct voter education. In general, STAE's performance was transparent, and it successfully fulfilled its duties and obligations including facilitating the accreditation of party agents, observers and media.

Generally, STAE and CNE worked together closely to prepare for the elections. According to IRI's core observers, nearly all electoral stakeholders throughout the country expressed confidence in the competency and the neutrality of STAE and CNE as organizations.[5] STAE repeatedly mentioned to IRI's core observers that a significant number of their officials worked during both rounds of the presidential election and therefore gained significant experience in conducting and supervising Election Day electoral processes.

During the 2007 elections, the United Nations Electoral Support Team (UNEST) had a fairly direct role in implementing and managing the elections. UNEST provided some technical and logistical support to both electoral management bodies during the 2012 national elections, though it played a smaller advisory role relative to 2007.

B. 2012 Presidential Election

1. First Round

On March 17, 2012, more than 78 percent of eligible Timorese voters went to the polls to elect a president. Insofar as no candidate surpassed the 50 percent threshold, the two leading vote earners, FRETILIN's Francisco Guterres, commonly called Lu Olo (earning 28.76 percent of the vote), and Major General José Maria Vasconcelos, commonly called Taur Matan Ruak (TMR) (earning 25.71 percent of the vote), advanced to a run-off election. Incumbent President Ramos-Horta, finished third with 17.48 percent of the vote. With separate funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, IRI conducted a small assessment of the election period. This effort allowed IRI to observe the presidential electoral proceedings as well as some parliamentary election preparations, which provided IRI with invaluable insights into the electoral process.

Given the young country's history of violence, the fact that the first round of election proceedings was conducted without any major violent incidents was of paramount importance. While they did not appear to compromise the overall integrity of the election or its result, IRI's assessment identified some areas of concern on Election Day. In general, the closing and counting procedures seemed disorganized and polling station staff appeared rather confused as to how to close polling stations. Polling-center staff did not appear to be well-trained in the counting procedures, often

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[5] One notable exception to this was the National Unity Party's (PUN) accusations in Dili, as reported to IRI, that the CNE was applying electoral law in a discriminatory manner and in favor of the governing party.

forgetting or repeating steps in the process. Various other minor issues were also noted at the polling stations IRI visited on Election Day. For example, IRI rarely noted polling station officials inspecting voters' fingers for ink prior to voting.

2. *Second Round*

On April 16, 2012, more than 73 percent of the Timorese electorate returned to the polls to cast their vote for either Lu Olo or TMR in the run-off election. The process was peaceful and orderly. The lack of tension and calm, almost jovial, atmosphere on both Election Days were a welcome change from the tension that surrounded the 2007 elections. Less than 48 hours after polls closed, STAE announced TMR the victor with 61.2 percent of the vote. TMR's victory was made official on April 25, 2012, when the Court of Appeals certified the results.

As with the first-round, during the second-round of the presidential election, the Timorese government, electoral administration bodies, electoral staff and citizens all appeared fully committed to ensuring an orderly, transparent and peaceful electoral process. The election law for the run-off election was identical to the first round. The relative decline in voter confusion and election-related incidents from the first round appeared to indicate that voting processes had become routine.

C. Pre-2012 Parliamentary Elections Environment

1. Security

With the country having successfully and peacefully completed both rounds of the presidential election and security officials implementing a strict zero-tolerance policy for election-related violence, there was a general atmosphere of confidence surrounding the parliamentary electoral proceedings. IRI and its observers consistently noted that the pre-election period was calm and electoral stakeholders were united in their will to hold open, transparent and peaceful elections. A credible and secure electoral process was seen by national and international actors as an important precursor to the consolidation of democracy and withdrawal of UN peacekeeping forces later in the year. This optimistic attitude stood in stark contrast to the tension that characterized the pre-election environment in 2007 and the uncertainty prior to the 2012 presidential election.

No major tensions between political parties were observed and good communication among all electoral stakeholders contributed to a positive environment. Though negative campaigning was problematic particularly in Dili, confrontations between political parties were avoided. Any incidents of violence or political tensions prior to elections in the districts were isolated, with IRI's core observers noting a small number of incidents, mainly reported in the traditionally volatile eastern region of the country. These were mostly rock-throwing incidents that resulted in minor injuries. However, there were some reports of more serious incidents, including an arson attack against a CNRT office and the murder of a FRETILIN supporter by his cousin. Both the police and political party spokesmen contended that the murder was not politically motivated. However, concern for post-Election Day unrest upon announcement of the results remained high.

With extreme and widespread violence not an overriding concern, observers were able to focus on other, more procedural issues that could threaten the legitimacy of proceedings on Election Day. Based on the core observers' reports during the pre-election period, IRI flagged the following

potential concerns for Election Day: missing materials in some polling stations, voters attempting to cast ballots without voter identification cards or other necessary documentation, smudged ballot papers, confusion over the large ballot size, the counting process, residual or active campaigning during the 48-hour legally mandated black-out period preceding Election Day and un-credentialed party agents in the polling station on Election Day.

2. Key Political Actors

<u>CNRT</u> - *Congresso Nacional para a Reconstrucao de Timor* (National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor)

- Head of the Party: Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão; Secretary General: Deonisio Babo

The name CNRT originally described the *Conselho Nacional da Resistencia Timorense* (National Council of Timorese Resistance), established in the late 1980s as the umbrella body of all groups fighting against Indonesian occupation, it dissolved in 2000. Xanana Gusmão launched a new political party in March 2007 using the same acronym with the name National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor. The party focused on reconstruction with resistance leader Gusmão as its president and the slogan "We have freed the country – now we will free the people!" It won 24 percent of the vote in the 2007 parliamentary elections, placing second behind FRETILIN, and earning 18 seats in parliament. CNRT formed the AMP majority coalition with Democratic Party (PD), Timorese Social Democracy Association (ASDT) and Social Democracy Party (PSD) coalescing in a majority of 37 seats.

<u>FRETILIN</u> - *Frente Revolucionaria do Timor Leste Independente* (Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste)

- Head of the Party: Francisco "Lu Olo" Guterres; Secretary General: Mari Bim Amude Alkatiri

FRETILIN was established in 1974 as ASDT, with Xavier do Amaral as president and Nicolau Lobato, Mari Alkatiri and José Ramos-Horta as founding members. It created Armed Forces for the Liberation and Independence of Timor-Leste, a military wing of FRETILIN, and led the resistance against the Indonesian occupation. Over the years, a number of leaders broke away from FRETILIN to form other parties, including Avelino Coelho (who established the Timorese Socialist Party PST), but FRETILIN maintains the widest support base and still symbolizes the resistance and independence to many people. In the 2001 constituent assembly elections, FRETILIN won 57.37 percent of the vote securing a 55-seat majority to form the government when the assembly became the National Parliament. However, it faced a setback when following the 2006 crisis then-Prime Minister Mari Alkitari was forced to resign. In the 2007 elections, FRETILIN won 21 seats in parliament, earning the most seats, but falling short of a majority. The party lost control of the parliament and took on the role of the opposition when the AMP coalition government was formed.

<u>PD</u> - *Partido Democrático* (Democratic Party)

- Head of the Party: Fernando "La Sama" de Araujo; Secretary General: Mariano "Assanami" Sabino

Established in June 2001, PD won 8.7 percent of the vote and seven seats in the constituent assembly elections, of 2001, winning the second largest number of seats after FRETILIN. In 2007, PD won 11 percent of the vote and eight seats, comprising the third largest party in parliament. It joined CNRT, PSD and ASDT in to form the AMP coalition government with PD's president, La Sama, serving as the president of the 2007-2012 National Parliament.

Other parties

Many of the other parties with parliamentary representation such as ASDT, PSD, National Democratic Unity of the Timorese Resistance (UNDERTIM), faced a number of challenges in the pre-election period namely due to internal factionalization, defections, corruption scandals, and the death or ill-health of senior leaders. Some of them, such as PUN, were expected to retain seats if they could expand their voter base.

3. Voter Registration

The voter registration process was managed entirely by STAE. In interviews with IRI core observers, both STAE and CNE officials expressed confidence that voter lists were successfully updated prior to the parliamentary race. IRI's discussions with citizens generally seemed to corroborate STAE and CNE's confidence; IRI did not hear any complaints regarding the voter registration process or concerns that eligible citizens were unregistered for logistical or technical reasons.

However, IRI's core observers noted some problems with regard to the new voter list system. The election law passed in May 2011 mandated that citizens must vote in the *suco* where they are registered. While an important step to ensuring a better electoral process by providing staff with more manageable voter lists and streamlining voting procedures, the re-registration process was not without challenges. Citizens residing outside their home *suco* either needed to re-register to vote in their area of current residence or make plans to travel back to their home *suco* to vote on Election Day.

Many citizens chose to re-register to vote, citing a lack of adequate, affordable transportation on Election Day. However, due to the large number of voters who chose to re-register, all districts in the central region experienced a shortage of voter identification cards, causing delays in the re-registration process. IRI observers were told that STAE recorded voter information and indicated that all cards would be printed and distributed before Election Day.

Additionally, IRI was not aware of any discernible display and challenge processes for the updated voter lists in any of the districts. According to electoral regulations, the finalization of the voter list should have been followed by a 10-day period during which the provisional voter register was posted at polling centers, *suco* village offices or local STAE offices. During this period, citizens should have had the right to review the voter lists and submit challenges if necessary. However, a one-week extension by CNE to the initial 18-day registration update period impacted the time available for the display and challenge period to occur. This limited the ability of Timorese voters to contest the list or file a complaint.

In Baucau, the STAE coordinator at one point stated that the display and challenge process would take place sometime within the last 10 days before the elections at the *suco* level, but repeated inquiries in various *sucos* over the last week before Election Day proved fruitless on this front.

OIPAS observers in Lautem confirmed that a number of voters had been mistakenly dropped from the lists between the first and second rounds of the presidential election and expected some similar issues during the parliamentary vote. However, they were unaware of anyone actually being prevented from voting in these cases. Overall, occasional problems with the lists and the lack of a clear display and challenge processes did not appear to have affected anyone's ability to vote, but did present a potential vulnerability.

4. Voter Education

Government-sponsored voter education initiatives prior to the parliamentary elections were often lackluster, and the activities that were meant for interactive participation were not well-attended in most districts. STAE created an official schedule to conduct voter education events in all *sucos* in each district, however, IRI observers noted that events were frequently cancelled. The most common reason stated by STAE officials for cancelling voter education events was a breakdown in communication between STAE and *suco* chiefs. For example, in Quelicai sub-district in Baucau, a *suco* chief explained that the invitation sent by STAE for the voter education event was confusing, indicating that it was only for *suco* (village) and *aldeia* (hamlet) chiefs rather than all citizens.

Citizen turnout to STAE voter education events was often low. A lack of interest among voters can be partially attributed to a degree of voter education fatigue. Many Timorese might have felt that they understood the basic electoral procedures from their experience voting in two national elections in the previous four months.

Another gap in voter education efforts was a lack of logistical support to sub-district and *suco* level STAE officials actually charged with organizing voter education events. In many cases, these lower-level election officials were not provided with transportation to the far-flung *sucos* and *aldeias* where they were to conduct the sessions. One official in Laga sub-district in Baucau relayed that she typically arranged rides with patrolling police, and in one case missed a scheduled session because no transportation was available.

Moreover, voter education sessions that took place often taught general voter education curriculum rather than focusing on the specifics of the 2012 parliamentary elections. For example, many voter education sessions used a generic ballot as an example, a tool of limited use given the length and complexity of the parliamentary election ballot.

Additionally, as far as IRI is aware, none of the sessions incorporated information regarding the process by which votes translate into parliamentary seats, or how government formation would be determined. A comprehensive approach to civic education likely would have been better received and led to even greater participation and enhanced understanding of the electoral results, thereby contributing to reducing post-election tension.

Despite the various challenges with voter education, it did not seem to have significantly impacted the voters' ability to cast their ballot. IRI observed on Election Day that voters were generally aware of what documentation was needed in order to vote as well as where and how to vote. The relatively low number of voters turned away for invalid or missing identification or for arriving in the wrong location demonstrates voters' knowledge and understanding of the requirements and steps necessary to vote. Moreover, the miniscule number of blank ballots (0.61 percent) and those invalidated due to voter error (1.75 percent), according to CNE, confirms the general high level of

awareness on correct voting procedure, even with the large and complex ballot. However, there were occasional cases noted in every district of voter confusion, particularly in the case of elderly voters.

5. Election Campaigning

IRI's core observers witnessed several different types of campaign activity in each of Timor-Leste's 13 districts during the campaign period that lasted from June 5 to July 4, 2012. The overall campaign environment was peaceful and tolerant, with multiple parties able to campaign freely. The most significant change from the two rounds of the presidential election, noted in nearly every district, was a shift from large rallies to small community gatherings (dialogues and meetings) and door-to-door campaigning. This allowed for more substantive engagement between voters and party representatives and generally boded well for the development of peaceful political dialogue.

Across all campaign events observed, and especially those of the main three parties, a similar mix of campaign messaging was at work. Most campaigns could be best described as using platform "soundbites" rather than engaging in a serious issue-based discussion. Subsequently, party platforms were essentially the same across parties. Talking points fell within the broad categories of development, poverty alleviation and government decentralization. Development issues typically pertained to infrastructure, for example, the need for road repair, increased access to water and electricity and agricultural reforms. Poverty alleviation policies included job creation, market decentralization to promote the consumption of local goods and welfare to the elderly and veterans. A commonly heard campaign promise involved granting significant funds to *suco* chiefs to initiate development projects on a community level rather than requiring chiefs to submit proposals to the central state. In addition to these topics, criticism of the incumbent government was also included in some campaign discourse.

At both larger rallies and smaller community events, IRI observers noted the common theme of party officials recounting the party's resistance credentials. Older parties took credit for the country's liberation in an attempt to distinguish themselves. For example, FRETILIN made statements during rallies that it solely won independence for Timor-Leste at a time when all other political factions during the 1970s-1990s favored integration with Portugal or Indonesia. CNRT similarly claimed that Gusmão was the true guarantor of independence. Almost all parties employed this type of language, imploring voters to go to the polls to vote for their freedom as citizens, just as they voted for the nation's independence in the 1999 referendum.

With some exceptions, campaigns tended to be highly personality-centric. This phenomenon is most likely due to a lack of distinct party platforms paired with the iconicism of party leaders, especially those who gained prominence as national figures during the resistance struggle against Indonesian occupation. In particular, Xanana Gusmão's image and personality were the defining elements of CNRT's campaign.[6] Language used in CNRT campaigns characterized him as the "father of liberation of Timor-Leste," the "father of development" and "Xananaism" was even referenced in one campaign speech as the primary ideology of the party. The parties' campaign posters and billboards usually prominently featured individuals, rather than themes or issues central to the parties' platforms. For instance, José Ramos-Horta was notably showcased on the print campaign materials for two separate parties—ASDT and PD.

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[6] At CNRT events, Gusmão's photo was featured on all paraphernalia (for example, t-shirts, caps and vests) and banners.

Furthermore, campaigns featured limited distinctions between parliamentary candidates and party leaders. In most cases, parties actually promoted party leaders rather than the candidates despite the reality that party presidents often do not serve actively as members of parliament.[7] There was no discussion on the campaign trail of the candidates on each closed party list.

In an effort to avoid overlapping use of common venues and prevent clashes between supporters from different parties, each political party submitted detailed campaign calendars and negotiated a final consolidated calendar with CNE prior to the commencement of the one-month official campaigning period on June 5, 2012. The calendar was generally effective at preventing campaign event overlap and potential confrontation, as well as providing political parties with an equal opportunity to plan extensive election campaigns. The calendar, however, was not very accurate, as many parties cancelled, added or changed their campaign events.

6. Campaign Strategies

Within the context of the aforementioned broader trends, each party exhibited a distinct approach to its campaigning, in large part reflecting their parties' structures and support bases.

FRETILIN entered the 2012 parliamentary elections with some clear advantages due to its extensive grassroots structure and strong organizational foundation, especially in the eastern region of the country. FRETILIN also benefitted from popular discontent with the pace of development and growth in rural areas. After an expensive campaign for the presidential election with large rallies that paid few dividends and recognizing its comparative advantage, FRETILIN deployed an extensive ground-game in the eastern districts. It used its party structure to conduct community events and door-to-door campaigns in every *suco.* Central to the FRETILIN campaign was the use of a social contract in which the party committed funding and support to each *suco* where the contract was signed. FRETILIN's campaign organization had the clearest structure and hierarchy, with party coordinators at each level following a similar playbook regardless of their location.

Led by Prime Minister Gusmão, CNRT was well-positioned for the 2012 elections. With a support base built around certain constituencies, namely resistance veterans personally loyal to Gusmão, much of CNRT's campaign was personality-driven. Interestingly, various groups campaigned on Gusmão's behalf without explicitly allying themselves with CNRT. Gusmão-led rallies were central to CNRT's campaign activities; rallies were conducted both in district capitals and in a range of sub-districts. While CNRT coordinators reported conducting door-to-door campaigning, IRI found limited reporting to verify this.

With roots in the student movement supporting Timorese independence and led by a former leader of the clandestine resistance and the president of the 2007 parliament, La Sama, PD employed a "third-force" or "kingmaker" strategy. Gambling on the likelihood that neither of the main parties would win an outright majority, PD sought to secure the same number if not a slightly higher number of seats as in 2007 so as to play a key role in securing a place in the winning government coalition by supporting either FRETILIN or CNRT. Thus, its campaign prominently featured former president Ramos-Horta while also involving community events and door-to-door activities similar to FRETILIN but on a less comprehensive scale.

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[7] Party leaders like FRETILIN's Mari Alkatiri and Lu Olo who were elected to parliament in the 2007 elections simply relinquished their role to substitutes from the candidate list.

i. Violations of Campaign Regulations

IRI's core observers did not observe any systematic violations that would impact the overall legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process. However, they noted some specific concerns, most of which were revealed through interviews with party members and other election stakeholders including citizens.

Campaign financing: The most frequently voiced and serious complaint involved allegations over the financing of CNRT's campaign, connecting the party's position in government with its ability to access extensive campaign funds. CNRT was alleged to have received funds from private companies in exchange for a continuation of government contracts. This accusation was compounded by general resentment among opposition parties of the obvious gaps in funding between them and CNRT. Allegations of CNRT's illicit fund-raising methods were referred to the CNE Prosecutor-General's office, and the Commission Against Corruption by the leader of the PUN, Fernanda Borges, who also serves as the chair of the local chapter of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC). To the best of IRI's knowledge, no subsequent actions were taken by the Prosecutor-General or the Commission Against Corruption.

Vote buying and distributing gifts: Rumors of vote buying were prevalent throughout the pre-election period. Few incidents were officially reported, though some voters and party coordinators claimed to have witnessed an exchange of money for votes. There was likely hesitancy among citizens to report serious violations due to fear that criticism of the electoral process would be interpreted as attacks against political party leaders and could lead to instability.

Use of the advantage of incumbency: A new disbursement of payments to veterans and their families commenced on June 15, 2012, in the middle of the campaign period. The decision to disburse payments to more than 27,000 veterans and their relatives just before the elections created the impression that CNRT used its position in government unfairly.

Use of government resources: Electoral stakeholders in several districts, including Ainaro, Baucau, Lautem, Manatuto and Viqueque highlighted the use of government vehicles for campaign purposes as the most common campaign violation. In interviews with IRI, these stakeholders stated that multiple parties employed this practice, typically by removing government-issued license plates when CNE officials were noticed in the vicinity of campaign events to obscure the use of the official vehicles from public view.

Campaign schedules: The official campaign schedules submitted by the parties to CNE frequently contained factually incorrect information or omitted key events. While CNE officials complained about this to party leaders, CNE could not compel party leaders to fully cooperate with the policy regarding updating the electoral calendar.

Use of party symbols and flags: FRETILIN coordinators in Baucau and Viqueque complained about the unauthorized use of the FRETILIN name and related symbols within the CNRT campaign. This was in specific reference to the FRETILIN Resistencia group, a faction that broke away from FRETILIN but continued to use FRETILIN flags and symbols at CNRT rallies and other campaign events. FRETILIN complained to CNE; in Viqueque they reported that following their complaint, FRETILIN Resistencia stopped using FRETILIN flags.

Overall, IRI found that structures and knowledge for addressing campaign violations were

constrained. Although the legal framework for defining violations and providing for a complaint process at every stage was in place, it was not clear that effective redress was always pragmatic. CNE's ability to enforce campaign regulations appeared to be quite limited. Furthermore, the practical steps required, such as travel to the district CNE office or completing a complicated form, may have been out of reach for many people.

7. Media Coverage

All 18 parties and three coalitions contesting the parliamentary elections were provided access to and relied upon public radio and the television outlet Radio Television Timor-Leste (RTTL). CNE coordinated assigned media monitors to oversee equal access to coverage. However, compared to Western norms, media was not an integral component of the pre-election period due to Timor-Leste's underdeveloped media sector. Most political parties lacked an active media strategy, with the exception of FRETILIN and its private radio station Radio Maubere.

i. National Public Radio and Television

According to its official policy, RTTL gave each political party two minutes of campaign coverage each night during the pre-election period in addition to 10 minutes within the program *Ita nia Partido* (Our Party), where parties discussed platforms and policies. This program aired once live and then was replayed multiple times by community radio stations in the districts. Additionally, parties were permitted to buy three-minute advertising spots for $300 per minute to promote their electoral campaign, but most parties chose not to do so.

In interviews with IRI, CNE media monitors[8] stated that all parties received equal campaign coverage from RTTL for those events that were listed on the official CNE calendar. Cases in which political parties were dissatisfied with their coverage[9] were typically those where parties cancelled or changed campaign events and failed to communicate this effectively to CNE and RTTL. CNE did not receive any official complaints from parties regarding unequal media coverage, though some parties did complain directly to RTTL and in some cases problems were addressed informally.

Stakeholders also highlighted the lack of professional journalism in Timor-Leste's media as a challenge to well-balanced and accurate coverage. As a state-owned company, RTTL was accused by some of being subject to state controls, promoting government policies and activities without critical examination. Government funding for newspapers over the last five years was also seen by some parties as undermining the impartiality of journalistic content.

ii. Private Radio and Television

FRETILIN was the only party that systematically used private media in its campaign via Radio Maubere.[10] No other parties own private official or unofficial media companies. If parties did seek

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[8] The CNE media team monitored RTTL and TV Timor-Leste broadcasts, three journals (*Timor Post*, *Diario National* and *Suara Timor Lorosae*), and a community radio station,*Centro Radio Communidade.*

[9] The PUN party alleged that RTTL coverage of campaign activities was unequal. The party received less than its two minutes of broadcast on several occasions, and on some evenings only received approximately one minute. This was discrimination on the part of the company's editorial staff rather than its media crews, according to the accusation.

[10] According to FRETILIN's Jose Texeira, the content of Radio Maubere normally includes coverage of party leadership and activities, as well as news headlines taken directly from RTTL and newspapers. Other content includes weekly

additional media coverage, they typically did so via independent community radio stations. These independent stations also provided basic campaign coverage in some district capitals; however, they lacked funds to extensively cover campaigns. In Dili, which has a far more active media scene than other central districts, private media outlets like Cafe Radio, Radio Liberta and Eritica did play a small role in campaigns. Smaller parties including PUN and National Development Party mentioned these outlets as resources.

iii. Social Media

Social media was used unofficially in some party campaigns. Facebook in particular was extremely popular among young Timorese, and political parties utilized it, as well as YouTube, to support their election campaigns. FRETILIN and CNRT employed social media tools, namely Facebook and text messaging, more systematically and adeptly than other parties.

Though it is difficult to gauge actual effects, it is possible that social media played an important role in facilitating discussion and debate among party supporters. According to IRI's core observers, Facebook provided a space where young voters could engage with each other and debate ideas, as inter-party dialogue rarely occurred in the traditional media.

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programs on health, and corruption and transparency. During election season, content was more directly focused on coverage of candidates, platform-oriented programs, recorded radio advertisements (no negative ads) and interviews with figures on campaign issues. Radio Maubere does not give coverage of any other political parties. Radio sets are distributed to all sub-district coordinators in order to extensively broadcast programming.

V. Election Day

A. *Electoral Procedures*

When polls opened July 7, 2012, the overall environment was calm, with a festive atmosphere noted around some polling stations. IRI's 13 observer teams, which included its core observers, visited 110 polling stations in each of Timor-Leste's 13 administrative districts on Election Day. With polls scheduled to open at 7:00 am to general voters, polling station preparations began at 6:00 am. Teams arrived at their self-selected polling stations within assigned districts between 5:30-6:00 am to observe technical opening procedures and develop a sense of the mood on Election Day. Then, teams observed general voting procedures at various polling stations throughout their assigned district. Between 2:30-3:00 pm teams arrived at a self-selected polling station to observe the closing procedures. As closing procedures began, teams followed the ballots to the location within the center chosen for counting procedures, usually a room that had previously served as one of the polling stations.[11] Throughout the day IRI's teams completed customized checklists, one for the opening procedures, one for each of the polling stations where they observed voting procedures and one for closing and counting procedures, to guide their observation and allow for systematic data collection. In addition to filling out detailed checklists, IRI's observers also completed a telephone-based IVR questionnaire immediately after leaving each polling station to provide real-time data on Election Day proceedings.

Overall, IRI's observers positively appraised the procedures and processes on Election Day. The various actors on Election Day – voters, polling station staff, party agents and citizen observers – showed great respect for the voting process and exhibited a sense of national pride in the electoral process. IRI commended Timorese electoral management bodies for their commitment to voter access via mobile polling stations in prisons and hospitals. Though observers noted procedural irregularities and minor electoral law violations at a number of polling stations, they did not identify systemic legal violations or any actions that would suggest intent to maliciously influence the election results. In IRI's assessment, Timor-Leste's 2012 parliamentary electoral proceedings and the subsequent results were open, transparent and accurately represented the will of the Timorese people.

1. Opening Procedures

All of the polling stations IRI's observers visited were clearly marked. In most cases, international observers were granted full access to observe opening proceedings inside the stations. The few instances where international observers were not granted full access were, according to station staff, due to concerns that the limited space available inside the station could detract from the orderliness of the process.

In many cases, IRI's observers witnessed long lines forming well before the stations were scheduled to open at 7:00 am. Despite the crowds at many polling stations, voters waited patiently and orderly for opening procedures to be completed and polls opened. The atmosphere was ubiquitously calm and relaxed.

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[11] The polling centers were comprised of one, two or three polling stations.

As late as the day before the elections, IRI received reports that STAE-issued voting materials still had not reached all the polling stations, particularly in remote areas. Based on interviews with local electoral stakeholders, IRI had concerns that the materials would not arrive at the polling stations in time. However, the Institute noted that necessary materials such as voter lists, ballots, ballot boxes, stamps, indelible inking materials and voting booths were observed to be on hand and in adequate supply.

Properly composed teams of polling station staff were present and ready to begin the procedures, in most cases, prior to 6:00 am. The generally young polling station staff took their responsibilities seriously and appeared dedicated to protecting the integrity of the process. In one polling station in Manatuto district, IRI's observer team arrived just before 6:00 am to find all of the poll workers waiting for the party agents to arrive in order to begin the opening procedures. At 6:12 am, a number of party agents had arrived and the polling officials began the opening procedures. In most cases, IRI noted that the polling station staff had performed these procedures in the recent past (in one or both rounds of the presidential election) as they demonstrated a familiarity with the processes and procedures.

An overwhelming majority of polling stations opened on time or within 15 minutes of the scheduled opening time. However, one notable exception occurred in Ermera district where a polling station that IRI observers visited was still not open at 8:00 am. Interviews with citizen observers and party agents in the vicinity revealed that this particular station was sharing a ballot box with a nearby prison. The polling station staff decided to allow the prisoners to vote first and planned to open the polling station to general voting between 9:00 and 9:30 am. This delay caused an extremely long line outside the polling station when IRI's observation team arrived.

In nearly all instances, polling station staff followed the steps prescribed by the electoral laws, though occasionally not in the order enumerated in the laws. Polling station staff was observed counting the number of ballots received, reading the ballot box seal numbers aloud and recording the details of all these steps in the polling station's official minutes as mandated by law. IRI's observers consistently noted that the ballots were clearly visible throughout opening procedures. Though mostly minor in nature, IRI's observers did note that there were some mistakes and missteps in the opening procedures. However, in IRI's assessment, no systematic violations occurred during the opening procedures that could be considered to compromise the integrity of the elections.

The lack of light (sunlight and electricity) was noted by several IRI observers as a hindrance to beginning the opening procedures in a timely fashion. This lack of electricity was also an issue during the presidential election. Prior to the parliamentary elections, STAE indicated they would provide generators at as many polling stations as possible in order to address this logistical issue. However, a number of polling station staff struggled to follow the opening procedures in near darkness as they did not have generators or an alternate source of light. In one polling station in Lautem, observers provided their flashlights to polling station staff so they could begin preparing the ballots, ballot box and other sensitive materials. In other cases, such as in a polling station in Bobonaro, the polling staff was forced to wait until there was sufficient sunlight to begin the opening procedures.

Party agents and citizen observers, namely OIPAS, were highly attentive to the opening procedures process. In many cases, IRI observed the party agents and observers taking notes of the proper steps as well as writing down the number of ballots the station received and the serial numbers on

the ballot box seals. IRI witnessed no queries or complaints made during the opening procedures. The absence of protests and complaints was a theme that continued throughout Election Day.

2. Voting Procedures

Overall, the Timorese – voters, election officials, party agents and citizen observers – showed great pride and enthusiasm for participating in the electoral process. In general, the atmosphere throughout the morning was upbeat and positive. Long lines of voters could be seen smiling and joking, and many lingered around the polling center grounds after voting, socializing in groups. As the morning turned to midday, the pace slowed considerably; the majority of voters cast their ballots in the morning. By noon, voting was mostly complete and only a few voters trickled into the polling stations. Voting was generally conducted efficiently and polling staff in all locations ensured that the process was conducted calmly and in an orderly fashion. Around 2:00 pm, the environment around polling stations became livelier as crowds of people again began to gather in anticipation of the vote count. By 3:00 pm, when polling stations officially closed, citizens were often pressed up against the polling center windows, fighting for a good view of the counting process. Though the counting process itself was relatively orderly, in some instances, the environment outside the polling center prior to the counting process was slightly chaotic.

According to Timorese election law, 10 polling station staff members were to be present in the polling station (though only a minimum of six were required in order for voting to proceed). These 10 positions included a polling station secretary, four identification officers, one ballot paper controller, one ballot box controller, one indelible ink application controller and two queue controlling officers. In general, IRI observed election officers dutifully carrying out their roles. Polling station staff seemed competent and dedicated to their duties and remained focused throughout the day. The staff appeared well-trained; they did not wait for direction from the polling station secretary but did their jobs independently. Without exception, all election officers that IRI interviewed reported having received training from STAE prior to the elections.

The identification officers closely examined the voter registration cards, national ID cards or other acceptable documentation to determine the validity of the identification and age of the voters in all the observed polling stations and then marked voters off the official voter registration list after they were determined eligible to vote. Occasionally, voters who were not on the official voter list attempted to vote. In most cases, this was due to confusion over the new geographical voter registration system – for the first time in parliamentary elections, voters were required to vote in the *suco* where they were registered to vote. Voters not appearing on the voter list were able to vote if they presented a valid voter identification card corresponding to that geographical area of registration.

While, in general, the identity of the voters upon their arrival at the polling station was verified in accordance with the procedures, IRI's observation teams noted that in many polling stations STAE staff failed to check voters' fingers for traces of indelible ink. In several of these locations IRI inquired with polling station secretaries about who is responsible for checking the voters' hands for ink. The commonly received answer was that this was done by the voter identification officers. However, it was evident that in some locations voter identification officers were not conducting even casual checks; some voters had their hands in their pockets or arms crossed during the voter identification process.

STAE-issued ballot boxes were utilized to collect the ballots, with one electoral officer stationed near the box to guarantee its security and to ensure each voter placed only one ballot in the box. IRI observers did not observe any missing, broken or unsecured seals on ballot boxes and to IRI's knowledge, no complaints were registered regarding the ballot boxes.

IRI's observer team in Ainaro district was one of the few to observe a mobile polling station. Along with a police escort, party agents and citizen and international observers, polling station staff brought ballots, the voter registration list, the ballot box and indelible ink to a local hospital to allow patients to vote. In the hospital, polling station staff followed proper procedures in terms of voter identification and went to great lengths to accommodate the voters and to ensure their privacy. However, periodically, polling station staff did not have a clear view of the ballot box as it was placed behind the hospital curtain while the patients cast their ballot. The box was out of the view for only a short period of time rendering wide scale electoral fraud unlikely.

IRI's observer teams repeatedly noted the lack of a standard layout for the arrangement of individual voting booths within polling stations. In a change from the presidential election, in some polling stations STAE staff oriented the voting booths so that the voters' backs faced the room. This reconfiguration exposed the inside of the booth to the polling station, providing viewing access to polling staff, observers, party agents and other voters. STAE developed this policy in response to concerns raised during the presidential election that some voters had taken photos to prove their selection and collect on vote buying agreements. Troublingly, there appeared to be no consistent policy for booth placement with the new orientation to ensure that vote secrecy was protected. Confusion over CNE's lack of formal approval of the policy change created an environment in which some polling station secretaries either did not know of the STAE-mandated change or did not implement it effectively. While IRI applauds STAE's effort to thwart vote-buying, the inconsistent arrangement of voting booths was problematic.

Additionally, in many polling stations, the voting booths were also situated very close to party agents, observers, polling staff and even windows. With little difficulty, party agents, observers and even polling staff could feasibly surmise where on the ballot voters were making their marks. Particularly in rural districts with small polling stations, party agents were seated extremely close to the voting booths, raising further concerns for voter privacy and ballot secrecy.

IRI also notes that PNTL officers were often observed closer than the legal requisite 25 meters from the polling station. This occurred generally because PNTL officers were socializing with polling staff immediately outside of the polling station or were curious about the proceedings. In one polling station, IRI noted that a PNTL officer entered the polling station to cast a vote without removing his sidearm; this clearly constituted a violation of the Timor-Leste electoral laws. However, the officer's presence inside the polling station did not appear to interfere or influence the process in any way and IRI's observers never sensed a threatening or intimidating presence from the PNTL officers.

In general, IRI observers noticed elderly voters, individuals with small children and disabled voters being given priority in the voting line according to Timorese election law. At one polling station, IRI noted that STAE staff provided chairs for elderly voters while they waited. However, IRI's observers also noted that most polling stations were not easily accessible to disabled voters. Walkways leading to polling stations were mostly unpaved, and the uneven ground was difficult to travel for those who were infirm or had mobility issues. Further, some polling stations required

voters to climb steps, which posed similar obstacles for some voters. It seems to IRI that polling station staff did their best to accommodate and assist disabled voters, but was a difficult task given Timor-Leste's underdeveloped infrastructure. Additionally, a number of party and citizen observers also commented that a lack of assistance for the elderly and illiterate slowed the voting process.

In short, though there were slight operational missteps during voting procedures, these small infractions did not seem to impact the outcome of the elections. Nonetheless, these procedural errors represent vulnerabilities in the Timorese electoral process that should be addressed in order to help Timor-Leste strengthen its democratic process.

3. Closing and Counting Procedures

Similar to the opening of the polling stations, the closing and counting procedures were executed in a transparent and proficient manner with polling station officials following the spirit of the electoral procedures, if not following the laws exactly. In IRI's experience, all polling stations observed closed on time at 3:00 pm. While there were hardly any voters who had yet to cast their ballot at 3:00 pm, those in line were allowed to vote pursuant to the law.

In many cases, polling station staff began organizing and preparing to implement closing procedures as early at 2:45 pm due to the lack of voters in the polling station. Though the staff began making preliminary logistical arrangements to close, polling stations remained officially open for last-minute voters. Where IRI monitored closing procedures, they appeared to be conducted according to the electoral law – unused ballots were marked with the appropriate stamp and placed into a sealed envelope to be returned to STAE.

The preparations for the vote tallying process that IRI observed appeared to be transparent, however the preparations were not conducted in a consistent manner throughout the country. At all polling stations observed by IRI, the staff announced aloud the numbers of the ballot box seals before cutting the seals, and the numbers were then recorded in the official electoral minutes. Then, in plain view of party agents and observers, the boxes were overturned and the ballots were unfolded. However, different polling staff members completed these tasks, rather than the polling center president or the polling station secretary as is explicitly stated in the electoral law. Though this is technically a violation of the electoral law, it appears that this was done for efficiency gains and not with nefarious intent. In some polling centers, as many as 15 polling staff or more were observed performing operations to prepare for the vote tally. This may be attributed to the fact that for centers comprised of more than one polling station, polling staff from multiple stations was on hand for counting procedures. The large number of people conducting multiple processes simultaneously made it difficult in some cases to observe the pre-vote tallying processes to ensure they were properly followed.

In each polling station where IRI observed closing procedures, the polling center president conducted the official vote tallying process, announcing the result of each ballot aloud and displaying the actual ballot for party agents and observers to inspect. In at least one instance, it did not appear as though the polling center president was carefully checking for a signature and stamp on the back of the ballot.[12] If valid, the ballot was placed in the appropriate pile based on the party which received the vote. If the ballot was deemed invalid or blank, it was placed in the appropriate

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[12] The signature and stamp on the back of the ballot indicates that the ballot was officially issued to the voter by the ballot officer.

pile designated for such ballots. However, sometimes these ballots were not immediately stamped as invalid or blank as prescribed by the election law.

IRI observers witnessed only a small handful of challenges by party agents, most of which were informal in nature. In general, the party agents seemed to trust the polling center president's interpretation of the ballot. Additionally, IRI observers repeatedly reported that party agents and OIPAS observers left immediately after the vote tallying process was complete. They did not stay to watch the ballots be placed into envelopes and sealed or watch the sealed envelopes be placed in a properly secured ballot box to be delivered to the district tabulation center. In IRI's assessment, more training and guidance is needed for party agents in these areas.

IRI's observers witnessed only one official complaint during the counting process. The incident occurred in Bobonaro district. During the closing process, the polling center president announced that he had made an error during the opening process in counting the number of ballots received. He reminded those present that they had announced receiving 800 ballots (16 books) whereas in fact they had received 850 ballots (17 books). He acknowledged his error. After asking a series of questions, a FRETILIN party agent was invited to submit a formal complaint. He was provided a form, which he filled out and returned to polling station officials. No further closing or counting processes proceeded until his complaint was formally received. In IRI's assessment, the STAE staff was respectful and encouraging of the agent's right to file a complaint. The complaint was officially filed with CNE and was adjudicated through the proper legal channels.

B. Actors and Stakeholders on Election Day

1. Polling Station Staff and Electoral Officials

In general, election staff seemed professional and committed to performing the necessary tasks to successfully administer each polling station. Polling station staff did not appear to wait for direction from the polling station secretary or the polling center president, but rather conducted their jobs independently in an appropriate manner. They showed great competency in the basic procedures, and every STAE polling station staff member that IRI interviewed indicated receiving sufficient training from STAE regarding their role and duties on Election Day.

IRI's observers noted a strong presence of women among the polling station staff. In some cases, there were more women polling staff members than men, a notable achievement in gender equality for this traditionally patriarchal society.

In IRI's assessment, the polling station staff was generally well-trained on basic voting procedures, such as correctly identifying eligible voters, properly stamping and signing ballots and issuing one ballot per voter. However, during the opening procedures and especially during the closing and counting procedures, polling station staff seemed much less confident in their abilities and tended to struggle with issues such as handling questionable ballots.

2. Party Agents

Party polling agents were ubiquitous on Election Day. IRI's observers noted them at every polling station they visited. In fact, at many polling stations there was more than one party agent per party present, technically a violation of the electoral law. Party agents were usually attentive to the general

voting process though they often seemed unclear of their role. In some cases, the party agents were observed passively watching voters deposit their ballot into the ballot box with little attention paid to any other procedures taking place in the polling station. On the other hand, at several polling stations, party agents were ill-trained regarding the limitations of their role. The most concerning cases included instances when party agents were observed directly assisting voters who appeared confused about where to go or how to handle their ballot. At one polling station where the party agents were seated less than two meters behind the voting booths, party agents were observed repeatedly jumping up to help voters mark their ballots.

Party agents seemed particularly attentive to the opening procedures and the ballot counting process, in some cases even taking detailed notes and recording ballot box seal numbers. In the case of the closing procedures, party agents were seen comparing the seal numbers with the numbers read aloud during the opening procedures. In most cases, IRI observed party agents diligently conducting simultaneous vote tallies during the counting process. Many of the FRETILIN party agents were noted to have specific tally forms to complete. When asked about the forms, the FRETILIN party agents informed IRI that during their training session they were instructed to return the completed forms to their local party leadership.

While their attention during the vote count was fixed on the vote tally, the party agents did not appear to pay close attention to how the ballots themselves were declared and whether or not the ballots were stamped and signed. Because perforations on the ballots were small and the ballots themselves were creased and wrinkled, there was potential for misinterpretation. Furthermore, some voters failed to fully puncture the ballot, rendering their choices difficult to quickly discern. IRI noted that in numerous polling stations, party agents departed the polling center while the ballots were being sealed in envelopes and recorded in the official minutes, only to return to sign a final results form provided by the electoral staff. When interviewed by the IRI teams, party agents mentioned various voting irregularities they witnessed, but seemed hesitant to voice their complaints to election officials. In IRI's observation, this hesitancy was likely because the agents did not deem the issues serious enough to warrant mentioning to election officials.

Party agent preparation and training appeared highly inconsistent across different parties. FRETILIN party agents were clearly the most organized and best prepared. Often they were the only party agents observed taking notes. Based on pre-election discussions with IRI, PD, while not as engaged in preparing their party agents, demonstrated clear plans for their party agent training and preparation. CNRT coordinators provided much less clear and generally inconsistent information regarding their party agents' preparation.

3. Citizen Observers

A number of citizen observation groups, including OIPAS, Belun, the National University of Timor-Lese, the Ombudsman's Office, *Ra'es Hadomi Timor Oan* (RHTO a Timorese nongovernmental organization for disabled people) and National Organization of Disabled People- Timor-Leste, deployed teams on Election Day and produced election reports based on their observations. IRI commends these civil society groups for contributing to the transparency and credibility of the electoral process. Of all these groups, the IRI-trained OIPAS group was by far the largest and most comprehensive observation mission for the parliamentary elections. Their presence and expertise was recognized and respected by other citizen and international observers. In all but three polling

stations, OIPAS monitors were observed by IRI's teams (in one case OIPAS was present albeit late). In IRI's assessment, the OIPAS observers were organized and confident in their ability to carry out their responsibilities. Several OIPAS observers noted that they were building on previous experience as observers during the presidential rounds, and were very proud of their contributions to their country's democratic development.

A number of times, IRI witnessed OIPAS observers serving as a source of information or clarification on the election laws and codes of conduct. Other citizen observers and party agents were observed asking OIPAS about technical aspects of the law, the allowability of certain actions or the proper order of procedure. To IRI, this demonstrated that the OIPAS observers were respected as a knowledgeable resource on the election process and added to the overall credibility and transparency of the elections.

Most OIPAS observers used checklists to guide their observation. The checklists, generally in the form of a booklet, also provided the observers with a place to record unique occurrences, both positive and negative, which proved to be a helpful source of information on voting trends throughout the day. Some OIPAS observers mentioned to IRI's observer teams that they had witnessed minor issues and possible infractions on Election Day. However, IRI did not witness OIPAS observers file an official complaint. Considering that inconsistencies and minor irregularities were often spotted by the IRI observer teams, in IRI's judgment, the observers would have benefited from additional training on official complaint mechanisms. Although generally thorough and committed in their work, OIPAS observers were perhaps less assertive than they could have been in reporting on violations.

4. International Observers

The Timorese parliamentary elections were characterized by a heavy presence of international election observers, many of whom were invited by the government of Timor-Leste. According to STAE, the electoral management body responsible for accrediting all election observers, 586 international observers from 33 different entities received accreditation. International observers came from numerous countries, including Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, Uganda and the United States. It is widely agreed that the presence of international observers served an important role in deterring electoral fraud and discouraging civic unrest. The government of Timor-Leste and STAE deserve recognition for encouraging and accommodating this monitoring of their electoral process.

C. Election Day Irregularities

Though IRI records a number of irregularities in this report, the Institute recognizes most of them as minor in nature and has no reason to assume the irregularities affected the outcome of the 2012 parliamentary elections. IRI documents these issues in an effort to assist stakeholders in future Timorese elections further refine the processes and policies concerning elections to continue to ensure open and transparent election proceedings.

Inconsistent inking practices: Despite a Timorese legal provision indicating that the forefinger of the right hand should be inked after voting, the application of indelible ink to voters' fingers varied widely from polling station to polling station. In some stations, the STAE official would dip the voter's finger into the ink for them; in other stations, voters were responsible for inking their own

fingers under STAE supervision. These inconsistencies in application led to unnecessary irregularities, such as different hands and fingers receiving ink.

<u>Lack of attention to previously inked fingers</u>: While the process for checking voter's identities was consistently and diligently followed, IRI's observer teams noted a common failure among polling staff to inspect voters' hands for signs of indelible ink. In most polling stations, voters' fingers were neither checked at the door nor at the identification station. Further, STAE workers did not check voters' fingers for grease that could allow for the ink applied after voting to be removed. This did not appear to be a deliberate or purposeful mistake, but rather an oversight on the part of polling station staff. Given that voters' names appear on multiple voter registry lists (voters names must appear on each voter registry list in the *suco* where whey are registered since voters can vote at any polling station in the *suco*), there is significant potential for fraud if voters' fingers are not thoroughly inspected for signs of indelible ink.

<u>Inconsistent configuration of voting booths</u>: IRI cites concerns about the lack of consistent polling station configurations, particularly regarding voting booths. Many voting booths were arranged with the inside of the voting booth visible to STAE officials, voters, observers and most alarmingly, party agents. With only the body of the voter blocking the line of sight of onlookers, the privacy of voters and thus the secrecy of their votes could have been compromised.

<u>Generous interpretations of valid votes</u>: The types of ballot marks necessary for a vote to be considered valid during the vote count were clearly enumerated in the election laws. IRI's observers, however, frequently noted a broad interpretation of valid votes adopted by STAE polling official. As long as voter intent is clear, this does not pose a problem. However, if voter intent is subject to question or interpretation, broad interpretations of valid votes could cause concern.

<u>Multiple party agents per party per polling station</u>: In many polling centers visited by IRI observers, more than one party agent per party was observed present in the polling station at a time. The election law stipulates that only one party agent per party can be present in each polling station at a time. This was an issue particularly in small polling stations where space was limited and privacy while marking a ballot in the polling booth could have been challenging to ensure.

<u>PNTL too close to polling stations</u>: As noted earlier, on numerous occasions, IRI's observers witnessed PNTL officers closer than the legal requisite of 25 meters from the polling station. This was observed more frequently at the end of the day when activity inside the polling station subsided and during the ballot count. However, PNTL's presence near or even inside the polling station did not appear to interfere or influence the process in any way and IRI's observers never sensed a threatening or intimidating presence from the PNTL officers.

<u>Underage voting</u>: IRI noted several cases of Timorese citizens under the age of 17 (the legal voting age in Timor-Leste) casting ballots on Election Day. IRI confirmed this issue via interviews with the voters and with party agents at various polling stations throughout the country, but most notably in Ermera district.

VI. Post-Election Period and Final Results

A. Post-Election Environment

Preliminary results indicated that four political parties met the required three percent threshold to earn a seat in parliament: CNRT, FRETILIN, PD and Frenti-Mudança. None of the parties earned an outright majority. Following the elections, negotiations among the four parties ensued in an effort to form a governing coalition. Dispelling rumors of a grand coalition between CNRT and FRETILIN, on July 15, 2012, CNRT announced its intentions to form a coalition with PD and Frenti-Mudança. The same day, Timor-Leste experienced sporadic post-election violence in some districts sparked by perceived insults by some CNRT members towards FRETILIN and the exclusion of FRETILIN from the governing coalition. The violent unrest was quickly brought under control by PNTL and F-FDTL with support from UNMIT. Nonetheless, the outbreak served as an important reminder of the fragility of the political situation in Timor-Leste.

B. Coalition Formation and New Parliament

With 65 seats, the new parliament includes 30 members from CNRT, 25 from FRETILIN, eight from PD and two from Frenti-Mudança. It also consists of 24 women parliamentarians making up almost 37 percent of the parliament, an increase of eight percent from the previous legislature. Additionally, 37 parliamentarians, more than half, are first-time legislators. Both CNRT and FRETILIN increased their seats at the expense of smaller parties with previous representation in parliament.

VII. Findings and Recommendations

Overall, Timor-Leste held credible parliamentary elections, and the results should be considered to accurately reflect the will of the Timorese people. Pre-election activities were carried out largely within legal parameters and Election Day processes were generally conducted according to the law. STAE and CNE deserve credit for a well-managed process in which polling site officials generally carried out their work in a conscientious manner. Recognition should also go to the Timorese police and armed forces, as well as United Nations security forces, in providing a peaceful environment for the elections. IRI observers also noted the extensive presence of political party polling agents and citizen observers, which further contributed to the of transparency and inclusivity of the elections.

Nonetheless, minor inconsistencies and irregularities did occur that merit redress. In the following pages, IRI's presents its findings and subsequent recommendations for various election stakeholders – STAE, CNE, political parties and civil society. The following measures are recommended to address shortcomings in the electoral framework – including laws, processes and procedures, the performance of administrative bodies and the behavior of political actors.

A. Findings and Recommendations Regarding the Electoral Framework and Pre-Election Period

Finding 1: Clear and specific campaign finance regulations are lacking, and the laws that exist are not accompanied by appropriate enforcement mechanisms. This enables entities, such as companies and wealthy individuals, to exert undue influence.

> Recommendation 1.1: Prior to the next elections, the government and National Parliament should review existing campaign finance laws and craft new legal provisions as appropriate to better regulate campaign finance and spending. The laws should include appropriate penalties to prevent illegal campaign funding and spending.

> Recommendation 1.2: Resources should be dedicated to develop an effective enforcement mechanism to investigate and prosecute campaign finance violations.

> Recommendation 1.3: Campaign codes of conduct should also address the use of incumbent advantage during the campaign with an eye toward aligning Timor-Leste's approach with international best practices.

Finding 2: Though vaguely enumerated in the election law, IRI was not able to confirm any instances of the mandatory voter list display and challenge process prior to the parliamentary elections. The apparent lack of an exhibition process denied voters the opportunity to confirm their registration at the proper *suco*.

> Recommendation 2.1: Regulations concerning the display and challenge process should be adhered to, and timeframes should allow adequate time for voters to file complaints and for electoral management bodies (STAE and CNE) to reconcile the complaints prior to Election Day.

Finding 3: The requirement that voters vote within their *suco* of registration is an important step in preventing repeat voting and standardizing the voting process. However, greater measures can be taken to ensure that no disenfranchisement occurs and to prevent voter fraud.

Recommendation 3.1: Regulations should be amended to minimize possibilities for repeat voting especially in large *sucos* with multiple voting centers by assigning voters to one polling center rather than any polling center in a *suco*.

Recommendation 3.2: While some exceptions were made for voters with compelling reasons for being unable to return to their *suco* of registration on Election Day (e.g. local observers or those supporting international observation teams), their ability to vote could be enhanced by allowing them to vote at any polling center in the country rather than only the polling centers within their *suco* of registration or polling centers where they anticipated to be on Election Day.

B. Findings and Recommendations Regarding Election Day Processes

Finding 4: Polling station staff inconsistently inspected prospective voters' fingers for signs of indelible ink prior to entering the polling station and the application of indelible ink varied from station to station. In some polling stations, voters' fingers were barely dipped in the indelible ink making it very difficult to clearly identify those who had already voted. This discrepancy could be exploited for multiple voting.

Recommendation 4.1: Officials from STAE and CNE should consider revisions to the election regulations specifying that the ink on each voter's finger should be clearly visible.

Recommendation 4.2: Polling station staff should be given further training on the importance of proper application of indelible ink and inspecting voters' hands during the voter identification process.

Recommendation 4.3: Greater voter education on how the credibility of the electoral process can be strengthened by the standardized application of indelible ink would likely help voters understand the purpose of inking and accept its practice.

Finding 5: The lack of uniformity in voting booth configurations, with party agents and citizen observers at times situated with clear lines of sight to voters while making their ballot selection compromised the secrecy of the ballot in some cases.

Recommendation 5.1: Clear standards regarding voting booth placement ought to be communicated to polling station secretaries well in advance of Election Day.

Recommendation 5.2: Voting booths should be arranged so that voters' privacy is respected. If the booths are arranged so that the inside of the booths are open to the polling station, curtains or some other shield should be utilized to provide voters with privacy. Alternatively, voting booths could be arranged so that the front (opaque portion) of the voting booth is facing the inside of the polling station, requiring the voter to walk behind the booth to vote.

Recommendation 5.3: CNE and STAE officials should train polling station staff to focus on the privacy of voters in the voting booth when arranging the polling station. Even in polling stations where space is limited, every effort should be made to maintain the secrecy of a voter's ballot.

Finding 6: Closing and counting procedures, including the determination of what constitutes a valid ballot, were not applied consistently and polling staff had divergent interpretations of valid votes. Although these irregularities did not appear to be deliberate or systematic efforts to manipulate the vote count, they are problematic due to their potential for abuse.

Recommendation 6.1: A chronological list of procedures for each phase of Election Day should be created and provided in each polling station to guide polling station officials and observers.

Recommendation 6.2: The printed list of procedures should be made available for party agents and observers at each polling station.

Recommendation 6.3: Further voter education on what constitutes a valid ballot should be conducted for Timorese citizens.

Recommendation 6.4: Party agents should receive specific training on the process to challenge ballots and file official complaints.

Finding 7: The law designates only two polling staff—the polling station secretary and the polling center president—to be responsible for conducting polling station closing and vote counting procedures. Instead of only these two polling staff executing the procedures, numerous polling staff were often observed assisting or completing the procedures (e.g. emptying the ballot box, sorting ballots).

Recommendation 7.1: STAE and CNE should consider revising the law so that polling station staff, in addition to the polling station secretary and the polling center president, can perform closing and counting duties.

Recommendation 7.2: Polling station staff should be trained on how to carry out their duties during the counting process.

Finding 8: IRI observers consistently noted that polling stations were not accessible to people with disabilities. Though polling station staff was willing to help voters with disabilities, they did not appear trained to do so.

Recommendation 8.1: The Timorese government should consider building access ramps to all polling stations to make them accessible to those with disabilities. Since polling stations are generally located in government or otherwise public buildings that are often utilized as public gathering spaces; the ramps would be simple and valuable additions to public venues.

Recommendation 8.2: Polling staff should be thoroughly trained on how to assist voters with disabilities while maintaining the voters' privacy and remaining within legal standards.

Finding 9: PNTL officers were often seen standing too close to the polling station on Election Day in violation of the election law. Although the presence of police officers near the polling stations did not represent a major problem, this issue was noted at several stations throughout the Election Day.

Recommendation 9.1: PNTL officials should receive more training on adherence to electoral guidelines including respecting the security perimeter and not carrying firearms into the polling station.

Recommendation 9.2: STAE and CNE officials should be further trained on regulations relating to the presence of security personnel at polling stations.

Finding 10: Poor infrastructure and lack of reliable public transportation created challenges for voters to return to their legally mandated *suco* to vote on Election Day. In addition, occasional long lines hindered the electoral process to a limited degree.

Recommendation 10.1: Over the long-term, Timor-Leste's electoral stakeholders should consider working with election experts to develop a system of early and absentee voting. Providing flexibility for voters to return to their home *sucos* will increase participation and relieve congestion.

C. Findings and Recommendations for Electoral Administration Bodies

Finding 11: STAE's voter education efforts were at times inefficient, impacted by miscommunications that led to cancelled events or low turn-out.

Recommendation 11.1: STAE's voter education responsibilities should be prioritized to ensure better coordination at the local level and avoid event cancellations.

Recommendation 11.2: STAE should aim to establish a more relevant voter education curriculum, that focuses on the specifics of the elections in question, as well as identified gaps in voter knowledge.

Recommendation 11.3: STAE should proactively reach out to new voter populations with voter education initiatives. Given Timor-Leste's youth demographics, a large number of new voters will be eligible to vote in subsequent elections. Voter education activities targeted toward secondary school institutions would be a strategic way to reach this population.

Recommendation 11.4: STATE should increase efforts to reach remote areas with voter education programs. Often the voters most in need of voter education are those living in the remote areas with restricted access to information.

Finding 12: There is a general lack of understanding among the population about Timor-Leste's political system. Confusion regarding the parliamentary system and coalition formation has the potential to lead to political tension or even violence.

>   Recommendation 12.1: CNE should be provided additional resources and take greater efforts to promote an understanding among citizens of the concepts of allocation of seats, absolute majority and coalition government.

Finding 13: The number of formal complaints and appeals issued during the voting process was very low compared to the number of possible violations in electoral processes and procedures that party agents and citizen observers noted to IRI. IRI surmises that party agents and citizen observers may have lacked knowledge or confidence in their knowledge of the complaints and appeals process.

>   Recommendation 13.1: STAE and CNE should emphasize the complaints and appeals process in their outreach to parties, ensuring they understand the proper procedures for filing complaints and appeals and the importance of doing so if they witness actions that merit an official complaint.

Finding 14: Though a positive tool for facilitating cooperation among political parties during the pre-election period, the integrity of the electoral campaign calendar was not maintained.

>   Recommendation 14.1: CNE should enhance its coordination with political parties and a more dynamic process for adding campaign activities to the official calendar should be explicitly communicated to parties. The process and requirements for political party campaign scheduling should be clear and applied consistently to all parties.

>   Recommendation 14.2: Political parties should better cooperate with CNE on providing updates to the electoral calendar.

D. Findings and Recommendations for Political Parties

Finding 15: Though abundant, party agents seemed to lack a thorough understanding of their role in the polling station on Election Day. Additionally, citizen observers seemed to lack an understanding of their role after the counting process concluded in polling stations.

>   Recommendation 15.1: Party agents should receive more formalized and uniform training on electoral procedures and their rights and responsibilities in the process on Election Day. Clear instructions should be provided to them against assisting voters or becoming involved in any polling staff duties.

>   Recommendation 15.2: Polling staff should likewise be trained and empowered to prevent polling agent intrusion and/or interference in the voting process.
>   Recommendation 15.3: Citizen observers should be further trained in post-vote counting observation good practices including monitoring the packing and transport of votes to the regional or national counting center.

E. Findings and Recommendations for Supporting Timor-Leste's Democratic Foundations

The peaceful conduct and largely credible campaign and election process observed by IRI signals an important step in Timor-Leste's journey to a fully functioning, sovereign and democratic nation. However, as the country consolidates its democracy, IRI notes the following as areas for further improvement:

Finding 16: Most parties developed campaign strategies based on personalities rather than issue-based campaigns and reflected limited discourse on important questions of sustainable development.

> Recommendation 16.1: More effort should be made by party leadership to institutionalize internal procedures and develop party platforms and messages that address important questions of the country's long-term growth. This will enable parties to more effectively represent Timorese citizens.

> Recommendation 16.2: Though resistance heroes will undoubtedly continue to play a role in Timorese politics, political party leaders ought to focus attention on grooming a new generation of party leadership. Elevating young leaders and women into decision-making positions is crucial for parties to innovate and grow in the future.

> Recommendation 16.3: Promote wider public discourse and citizen engagement on development planning and Timor-Leste's financial future. Discussion regarding development strategies was central in party campaigning, but mostly lacked discussion of sustainability over the longer term.

Finding 17: There was a notable lack of investigative journalism regarding the political parties' platforms and robust media coverage surrounding the electoral process itself.

> Recommendation 17.1: More attention and resources should be dedicated to building the capacity of the media, particularly in the areas of investigative journalism, critical thinking and impartial reporting.

VIII. Appendices

A. List of Acronyms Referenced in the Report

AMP	Alliance of the Parliamentary Majority
ASDT	Timorese Social Democracy Association
CNE	National Electoral Commission
CNRT	National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction, *Congresso Nacional para a Reconstrucao de Timor*
GOPAC	Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption
F-FDTL	Falentil-Timor-Leste Defense Force
FRETILIN	Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste, *Frente Revolucionaria do Timor Leste Independente*
IRI	International Republican Institute
IVR	Interactive Voice Response system
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OIPAS	*Observatorio da Igreja Para Os Assuntos Sociais*
PD	Democratic Party *Partido Demorático,*
PDN	National Development Party
PNTL	Timor-Leste National Police
PSD	Social Democracy Party
PUN	National Unity Party
RTTL	Radio Television Timor-Leste
STAE	Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration
TMR	Major General José Maria Vasconcelos, Taur Matan Ruak
UN	United Nations
UNDERTIM	National Democratic Unity of the Timorese Resistance
UNEST	United Nations Electoral Support Team
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

B. Political Map of Timor-Leste with the Deployments of IRI Core Observers

Western Region – Nazmul Asahn Kalimullah

Districts: Liquica
             Ermera
             Cova Lima
             Bobonaro
             Oecussi

Central Region – Sarah Grebowski

Districts: Dili
             Aileu
             Manatuto
             Manufahi
             Ainaro

Eastern Region – Elizabeth Wharton

Districts: Baucau
             Lautem
             Viqueque

C. IRI's Election Observers

Short-Term Observers:

1. Ambassador Frank G. Wisner, leader of the IRI delegation and former U.S. Ambassador to Zambia, Egypt, India and the Philippines
2. Ambassador Victor Ashe, former U.S. Ambassador to Poland, member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors
3. Perry Aritua, Executive Director of the Women's Democracy Network's Uganda Country Chapter
4. Ian Hanke, founder of Media & Political Counsel in Australia
5. Brian Keeter, Director of Public Affairs at Auburn University
6. Matt Leffingwell, Deputy Chief of Staff for U.S. Representative Kay Granger
7. Teresa Stringham, media and elections consultant and former long-term election observer with The Carter Center
8. Vani Tripathi, National Secretary of India's Bharatiya Janata Party
9. Marta González Vazquez, member of the Spanish Parliament and spokesperson for Partido Popular Group
10. Maha AbouBakr, Coordinator of the Community Development Bureau, Giza Secretariat and Instructor at Futures University (Egypt)

Core Observers:

1. Sarah Grebowski, former Deputy Elections Coordinator; IRI's long-term observers in Cairo, Egypt
2. Professor Nazmul Ashan Kalimullah, Chairman and Founder of *Jatiya Nirbachon Parkobekkhon Parishad* (JANIPOP) National Election Observation Council of Bangladesh
3. Elizabeth Wharton, Ph.D. Candidate in Human Geography; University of Colorado, Boulder (on leave from U.S. State Department's Foreign Service)

IRI Staff:

11. Thomas Garrett, Vice President for Programs
12. Gretchen Birkle, Acting Director, Asia Division
13. Tina Mufford, Deputy Director, Asia Division
14. Shirin Sahani, Resident Country Director, Timor-Leste
15. Johanna Kao, Resident Country Director, China
16. Steve Cima, Resident Country Director, Indonesia
17. Sam LaHood, Resident Country Director, Cambodia
18. Derek Luyten, Resident Country Director, Thailand and Malaysia
19. Jennifer Crall, Resident Country Director, Afghanistan
20. Bojan Ristic, Resident Program Officer, Timor-Leste
21. Belma Sisic, Resident Program Officer, Timor-Leste
22. Alysson Oakley, Senior Advisor, Office of Monitoring and Evaluation
23. Jeffrey Phillips, Program Officer, Timor-Leste
24. Damir Tokic, Program Officer, Burma and Cambodia

25. Natalie Trisilla, Assistant Program Officer, Timor-Leste
26. Melissa Yeakley, Program Assistant, Timor-Leste

D. List of the Polling Stations IRI Visited on Election Day

<u>**Aileu**</u>

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Aileu-Vila	Seloi Malere	E.P. No1 Aileu Villa	00015-0016
Aileu-Vila	Aissirimou	Sede Suco Aisirmou	00001-0001
Aileu-Vila	Aissirimou	Sede Suco Aisirmou	00001-0002
Aileu-Vila	Fahiria	Sede Suco Fahiria	00005-0006
Laulara	Cotolau	E.P. S. Madabeno	00022-0024

<u>**Ainaro**</u>

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Hato-Bulico	Mulo	EP Aituto	00060-0071
Hato-Bulico	Mulo	EP Aituto	00060-0070
Maubisse	Maubisse Villa	ES Central Maubisse	00072-0088
Maubisse	Maubisse Villa	ES Central Maubisse	00072-0089
Maubisse	Aituto	EP Fleixa	00064-0076
Maubisse	Aituto	EP Fleixa	00064-0077
Maubisse	Horai-Quik	Sede Suco Hohoraai Quik	00068-0082
Maubisse	Maubisse Villa	EP Liquite	00074-0091

<u>**Baucau**</u>

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Baucau	Tirilolo	Sede Suco Tirilolo	00102-0130
Baucau	Bahu	E.P.C. Sao Domingos Savio	00090-0111
Baucau	Bahu	E.P. No 1 Bauoli	00091-0113

Laga	Nunira	Sede Suco Nunira	00108-0141
Laga	Soba	EPP Soba	00113-0149
Quelicai	Abafala	Sede Suco Abafala	00115-0151
Quelicai	Uaitame	E.P. Uaiaca	00132-0169

Bobonaro

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Bobonaro	Lourba	Sede Suco Lourba	00173-0224
Bobonaro	Atuaben	Sede Suco Atuaben	00165-0214
Bobonaro	Soelesu	Sede Suco Soelesu	00179-0231
Bobonaro	Suco Malilait	Sede Suco Malilait	00175-0227
Maliana	Holsa	EPS No 1 Maliana	00203-0257
Maliana	Holsa	EPS No 1 Maliana	00203-0258

Cova Lima

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Suai	Camenassa	EPC Ailoc Laran	00235-0301
Suai	Beco	EPS Beco	00233-0298
Suai	Beco	EPS Beco	00233-0299
Suai	Camenassa	EPC Ailoc Laran	00235-0302
Suai	Labarai	Sede Suco Labarai	00238-0308
Suai	Debos	EPC Ave Maria	00236-0303
Suai	Debos	EPC Ave Maria	00236-0305
Zumalai	Raimea	EP Harekain	00255-0327
Zumalai	Fatuleto	EPS Fatuleto	00248-0320

Zumalai	Tashilin	Sede Suco Tashilin	00256-0328
Zumalai	Zulo	Sede Suco Zulo	00258-0330

Dili

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Cristo Rei	Bidau Santana	EP 02 Bidau	00270-0354
Cristo Rei	Hera	EP No 4 Hera	00275-0369
Dom Alexio	Bario Pite	EP Fatumeta	00279-0378
Dom Alexio	Bairo-Pite	Sede Suco Bairo Pite	00277-0371
Dom Alexio	Fatu-Hada	EP 10 Desembro	00293-0416
Dom Alexio	Comoro	EP No 5 Kampu Baru	00291-0410
Dom Alexio	Comoro	EP No 5 Kampu Baru	00291-0409
Dom Alexio	Comoro	ES Finantil	00289-0405
Nain-Feto	Akadiruhun	EPP Akadiruhun	00298-0425
Nain- Feto	Santa Cruz	EP Cina	00304-0438
Vera Cruz	Vila Verde	EP No 2 Vila Verde	00314-0465
Vera Cruz	Mascarenhas	EP Cristal Balide	00312-0445

Ermera

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Ermera	Poetete	EPC Poetete	00336/0498
Ermera	Ponilala	EP Ponilala	00337/0501
Hatolia	Talimoro	ES Nino Conisantana	00341/0508
Railaco	Fatuquero	EP Fatuquero	00370/0549
Railaco	Tokoluli	EP Tokoluli	00378/0557

| Railaco | Liho | EP Railakuo Vila | 00371/0550 |
| Railaco | Railaco Craik | EP Cucua | 00374/0553 |

Lautem

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Lautem	Maina 1	Sede Suco Maina 1	00393-0572
Lautem	Parlamento	EP Ira-Ara	00399/0578
Lautem	Com	EP Com	00387/0566
Los Palos	Fuiloro	EP No 3 Los Palos	00404/0583
Los Palos	Fuiloro	EP No 3 Los Palos	00404/0585
Los Palos	Fuiloro	ES Nino Conisantana	00405/0587
Los Palos	Home	EP Home	00407/0590
Los Palos	Home	EP Home	00407/0591
Los Palos	Fuiloro	EEB Paioto	00406/0589
Los Palos	Fuiloro	EEB Paioto	00406/0588

Liquica

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Bazartete	Maumeta	Sede Suco Maumeta	00434-0620
Bazartete	Fatumasi	Sede Suco Fatumasi	00428-0613
Bazartete	Mota-Ulun	Sede Suco Mota-Ulun	00437-0623
Bazartete	Fatumasi	Sede Suco Fatumasi	00428-0614
Bazartete	Ulmera	Sede Suco Ulmera	00442-0628
Liquica	Dato	EP Mauboke	00448-0635
Liquica	Dato	EP Mauboke	00440-0636

Liquica	Dato	ES No 1 Liquica	00446-0632
Liquica	Dato	ES No. 1 – Liquica	00446-0633
Maubara	Vaviquinia	EP Vaviquinia	00465-0657

Manatuto

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Laclubar	Orlalan	E.P. Kampune Baru	00491-686
Laclubar	Orlalan	E.P. Orlanlan	00490-685
Laclubar	Orlalan	E.P. Pualaca	00492-0687
Manatuto-Vila	Cribas	Sede Aldeia Caunua	00501-0697
Manatuto-Vila	Sau	E. Inftantil Obrato	00507-0703
Manatuto-Vila	Cribas	Sede Suco Cribas	00500-0696

Manufahi

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Alas	Mahaquidan	EP Wadauberec	00519-0715
Alas	Uma Berloi	EP Besusu	00522-0718
Same	Letefoho	EP SMA Arcanjo	00545-0751
Same	Hola Rua	EP Fatuco	00541-0743
Same	Babulo	EP Ailok Laran	00534-0732
Same	Letefoho	EP Cablaki	00544-0749
Same	Dai-Sua	EP Simpang Tiga	00539-0739
Same	Betano	EP Raisusa	00536-0735

Oecusse

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Oesilo	Bobometo	EP Oebahac	00570-0784
Pante Macassar	Costa	EP Mahata	00574-0790
Pante Macassar	Nipani	EP Sakato	00583-0806
Pante Macassar	Costa	EP Masin	00576-0794
Pante Macassar	Costa	EP Masin	00576-0795
Pante Macassar	Costa	EP Masin	00576-0796
Pante Macassar	Lifau	EP Tulaika	00580-0802
Pante Macassar	Lifau	EP Tulaika	00580-0803
Pante Macassar	Naimeco	EP Meco-Sikaloti	00581-0804

Viqueque

Subdistrict	Suco	Name	Number
Ossu	Uabubo	EP Buanurac	00606-0837
Ossu	Loi-Huno	Sede Suco Loihuno	00598-0827
Ossu	Ossu de Cima	EPC Ossu de Cima	00602-0833
Ossu	Uagia	Sede Suco Uagia	00607-0838
Ossu	Ossorua	EPS Osolequimeta	00601-0831
Ossu	Uaibobo	Sede Suco Uaibobo	00608-0839
Viqueque Vila	Caraubalo	EPS Beloi	00629-0867

E. IRI's Preliminary Statement on the 2012 Parliamentary Elections

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 7, 2012

Timor-Leste Holds Credible Parliamentary Elections

Dili, Timor-Leste - Following a two-round presidential election that concluded in April, the people of Timor-Leste returned to the polls on July 7, 2012, to elect a new parliament from the 21 parties and coalitions contesting the elections. IRI found that the national assembly elections were peaceful, without major incident and generally met international standards. While the final, official results will not be available for some time, there is in the making an election that is free, fair and well organized and whose results will be seen as legitimate by the people of Timor-Leste and the international community. IRI commends the country's National Electoral Commission (CNE), Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) and other relevant authorities for administering a credible election process.

In casting ballots during the July 7 elections, the Timorese people showed support for democracy and their homeland. STAE and CNE deserve credit for a well-managed process, in which polling site officials carried out their work in a conscientious manner. Credit should also go to the contribution of the Timorese police, armed forces and United Nations security forces in providing a peaceful environment for the election. The atmosphere inside and outside polling stations was orderly. Disabled voters were given priority in balloting as provided by law. IRI observers noted the extensive presence of political party polling agents and domestic observers which further contributed to the atmosphere of transparency and inclusivity of the elections. The role of domestic observers from civil society and political parties is one of the more useful methods to deter fraud.

However, this election was not without some difficulties. IRI delegates observed some voters being given smudged ballots in several locations, which could lead to the ballot being voided in the tabulation process. A significant number of polling sites did not seek to verify that voters' fingers were not already inked, which would indicate they had already cast a ballot in another polling station, before providing ballots. Confusion existed as to the placement of voting booths within polling stations. IRI also witnessed sporadic irregularities including what were apparently instances of voting by those younger than 17, the legal age of voting.

The vote count process was not consistent nationwide, but does not at this stage appear to affect the final results. IRI has no reason to believe the results will be seriously contested by any party; nor is there any indication voters were kept from the polls.

Elections are a multistep process wherein the pre-election environment, Election Day voting, counting and announcement of final results are equally important. The pre-election environment and administration in Timor-Leste were conducive to a credible process. IRI deployed long-term observers throughout the country to observe election related activities such as political campaigns, rallies and electoral preparations. These efforts gave IRI an in depth understanding of the election environment in Timor-Leste.

With the final tabulation of votes ongoing, IRI looks forward to an early announcement of the outcome and the seating of the National Assembly, thereby reinforcing the public's assessment of the final results.

Overall, IRI concludes the election is an important step on Timor-Leste's long road to a fully functioning, sovereign and democratic nation. Later this year, the United Nations will have a further opportunity to judge Timor-Leste's progress. The United Nations should be able to conclude that these parliamentary elections made an important contribution to its judgment about Timor-Leste's future.

IRI's delegation was led by Frank G. Wisner, former U.S. Ambassador to Zambia, Egypt, India and the Philippines and included representatives from Australia, Egypt, India, Spain, Uganda and the United States.

Prior to the elections, delegation leaders were received by the president of Timor-Leste and the delegation was briefed by representatives from the U.S. Embassy, international and Timorese nongovernmental organizations, political parties and CNE. They were briefed on Timorese election laws and codes of conduct, and the rights and responsibilities of international observers. Delegates also heard from Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former president of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta.

IRI delegates were deployed to each of Timor-Leste's 13 districts where they observed opening procedures, general voting procedures and closing and counting procedures at polling stations. Delegates identified and evaluated strengths and weaknesses in the election system, including campaign regulations, the balloting process, vote tabulation and reporting.

IRI also partnered with Observatorio da Igreja Para Os Assuntos Socials (OIPAS), a Dili-based nongovernmental organization founded in 2007 to develop Timor-Leste's internal capacity to observe domestic elections. IRI assisted in training OIPAS' 1,700 domestic observers, following a similar program for the country's 2012 presidential election, which successfully deployed more than 1,600 observers at polling stations throughout the country for both the first round and the run-off election.

Funding for this election observation mission came from the United States Agency for International Development.