



Presidency of the Republic  
Office of the President

**SPEECH<sup>1</sup> OF H.E.PRESIDENT KAY RALA XANANA  
GUSMÃO  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE SOLEMN CEREMONY OF  
THE FIFTH LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT**

**29 SEPTEMBER 2006**

**NATIONAL PARLIAMENT**

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<sup>1</sup> Check against original in portuguese

Excellencies  
Distinguished Parliamentarians  
Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I wish to thank His Excellency the Speaker of the National Parliament, for his kindness in inviting me to come here today and to convey a message to all the people.

I must stress that this opening ceremony of the Fifth Legislative Session of the National Parliament comes with a very special meaning. Special because this is the last legislative session within the scope of the parliament which has been defending the interests of the electorate for the last four years. It is also special for me, because this is the last of the legislative opening sessions of this Parliament that I have had the honour to mark my presence, because this is the last year of my mandate.

The situation in the country, particularly in Díli, is one must say, that it has improved substantially, due to the generous intervention of the International Army and Police, who came here to help us reestablish, step by step, tranquility in our country.

Unfortunately, five months later, we still witness a spirit of rejection and repulsion within our communities. After a period of turbulence, where the spiral of violence and destruction generating fear and panic, that we witnessed from the various phases of motivation, which were political as much as of social character, more recently the population in general have enjoyed much more normality in their activities.

There still remains of the climate of insecurity in some suburbs and there still remains of the problem of IDPs, inside the city, refusing to return to their homes, especially at night.

The Government has kick-off its program 'simu malu', which contemplates a wide range of facets for the solution of the problem, ranging from political to ethnic, social to humanitarian, economic to legal.

I express my deepest appreciation for the contribution of the International Agencies, the tireless work of the priests and nuns, the missionary spirit of many international NGOs, the dedication of national NGOs and many other agencies. All of them gave their hands on at work, all of them tried to provide support in areas where assistance was needed.

Also due to the generosity of the government and, above all, of the Parliament where a decision was made to award the Presidency with USD 250.000, we are know

about to implement a program towards community reintegration, which will complement the efforts of the Government and all other Agencies.

I do hope that with this concerted effort, we can manage to get the IDP's back to their suburbs, long before the rain falls. We shall continue to maintain contact and coordinate with the Government because this is the only way to serve the population.

I believe we all are aware that the European Commission is also interested in providing support for this process of dialogue. We shall coordinate with this initiative (of the European Parliament) so that we can foresee meetings at the medium level, between politicians, intellectuals, church, civil society and even the university students in their last year of study program.

Beyond that, at a higher level, the institutions of the State, the hierarchy of the Church, the leadership of the political parties will be able to also have the opportunity to debate about our problems, with the support of the Madrid Club.

Let us all take part in this National Reflection on the causes, circumstances and lessons to be drawn from these latest developments that have inflicted the country and caused suffering to the People.

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Distinguished Parliamentarians

I will succinctly summarize the question of weapons and disarmament.

Right from the start, the Presidency of the Republic issued a decision relating to the need to immediately control the weapons, thus creating a Weapons Inspection Commission of the F-FDTL and PNTL.

We must commend the readiness and efficiency with which our military institution submitted the documents to the relevant institutions relating to the acquisition of weapons and to the existence, both on paper and in reality, of the armaments in the barracks.

The result of this readiness is that the Inspection Commission was capable of fulfilling its mission within a short period of time.

One fact highlighted in this report is the existence of more than 119 weapons, which were not registered properly, in addition to observing that the lack of a few weapons that were in the possession of military personnel who abandoned their posts in the aftermath of 28 April.

The explanation regarding the non-existence of an adequate registry of those 119 weapons was that 119 weapons were subsequently being handed over by the former guerilla who had possessed them since Aileu.

I would suggest that the Parliamentary Committee in charge of Defense and Security issues conducts an inquiry into this issue, thereby helping the F-FDTL to reconstitute the process of weapons handover, which should include dates and identities of people or groups who (being former guerilla fighters), over time, handed over weapons of the guerilla so that we can know who already has handed them over and who has not.

As none of us were kept informed of this the question is: who can guarantee that the weapons of the former guerilla, which were not handed over in Aileu, are only those that have already been controlled? Who can guarantee that a some good hundreds of weapons hidden somewhere by former guerilla fighters did not enter the F-FDTL in Aileu?

This is a problem for the Organs of Sovereignty of the State to solve and not for the International Forces or for the 1,600 UN Police to solve!

As for the PNTL, the weapons handover process took place much more slowly and only recently was the Inspection Commission able to finish its work, arriving at the conclusion that there are 231 weapons missing, most of which are pistols.

One of the causes for the slowness of the process is due to the fact that the PNTL, contrary to the F-FDTL, is spread throughout all 13 districts of the country.

However, it can be said that for those weapons that are still missing there is individual indication about who was the last police agent who legally received the weapon. Today we have yet to conduct a more accurate and thorough investigation on the reasons why a particular officer has not yet handed over the weapon, where the weapon is located or to whom, when and why, a particular officer has transferred the weapons so that it can be collected.

Another issue, distinguished parliamentarians that I would like to present here in the National Parliament is the question of the possible illegal entry of weapons into the country. It is equally crucial that the Parliamentary Committee in charge of defense and security issues can verify the veracity, or lack thereof, of this matter so as to clarify it and avoid any speculations and to ensure a climate of trust amongst the population.

This sentiment of insecurity also derives from the fact that there are still armed civilians.

Much is said about disarmament and today, as if we were free from something, we all seem to be constrained by this reality. Only God knows what we hide in our thoughts.

Instead of questioning the so-called inaptness of the International Forces in collecting weapons, we should be more fair in our interpretations and we should oblige or at least appeal to all those who distributed or were present during the act of distribution to collect these weapons.

Many of us try to free ourselves from the responsibility of this distribution, demanding only that the measures taken or that the International Forces fulfill an almost impossible mission.

What is most lacking in the Timorese society and above all in those who govern the country is political honesty (or political integrity?).

We like to praise ourselves, as if this was the essence of pluralism, we like to play cat and mouse, as if this was the best democratic exercise.

Today we like to preach peace when yesterday we spoke of violence and today we like to talk about stability and instability when yesterday we incited social disharmony.

We only like to discover or invent the faults of possible mistakes of others while we keep on living in the ignorance of the validity of our own acts. We like to build around ourselves a subterfuge of propaganda and lies because we have lost the notion of the interests of the people and of the country and we arm ourselves to fight against everything and everyone who think differently from us.

And because we still lack the political courage to recognize that we also had our share (whether big or small) of responsibilities, we always like to appear as the 'biggest victims' of all the evil engendered by others.

Political honesty integrity demands humility of thought. And we are not, or do not want, to be humble, and we purely and simply forget that in a small societies such as ours, what counts is not the perception that we make of ourselves, but the appreciation or depreciation that society can perceive about us.

Let us never forget that the people, although they are illiterate, are not as naive as we think they are, or, worst still, as we think this way in our illusion.

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Honourable Members of Parliament

Many voices have clamoured for justice and we all know that there are high expectations with regard to the work that the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry of the UN has been conducting over the last two months. By the way, we all remember as well that high-level personalities of the country have also proclaimed, loud and clear, that they were the ones who asked for the establishment of this Commission because they wanted a work that was independent and transparent. And therefore I want to make it clear here that I was not the one who invited this Commission, just as I have already stated here in May that it was not my initiative to invite the International Forces to help restore law and order.

As Organs of Sovereignty we all have to assume the responsibility to help the people to understand the nature of the mandate of that Commission.

I hope that all those who were elected and who represent the higher interests of the people, will reflect about the words we use in public statements so that we will no longer instigate the spirits, as this would only render unviable the efforts that are being made to create a climate of mutual acceptance within the various communities.

I hope that we all understand that the investigation conducted by the Independent Special Commission of Inquiry is only an assessment of data regarding the events, outlined in the mandate attributed to the Commission.

It is also my hope that we can all look at the process as an initial and necessary step, one that will pave the way for the future acts that will be incumbent upon our national judicial system. Everyone surely knows that the Commission will send a copy of the report to the Secretary-General of the UN, another to the Human Rights Commission in Geneva and another to the National Parliament. I hope that, by way of courtesy, the President of the Republic can also have access to this Report.

From my part, I wish to clarify the following to the people:

I believe it is possible that it is not on the part of the distinguished parliamentarians (who, surely, do not pay attention to these things), but that it is common knowledge (even internationally, as technology such as computers, photocopiers and the Internet are ready available in Timor) that I am accused of having encouraged this whole crisis and of having caused the subsequent chaos in the country for my own benefit.

I want to solemnly state here that as the President of the Republic, I will not try to protect myself behind the statute of immunity to avoid having to answer for any of my acts.

I will, at any time of the day, be ready to present myself to the Court and to assume the responsibility for any act that could have perhaps contributed for the

distribution of weapons, for the death of people, for the arson, the lootings and the violence that unfortunately continues to take place.

And I will not be the one to escape from my faults when these are proven in Court. We can all rest assured in this regard that I will not need lawyers, as I do not have money to pay them, and even less, I will not be able to bribe judges, who are even international staff and who already earn well.

I already have experience with trials and I must say that I have good memories, in terms of political maturity, of the seven years I spent in Indonesian prisons.

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Distinguished Parliamentarians

Some may agree and others, however, may not agree but I have heard from many people that one of the preconditions for the solution to the 'east versus west' problem in the mutual acceptance process resides in the capacity of the Government institutions to resolve the petitioners issue.

I wish to publicly praise the open spirit adopted by Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak, Commander of the F-FDTL, in welcoming Major Tara in the facilities of the headquarters in Taci Tolu. From my humble viewpoint, this is a crucial question in this turbulent period for the minds and sensibilities in which we are unfortunately living in.

I also wish to congratulate the Prime Minister, Dr Ramos-Horta, for having agreed to meet with Mr. Gastão Salsinha and other members of his group in Gleno. The humility shown by one who governs never depreciates whoever possesses it. On the contrary, it always attracts sympathy and trust and builds, from the top, the most capable method for the solution of problems: that of listening and understanding what people think, feel and want.

It is my hope that the High-Level Commission and the Council of Ministers will always adopt a positive and balanced stance, one that is free from pre-conceptions so that they can fulfill their part in rehabilitating the social fabric, which has been fragmented by hostile sentiments that society has too easily absorbed.

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Distinguished Parliamentarians

I started my intervention by reminding us all that this is the last year of our mandate.

And this means that we will have elections before 20 May 2007.



I therefore appeal the Parliament to not delay discussions on the draft electoral laws. The earlier the Parliament decides on a plan of debates with the civil society in general, with care and thoroughness, the work to be done regarding public awareness on the electoral law, because at the end they will perform the main role in that political act.

In order to avoid much speculation, I believe that I should publicly state here, particularly to the parliamentary majority, that all can be sure that even if I promulgate the electoral law tomorrow, nothing moves me or will move me to dissolve the Parliament.

Some people think that the recent demonstrations had influenced my political decisions and this is not true. I made my decisions, always striving to rigorously fulfill what you, the parliamentarians, wrote in the Constitution of the Republic, exactly five years ago.

I have no desire to become the all-powerful in this small country; that time has already passed when a simple word of mine, for practically 23 years, was considered to be the “order of the Command of the Struggle”

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Distinguished Parliamentarians

What I am going to say is not new, I have said it in many occasions. ‘I would not like to see a law which kills the smaller parties’. We shall let the people decide, express through their ballots, their trust or mistrust with the parties, which had representation in this Parliament for five years, or the new ones, running for the coming elections for the first time.

I also heard about the two available options for the threshold and that they are either 5% or 2%. If, on the modality which benefits both options, we can reach an agreement or reach a consensus, it will show that we are moved to serve. If we allow ourselves to be guided by the principle that we must leave the final decision to the voters, maybe we can overcome the existing contradictions which, in my opinion, if they are not overcome, they can create a situation of intolerable political animosity, with negative consequences for the efforts which all of us must invest in order to stabilize the situation again.

On the other hand, also in this Parliament, I have raised it in the past, when I was given the opportunity, matters pertaining to the elections, appealing, above all to the conscience of the politicians (and by politicians I mean the distinguished Members of the Parliament, members of the political parties, and not the President of the Republic) that our approach, be it of administrative or technical nature, should be guided by the principle of transparency.



Let me remind us all that the next general elections will be the very first ones, whilst a sovereign State, prescribed in the constitution of the DRTL, adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 2001.

Being the first general elections, it is imperative that the rules which govern a process of free and democratic elections in the country become the fundamental parameters of our endorsement of a system of pluralistic opinions, where differences (of opinion) do not lead to making enemies but to the process of debate, towards finding the best solutions for the problems of our people.

I have noticed that the Distinguished Members of the Parliament in their debates have started to concede due importance to the needs of other state institutions, either on infrastructures, conditions or physical resources.

Such a concern, that other institutions of the State also need to meet their working conditions must also include the National Electoral Commission.

Moreover, the NEC shall be able to work with due independence, bearing in mind that it must be above STAE and not the other way around.

Secondly, it must be ensured that NEC has all the necessary capacity to perform fully its duties for the benefit of the people.

It has been obvious that STAE apart from exceeding its own competence (taking on the functions which otherwise belong to NEC) acted on a vicious cycle and distanced itself from the need to act with more independence, thus making it less credible in the eyes of the society and the people in general.

If this is because it is the Government who pays (therefore STAE is controlled by the political orders of the Government) then even the Presidency of the Republic, the Courts, the Police, the Armed Forces, the Ombudsman's Office, we all would relinquish our independence, because it is the Government who provides us with funding.

All these aspects need to be properly weighed, so that we can inspire the world and our people, with the values enshrined in our Constitution.

I further recommend that all of us, the citizens and those in power, to try to comprehensively understand the mandate of the new mission of the United Nations, UNMIT, including the role it is expected to play in the electoral process, which is on our doorstep.

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Honourable Members of the Parliament

To conclude, I wish to register here a challenge for the political parties and the society in general.

We have been pointing our fingers to others, so let each one of us reflect on our own acts.

It is crucial that all the political parties, and the society, speak the language of tolerance and reconciliation. It is, mostly for this people that had suffered so much, but it is also for the interest of the political parties themselves.

Let us put behind, once and for all, the irresponsible attitude that the elections will not take place as expected because there will be no stability. Let us, instead, generate the necessary energy to act now, in concerted efforts and in cooperation, towards creating the necessary stability, so that the elections can take place.

If we continue to promote the sentiments of hatred and vengeance, there will be no peace in the country. Law and order do not emerge because of strong military and police presence, law and order can only be nurtured by the attitudes and behaviour of all the citizens.

I have said it before and I continue to do so, that it is for the benefit of the political parties, and the society in general, that we ensure a climate of political tolerance, because the political parties will be the beneficiaries of this environment, because only under such an environment, when the time comes, they can implement their political campaigns in the forthcoming elections.

I appeal to other Organizations, recently created, which are still insisting in the dissolution of the Parliament and Government, to start thinking more in-depth and with wider perspective, and not to focus on a single issue of interest, and undermining the complexities of the process which we are facing.

I have stressed, last May, that until the end of my mandate, I shall not waver in ensuring that the Constitution of the Republic prevails over the interests of groups, whoever they may be.

**THAN YOU!**