

**A GENDER PERSPECTIVE AUDIT OF
THE 2007 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF TIMOR-LESTE**

MEDIA MONITORING AND GENDER PERSPECTIVES

1. From a gender perspective, the issue is can the new president, Jose Ramos Horta, guarantee national unity and with it, peace and security for women, children, and other minorities at this historical juncture, given that East Timor is a post-conflict society,¹ the unresolved problem of the IDPs from the crisis of 2006 and the formation of an exclusive AMP government after a month of indecision?
2. Excerpts from the presidential inaugural speech² promise the following:

“As a new president, (...) I will follow in the footsteps of the outgoing president, Xanana Gusmao, to realize the people’s dream. I will find ways to end the crisis in this country.”

“Dedicate all my energy and capacity to the defense and consolidation of freedom and national unity.”

3. As far back as 2 April 2007, after the first round of the presidential election, *Jornal Diario Nacional* noted that:

It is important for the public to know that Timor Leste is a semi-presidential system where the Head of State is a symbol of national unity, suggesting that the post of president is more than just ribbon-cutting.

4. The enormous aspiration for peace and security that women groups pinned on the new president is underlined by the congratulatory message from REDE-Feto to the president-elect, carried in *Timor Post* of 21 May 2007:

We wish that you will serve all and usher in a bright future for Timor Leste.

¹ Suzanne Alden, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Women’s Security – analyzing political outputs in East Timor*, p.2, Umea Working Papers in Peace and Conflict Studies, no 1, p.2

“New international norms and values were established with the end of the Cold War, highlighting that real threats to international security were the lack of security of individuals, emphasizing the importance of democratization, human rights and good governance in order to stabilize societies. The redefinition of peace was accompanied by a shift in the understanding of peace; from negative to positive peace. Positive peace is the presence of social justice, focusing on equality, rule of law, and fair distribution of power and resources. Peace ought to guarantee people their physical safety, protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and secure their economic and social well-being – that is, protecting human security.”

² The full text of President Jose Ramos Horta’s inaugural speech in Tetum is carried in *Jornal Diario Nacional* of 22 May 2007. However, Mr. Horta spoke in 4 languages – Tetum, Portuguese, English and Indonesian – during his swearing in ceremony and pledged that he would promote greater use of Indonesian in official communication in public administration. (*Kyodo News*, 6 June 2007)

5. In a similar vein, Milena Pires, Director of UNIFEM is quoted in Tempo Semanal of 28 May-2 June 2007 as saying:

I can guarantee that the president-elect Dr. Jose Ramos Horta support women fully.

6. And Jornal Diario Nacional of 24 May 2007 reported MP Lucia Lobato, ex-Presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party thus:

All the people and the Constitution have to provide maximum support to the President of the Republic by helping him conduct his tasks properly. The new President of the Republic should be open to collaboration with all the people of the country.

7. Further women's pleas for peace and security of the physical person (for e.g., to be safe in one's home and dwelling, and freedom from domestic violence), and to pursue one's education and livelihood, or even just to play and enjoy one's childhood, are reported below. To the media's credit, it currently presents the small women, be they camp refugees, vendors, small coffee growers, students, or housewives, as objects or subjects of security.
8. Guilhermina Marcal, director of the Canossian Sisters, Balide, Dili says that the patriarchal system is very strong. Men think that women rank second in the family and nation. Domestic violence is therefore rampant. Men think that women exist to serve them only, which is not fair. In many instances men inflict violence on women - punching, kicking and beating them. Women are not even free to exchange thoughts with friends since men frown upon this practice as not being good for Timorese women. (Jornal Diario Nacional, 25 May 2007)
9. Terezinha Frietas, a refugee, wants to tell the newly elected President of the Republic to resolve the refugee problem so that they could return to their homes. The government must, not only talk, but act fast. Another refugee, Ana Rozaria Gutteres from Motael, also says that the government must resolve the (refugee) problem and continue to guarantee the security of refugees who have returned to live in their villages. (Tempo Semanal 28 May-2 June 2007)
10. Domingas Soares, from Obrigado Barracks refugee camp, advises the government to consider the security of the area where it intends to build or have built houses. Otherwise, it is empty promise and the refugee cannot return. (Diario Jornal Nacional 27 July 2007)
11. Eugenia Fernandes, a representative of the IDP community in Jardim Intergrasaum, asks the new government to solve the crisis immediately and pay attention to the plight of widows, noting that women have been severely affected by the crisis. In her view, culture and traditions limit the political involvement of many East Timorese

women, but women have the right to be in political life since they have the same rights as men to seek positions in government and institutions.

12. She pointed out that since the crisis broke out, 67 children's right to education has been infringed; there are 230 cases of severe malnutrition among children aged one month to 13 years. At the same time that children are acclaimed to be the future of the nation, many cannot go to school due to the crisis. Indeed, the crisis affects the children's right to school and play. They cannot go to school because the security situation does not permit them to do so. If the school is far, they also have no money to get there. The living condition in the refugee camp is unsanitary. The children do not live in freedom. As small people, we are appealing to the new government to give children, especially the children in the refugee camp, the right to education. (Jornal Diario Nacional 16 July 2007)
13. Zenaida Espirito Santo, 22, Faculty of Law student at UNTL: I have a friend, my classmate actually, who is from Viqueque. She stopped going to school when the crisis broke out. She still lives in a refugee camp. She should be in the same class as I am now. Conflicts and crisis occur in many countries because many of the leaders are men. In the future, East Timor will have a woman leader. I want to become a politician to develop East Timor. I want to be a lawyer to defend women's rights. I want to tell my women friends who cannot continue schooling not to lose hope. As human beings, we must struggle to elevate our living conditions. (Jornal Diario Nacional, 19 July 2007)
14. Fatima Maria Auxiladoro Ku, 2nd Year High School, SMU 5 de Maio, Becora, Dili: For the government to fight the threat of HIV/AIDS, there must be district-wide health promotion campaign. (...) I want to be a doctor after finishing high school and continue my studies in the Faculty of Medicine in Bandung. (Suara Timor Lorosa'e, 20 July 2007)
15. Mariana dos Santos, coffee grower, Ermera: I expect that the leaders of the future government will create a coffee regulation board so that companies cannot impose the market price of coffee based on their own whims.
16. Maria Dos Reis, street vendor, Dili: The elections are over, business is picking up again. We made USD 20 a day. During the crisis, our business was affected. We could not even come up with the capital and are lucky if we can make USD 10-15 daily. We, the small people, hope that the government will prioritize security. (Suara Timor Lorosa'e, 17 July 2007)
17. Teresa de Araujo, a refugee in Central Formation, Aitarak: I appeal to the government to allocate some money, if there are any available, for the refugees to return homes, because we cannot find jobs here. (Tempo Semanal, 9 June 2007)
18. Delfina Mendez, Maliana, Bobonaro said that she is threatened because she could not afford to pay for basic cooking ingredients for her family since the price of Bimoli

cooking oil in the shops had sky rocketed within a few days. “We used to have a rice crisis before, now we have a cooking oil crisis!” (Suara Timor Lorosa’e, 17 July 2007)

19. Espedita da Cruz, 37, Ermera: We are worried now. If one party wins and the other party cannot accept it, then violence will occur. My message to our leaders is that they must be responsible and ensure that their followers do not create violence. There must be national unity to ensure especially in the Ermera district. (Suara Timor Lorosa’e, 23 June 2007)
20. Rosalina da Conceicao Gama, 16, refugee in Motael, Dili: Since the crisis, the situation has worsened. Sometimes, our teachers cannot report to school because they are afraid of fighting in the street, stone throwing, and occasionally sling shots with arrow. This situation affects my school activities. (Tempo Semanal, 9 June 2007)
21. Maria F. Sanches, street vendor: In East Timor, many decisions are dictated by emotions and ambitions. The political elite feel that it knows better than others and that it is qualified to take actions. (Suara Timor Lorosa’e, 17 July 2007)
22. Maria, a refugee in T-Bar: Peace is when the leaders listen to one other, and give mutual respect in spite of differences. People have different perspectives on how to achieve peace. Strong peace means strong unity. Real peace for the people is a very important priority on the national level. (Tempo Semanal, 2 June 2007)
23. God(dess) Help Those Who Help Themselves!
24. However, since East Timorese women’s participation in National Parliament is the highest in ASEAN, “they have sufficient force to ensure the rapid adoption of bills promoting women rights, especially the bill on domestic violence,” said Dr. Jean D’Cunha, UNIFEM’s regional director, who noted that East Timorese women occupy 27% of the seats in the National Parliament whereas it is 25% in Vietnam and Laos, and 24% in Singapore. (Suara Timor Lorosa’e; Timor Post; Jornal Diario Nacional 20 July 2007)
25. Rosi de Sousa, director of FOKUPERS urged women MPs to debate and to pass the draft domestic violence bill. Whatever their party affiliations, they must unite and work together with civil society to realize women’s aspirations. She declared that she was very proud and happy at women’s courage to go into politics, especially the National Parliament. She was also proud of the electoral law that assures women’s involvement – which she thinks to be extremely important. (Timor Post 12 July 2007)
26. Nevertheless, there are contesting voices from within and former MP Judith Dias Ximenes (Fretilin) had this to say of current MP Lucia Lobato (PSD), that it was not appropriate for her to say that parliament did not prioritize women’s issues when she spoke at the Women in Politics Celebration of 20 July 2007. Ximenes pointed out that Lobato was herself a member of the parliament in question – her words show that

she lacks moral political responsibility toward the people. Furthermore, her statement does not represent women's voices in the National Parliament. (Timor Post, Jornal Diario Nacional, 27 July 2007)

High Women Voters Turnout In General Elections – But Is It Enough To Make A Difference For Women or the Road is still Long and Hard?

27. Maria Domingas Alves testified to this high women turnout. “Old women, sick women and pregnant women voted. Even those who lived in very remote places walked far to cast their votes. Yet most women have little understanding of elections. Civic education is important to women. In the future, all people must feel that they are equal (...). It is not only women who should be concerned but the top leadership, political leaders and parties. We must think of gender equality in all aspects and we cannot talk of gender equality when women are not involved in the implementation process.”
28. Aurora Ximenes seemed pessimistic. She noted that, “A significant number of women voted and it should have been big enough to bring about changes in the interests of women. Throughout the electoral processes, women demonstrated a strong and active commitment to participation in political life. Nevertheless, women still think that the political world is the exclusive domain of men because it is full of challenges and dangers. For this reason, despite the fact that a large percentage of women voted, women are still unable to make political decisions.” (Jornal Diario Nacional, 17 July 2007)
29. Idelta Rodriguez urged women to “work hard with creativity, solidarity and unity for a peaceful environment where women can promote peace and mediate unity.” She continued, “Our struggle has a long way to go. Women are still marginalized in their own homes, communities and society. We need to prepare, take steps and strategies to guarantee that the elected government has a political agenda that promotes gender equality in our beloved Timor Leste.” (Timor Post, 28 May 2007)

First Lady to be All Impoverished Women of East Timor

30. President Ramos Horta further stated that he will be the president of the poor. CAFOD website retrieved on 18 May 2007 observed that, “Since his post is largely ceremonial, he would have to work closely with the new government to reduce poverty and ensure that the people have access to basic services and opportunities.”
31. ABC Online's Correspondents Report retrieved from its web on 20 May 2007, also carried an interview of Anne Barker who noted that several times during the campaign, East Timor's newly elected and long divorced president, Jose Ramos Horta was asked by reporters, “Who will be East Timor's first lady if you win?” To which he replied that the first lady will be all the impoverished women of East Timor. Ms. Baker commented that, “In a country of one million people now where very few locals live in any real comfort, that's a lot of first ladies – a reminder of how poor East Timor is.”

32. Is this an offence or a compliment to the impoverished women of East Timor from the president to marry them to lift them out of poverty? The local media however failed to make this an issue.

A Monument to a Nation's Squandered Unity?

33. On 27 May 2007, a few days before the start of the parliamentary campaign, the newly inaugurated President Ramos Horta unveiled a monument at the site of the shootout between PNTL and F-FDTL during the crisis of April 2006. The epitaph reads, "In memory of PNTL members who died on 25 May 2006 in service to the nation."

34. Since the date of the unveiling and the monument itself are surely no accident in political language and imagery, what is the calculation behind this powerful visual image for East Timor at this historical juncture? Perhaps the voice of the renowned photographer, Susan Sontag,³ is relevant where she noted the play between military offences on the ground and their coordination with visual offences, the latter designed to dazzle the heart and mind.



35.

³ See Susan Sontag, "Regarding the Pain of the Others." London: Penguin Press Ltd. (2004)

36.



37. Of note too is that one day before, on 26 May 2007, Timor Post and Jornal Diario Nacional carried another powerful image of a child wearing a miniature police uniform in the arms of the widow of a fallen policeman. If this were to be interpreted that national unity can be redeemed through vengeance, then it would bore well to keep in mind that the rational man's concept of national security and nation-building as embodied in the army and police is a fallacy since these institutions are still very weak and prone to corruption and ethnic manipulation by the political elites in a post-conflict society.

Of Widows, Medals and Assistance

38. Amelia de Jesus alias Bi Kiak, Lemorai, said, "I feel sad and cry when my children ask for their father. They have no father. I feel sad and cry when I am referred to as a wife because I don't have a husband beside me. He died in 2003, after an operation in hospital, leaving me with 6 children and nobody to look after them. I asked Minister Arsenio Bano for assistance in material for building construction and a small sum of money to sustain my children."

39. Saturnina Alves da Silva alias Balikasa, said, "I have already complained on 3 March 2007 to the Comisaun Organizadora Homogen National but they have not responded. As women, we also participated in the East Timor liberation struggle for 24 years. At present, the government is giving its attention to the fallen freedom fighters. They had sacrificed their lives, struggling until death for the nation. This country is free but the people are not free because they have not received any assistance from the government, especially the orphans and widows of the liberation fighters." (Jornal Diario Nacional, 17 May 2007)

40. On 17 July 2007, the news captions of the front page of Suara Timor Lorosa'e read: These four elderly women, members of The Veterans and Falintil Fighters, are listening intensely to the socialization of the law on Combatantes da Liberacao by the Secretary of State on Veterans Affairs.
41. From the above media monitoring, it is very evident that East Timorese women too imagine the nation in their own terms of human security - food sufficiency, safe abode, adequate health facilities for infant and mother, schools and a living wage - which is a far cry from the nation and nationalism that are traditionally male and based on meeting external threats. From these women's voices can be heard, the heartfelt plea to President Ramos Horta to be a man in dealing with the soft issues of human security when he revisits his national unity and security program.

Regarding the Others: Notes on Writing on Women

42. From gender perspectives, narrating or translating about "the others" is not neutral. The ICG presented CNE spokesperson Maria Angelina Sarmento in less than a flattering light, "Maria Angelina Sarmento joined Fr. Martinho Gusmao as CNE spokesperson in the second round. Sarmento always read from a prepared statement at the press conference and the statements were the same in Tetum, English and Portuguese. She also distributed copies of the results to ensure that accurate data were received by the media, reducing confusion about the results." (Footnotes from p.4 of Update Brief on Timor-Leste's Presidential Elections, Asia Brief No.65, Dili and Brussels, 13 June 2007)
43. Yet, the only "crime" of Ms. Sarmento is her concern for accuracy so that there would be no confusion. As noted in Timor Post, 4 July 2007, "She also appealed to the media to confirm its information regarding statistics and preliminary results prior to publishing."

The Parliamentary Election Campaign: Tracking The Gender Platform As Portrayed By The Media

44. "I'll undo some political parties." Fernanda Borges is a woman of substance to watch in the national parliament. The only woman to head a party in the 2007 parliamentary election, Fernanda Borges, founder of the new political party, Partido Unidade Nacional (PUN) stated at the opening of the party's congress that she will undo the old behavior of some political party leaders who are still clinging on. Ms. Borges said that PUN would establish a new political model to serve the people, noting that the country needs many changes and that they can only be achieved with the trust of the people adding that PUN can do so because it is based on Christian democratic principles. (Timor Post, 25 January 2007)
45. "A new generation of leaders is necessary." PUN president Fernanda Borges has no hesitation about attacking the established and seasoned political leaders of East Timor and in calling for more space for an emerging political class. "All of the main politicians should be held accountable for what had happened. (...) Horta, Gusmao

and Alkatiri all share in the responsibility in their capacity to destroy the country by not upholding the values of our nation," said Borges, who was a member of the first East Timorese government formed under the UN administration, but eventually resigned accusing it of not being transparent enough. Among the essential values that are required, Borges said is a need for justice, respect for the law, a sustainable economy and leadership based on values and not on personal interests. (AKI, 26 June 2007)

46. The Church Endorsed Borges? If the letter from Dili Doicese endorsing Borges is true, then it contravenes the electoral law. CNE spokesperson Maria Angelina Sarmento said that CNE will refer any complaint with respect to it to the Ministry of Interior for investigations. The President of PD, Fernando La Sama de Araujo, said that if it were true then the church was making a big mistake. (Jornal Diario Nacional, 29 June 2007). Fernanda Borges responded that PUN does not belong to the church and confirmed that the church is not involved in PUN's activities. However, she welcomed the Church's support to improve the lives and future of the Timorese people. (Jornal Diario Nacional, 29 June 2007)
47. On Quota System. "I want to say that women have the opportunity to be involved in politics because we have a quota system. We can see from the list of candidates that women are in a disadvantaged position." Fernanda Borges on the Parliamentary Election's Debate on Human Rights, Governance and Anti-Corruption. (Jornal Diario Nacional, 30 May 2007)
48. Former MP Antonio Ximenes of the Christian Democratic Party said that the women's vote is important for his party, because women also have the right to be involved in political life. He noted that women had been actively involved in the democratic process even in difficult times. (Jornal Diario Nacional, 30 May 2007)
49. Adalgiza Magno from Fretilin's CCF said, "We do not tolerate attacks by Fretilin's militants. We never tolerate such attitude or behavior from them. (Timor Post, 31 May 2007). Cipriana Periera, Fretilin's spokesperson said that the party has a zero tolerance policy on corruption and implements a decentralization program. In another press coverage, she expressed that there must be a spirit of love for the people and nation. There must first be a spirit of patriotism. But desire for power and ambition can be an instrument of political destabilization. Women can contribute positively to this nation. On women's participation in politics, our dream was to obtain 30% which is now realized. (Timor Post, 25 May 2007, 30 May 2007)

50. Lucia Lobato, vice president of PSD questioned the subsidy promised by the Fretilin government during the parliamentary election campaigns. "Until now we haven't heard of any political party receiving such subsidy," said Ms. Lobato in the national parliament. (Suara Timor Lorosa'e, 25 May 2007). "In the five years of its rule, Fretilin had not done anything to make this country better," said Ms. Lobato and the "people have lost patience." (Time.com, retrieved on 5 July 2007)
51. In the debate by political parties on 29 May 2007 at Dili Gymnasium, it was noted that in line with gender equality, CNRT was represented by a man and a woman, Cecilio Caminho and Carmelita Moniz. The latter emphasized that CNRT's platform was to promote gender equality and it would press for the implementation of Article 17 of the RDTL constitution to ensure women's involvement in all governmental departments. On the rampant domestic violence, CNRT would approve the penal code which had not been approved in the last four years. The alphabetization campaign for non-formal and formal education was a priority to enhance women's capacity. It aimed to reach 80% of the population with party's funds and collaboration from international NGOs. They also said that PNTL should be separated from the ministry of interior. (Suara Timor Lorosa'e, Jornal Diario Nacional and Timor Post, 30 May 2007)
52. Responding to alphabetization is 50 year old Rosalina de Jesus of Rasa, Los Palos, who said, "Even if you are 50 years old, you should continue to study. A person does not stop studying in life. A person with a wide horizon is liberated from mental dependency, whether she is rich or poor. (...) In the morning, we work in the farm and study in the afternoon. Translated from Fataluco by Silveria, coordinator of the alphabetization program. (Suara Timor Lorosa'e, 9 July 2007)
53. UNDERTIM's Cornelio da Gama alias L7 said that his political program would prioritize help to women and children, especially orphans and widows of the liberation struggle. (Suara Timor Lorosa'e, 9 June 2007)
54. Women were high on PST's list of candidates. After the secretary-general and president were 2 women candidates and activist, Angela Fraga and Maria de Carvalho. The president, Nelson Correia said, "We are also campaigning for a series of direct benefit payments, including US\$100 per month for unemployed household heads while the government is finding work for them. Also we advocate \$100 per month benefit for three months for new mothers and a similar amount for old age pension. These benefits are meant to assist everyone in need and for the people to

reap the benefits of freedom.” (International News, Green Left retrieved on 10 June 2007; Timor Post, 30 June 2007).

55. “PR is anti abortion because it is against the moral and religious ethics of the Catholic faith that is professed by the majority of the people. (...) Abortion is like murder (...) nobody has the right to take away life except God,” expressed Joao Saldanha. “However, PR advocates for guaranteed quality maternal health care services to both mother and child. Etelia da Costa Jeronimo of the women organization in PR said that PR was anti-polygamy and would formulate a policy penalizing government officials involved in this practice. (Suara Timor Lorosa’e, 9-11 June 2007). It is noted that side by side this stand on abortion, PR has an enlightened concept of gender categorizing it with minorities instead of women and children.

Examining FRETILIN and CNRT’s Gender Platform

56. In “Purchasing the Nation,” anthropologist Elizabeth Traube⁴ narrates how popular nationalist movements absorbed the local systems and symbols of the Mambae in Alieu. Now that the independence of the nation of East Timor has been “purchased” with the supreme price of the people’s (povu) blood, the women and men are now entitled to be compensated for their sacrifice. Completing the imagery of local systems and symbol, the parliamentary election campaign had been likened to a cockfighting arena, where the meaning and symbols of East Timor’s national identity were contested by those laying claim to legitimacy to objectify the supreme price of the nation.
57. Let us now examine how FRETILIN and CNRT claim to “purchase the nation,” in other words, to compensate the supreme price that women had paid for the independence of the nation, through the narratives of their politicians during the election campaigns.
58. In its media release of 22 June 2007, FRETILIN evoked the immense sufferings of the women in the liberation struggle and that they were to be repaid through a literacy program, primarily for rural women. Of note is that such a program had long been on FRETILIN’s agenda.⁵ Low birth rate and maternal health care are also among those mentioned. FRETILIN reaffirmed a continued promotion of gender equality and women’s participation at all levels of society.
59. On the achievement of the previous government, Ana Pessoa, former Minister for State Administration had this to say, "Representation of women in the Timor-Leste

⁴ See Traube, Elizabeth (1986), *Cosmology and Social Life: Ritual Exchange Among the Mambae of East Timor*. Chicago: Chicago University Press and Traube, Elizabeth (2002) *Unpaid Wages: Local Culture and Popular Nationalism: A Paper Presented at the Conference on East Timor in Transitions Past and Future* (12-13 April 2002), Center for Southeast Asian Studies: University of Illinois, Dekalb.

⁵ Hill, Helen (1978), *FRETILIN, Ideologies and Strategies of the Nationalist Movement in East Timor*. M.A. thesis, Monash University.

parliament is among the highest in the world, despite very low education levels. It was FRETILIN who argued strongly for the inclusion of a specific clause in the Constitution to guarantee equality. FRETILIN has worked to build a legislative framework to fulfill the constitutional commitment to equality since taking government in 2002. (...) Currently women hold senior positions in the Council of Ministers, including the Minister and Vice Minister of Planning and Finance, the Minister and one of the Vice Ministers of Education and Culture, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Minister of Public Works and myself, as Minister for State Administration.

60. We also appointed women to senior positions in the civil service. The Permanent Secretary of Agriculture for example, is a woman. We established an Office for the Promotion of Equality inside the Prime Minister's Office and each Ministry has a focal point for gender issues. These are some of the practical expressions of the FRETILIN government's commitment to developing a modern society in which women are treated as equals and with respect. I believe FRETILIN has been able to sustain women's rights as a priority issue in our party because almost 50% of our members on the National Political Commission and almost 30% of members on the Central Committee are women. The National Political Commission and the Central Committee are the highest decision-making organs within FRETILIN. These legal and administrative measures are just part of the process to improve the overall status of women. In a country with very low education levels, and where 52% of women are illiterate, there are huge barriers to women's equal participation in the economic, social and political life of the nation." (23 June 2007, media release)
61. On the other hand, CNRT's platform on women, broadcast through its media release of 21 June 2007, entitled, "CNRT Defends Women's Rights," is in the form of a speech designed to evoke patriotic and nationalistic sentiments. It said in parts,
62. "[I]n order to combat these unacceptable conditions, the country must have a leadership whose policy reflects a modern and forward thinking democracy. It is essential to protect the rights and role of women in the motherland by providing a holistic approach to their gender specific social, economical and educational issues. (...) [but] is time the leadership of this country equally delivers to our sister, mothers, wives and daughters. These are our national treasures, these are the citizens who braved the fight for independence with equal conviction and contribution, and they deserve to be honored with opportunity and legislation that protects their rights and those of future generations." (Emphasis ours)
63. This CNRT's women platform is drafted as a discourse to protect, defend and nurture women. Arguably such a visualization of women is questionable.
64. Furthermore, an examination for gender perspectives of CNRT's campaign banners reveals that some of them carried images of high rise buildings to denote the future East Timor as a strong and prosperous nation. Still other banners prominently displayed fighter jets, helicopters, rockets and even a satellite with an East Timorese

flag on the moon! When belligerent instruments of war are incorporated into the nationalistic discourse, it could belie ambitious men leaders. To this optical illusion, the slogan of “Strong Women, Strong Nation,” of a program was launched by no less a person as the wife of the president of CNRT and the then First Lady of East Timor, on 19 May 2007. (Jornal Nacional Diario, 29 May 2007)

65.



66.



67.



GENDERED SENTIMENTS



68. “hola feto” literally mean “buy a woman, “but” hola feto” also mean “taking a wife in marriage” or “to marry.” In this sense, “Pe. Martinho Gusmao bele hola feto” means, “Fr. Martinho Gusmao, go get married.”



- 69.
70. Translation: Alfredo anti-young women (in red); Enemy Race, Anti-Westerners, Westerners fuck off (in yellow)
71. Graffiti is a form of visual communication involving the unauthorized use of public space by an individual or group. Graffiti is widely considered as a form of anti-social behavior to gain attention or simply for thrills. But it also can be an expressive art form. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/graffiti>)
72. The subject of these graffiti is two men in public glare. Fr. Marthino Gusmao is CNE spokesperson and the renegade soldier Major Alfredo is a hot item for politicians to solve. As for Fr. Marthino Gusmao, a priest, the graffiti is slanderous upon his vow of celibacy and could be even a deliberate attack on his ecclesiastical status in a

predominantly Catholic East Timor. Women are also derogated by this graffiti to be married to a priest.

73. Why is Maj. Alfredo labeled as “anti-gadis” i.e. “anti-young women,” since he is packaged as raising the issue of discrimination in the army? Can the interpretation be that he is “anti-gadis” because of the sufferings he caused to them or women in general via ironically his self professed nationalistic sentiment and patriotic duty to save the nation?

The Local Media And Women’s Struggle To Reaffirm Their Political Space

74. There is every reason to celebrate the results of the parliamentary elections since women re-affirmed their presence in the political arena by obtaining 28 % of the seats in the National Parliament, renewing their vigor for a gender agenda to consolidate the fragile democracy toward an egalitarian East Timor.
75. During the 2007 electoral campaigns, the youthful local media has demonstrated itself to be the small women’s closest ally. It did its share in the democratic exercise of forming public opinion by depicting the painful plight of small women and their demand for human security and peace, as well as challenges of the norms of a patriarchal society.
76. This positive portrayal of East Timorese women by the local media is a complete rejection of how the hegemonic international media presents East Timorese women as mere victims or care-givers in the male-engendered violence in the streets of Dili.
77. This is a very young media industry, with limited resources and training yet it is delivering quality work. Like the woman subject of its reports, the East Timorese media struggles to secure a bright future for the East Timorese nation.

END OF THIS PART

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