Chapter-III

Role of UNMIT in 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary Election in Timor-Leste

3.1: UN Peacekeeping and Electoral Assistance

The United Nations (UN) has been involved in electoral assistance since its founding in 1945. Its Charter enshrines the principle of self-determination and identifies the promotion and protection of human rights as one of its central purposes. UN electoral assistance has historically included in advancing the principle of self-determination through the development of self-government and decolonisation. More recently, it has entailed establishing and advancing democratic principles and political rights. The fundamental objectives of UN Electoral Assistance consisted of two primary goals. The UN undertook the mandate to assist member states in their efforts to hold credible and legitimate elections in accordance with internationally recognised standards. Secondly, the UN would contribute to build a sustainable institutional capacity to organise democratic elections that are genuine and periodic and enjoyed full confidence of the contending parties and the electorate.

The United Nations provides electoral assistance to a member state only when they received a request from the host country or when the Security Council or General Assembly mandated to supervise or conduct the election. The UN electoral assistance is provided in conformity with the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Besides, an assessment is always carried out before any electoral assistance is agreed.

2Article 1 (2) of the United Nations Charter.
3Article 1 (3) of the United Nations Charter.
or provided in order to ensure the assistance in accordance to the specific needs of the situation since there is no single electoral methodology or system that is appropriate for all countries. Today, the UN provides the following five basic types of electoral assistance, (a) organisation and conduct of elections (b) verification or certification (c) technical assistance (d) expert panels and (e) coordination of international observers. It should be noted that the first two basic types require a General Assembly or Security Council mandate, and are rarely utilised at present. The United Nations as an independent body that represent all sovereign states does not advocate nor foster for a specific model of government, such as liberal democracy. The UN never imposed such model of governance while extending electoral support or assistance. The basis of the UN is only to promote democratic governance as a set of values and principles that should be followed and adhered for greater participation, equality, security which will usher human development in countries plague by conflict.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations’ involvement in electoral processes is defined and authorised by the Security Council as mentioned above. The resolutions and the specific provisions regarding electoral assistance are not only based upon the requests of the host country, but were also the result of political negotiations between the member states in the Council.

The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations so far had played a major operational role in providing security, technical advice and logistical support to

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7Ibid., para. 6.
national authorities in administering elections in peacekeeping mission settings. The UN electoral assistance has been crucial and successful component in peacekeeping missions, peacebuilding and in establishing and deepening democratic governance in countries that are torn apart by conflict. As democracy has spread rapidly, so has the role of elections as the means to establish legitimate government. It is vividly crystal clear that elections represent a key step in a broader process of political maturation and legitimisation. Holding of elections can have a decisive influence on how the rhythm of peaceful democratic politics can evolve and become sustainable and also help to stabilised internal politics of fragile new states. The UN was often call upon to assist in the election especially in countries plagued by conflict or civil war on the ground that the presence of external actors would help to overcome the electorate’s distrust for the process or to contribute to the international acceptance and recognition of the regime. In such cases, the UN is perceived as an impartial actor that can ensure that elections are carried out in a free and fair manner. Under such mandate the UN has to act in a transparent and globally consistent manner while performing the electoral operation to uphold its credibility as a neutral arbiter in electoral processes around the world.

Today, the UN focuses its electoral efforts on providing technical assistance to help Member States build credible and sustainable national electoral systems. The General Assembly, in resolution 46/137 of 1991, endorsed the view of the Secretary-General to designate a senior official in the offices of the Secretary-General to act as a

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11 Ibid., p. 3.
14 Ibid., p. 148.
Focal Point for Electoral Assistance. The official would assist and advise Secretary-General on electoral matters, coordinate and consider requests for electoral verification and to channel requests for electoral assistance to the appropriate office or programme and ensure coherence and consistency in UN electoral assistance.\(^{15}\)

The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) who served as the head of the mission discharge the primary function in implementing the mission’s mandate regarding electoral support and develop strategies to achieve the goals established by the Security Council. The SRSG’s responsibility to build consensus and facilitate dialogue between key actors has proven to be especially critical during post-conflict electoral cycle. His/her capacity to lead the mission and mobilised political and financial support for the elections has also become an important component of the SRSG’s responsibilities. The Council has given three main functions to the SRSG in supporting an election.\(^{16}\) Firstly, the SRSG was responsible to ensure that all components of the mission work towards a common goal with an integrated strategy to be implemented by all stakeholders. Electoral support requires effective mobilisation in order to overcome potential logistical and political challenges. The SRSG ensure that the mission prepared and mobilised itself for elections and continues to develop contingency plans. Different units of the missions coordinate their activities, share information, avoid duplication, and mutually reinforce their work to increase their impact for maximum effectiveness.\(^{17}\) Secondly, the SRSG coordinate international support among UN agencies and other international stakeholders. The ability to coordinate political and technical assistance might determine the success or failure of electoral support. The SRSG is responsible

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\(^{16}\) See, Derek Carnegie, Marie Doucey, Sara Jacobs, Aaron Pangburn and Inbok Rhee, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

\(^{17}\) *Ibid.*
to coordinate with the international observation groups. Thirdly, the role of the SRSG’s good offices was meant to mitigate potential tensions and to help prepare a political climate conducive to peaceful elections. This often required a direct and personal engagement with the host government, political parties, legislative actors, and the electoral management body.

3.2: Role of UNMIT in the 2007 National Election in Timor-Leste

As per the UN Security Council resolution S/RES/1704, August 2006, UNMIT mission was entrusted with the mandate to support Timor-Leste in all aspects of the presidential and parliamentary election such as providing technical and logistical support, electoral policy advice, verification and other means which were necessary in ensuring peaceful conduct of the national election. The UN Security Council noted the prevailing situation in the aftermath of the 2006 crisis as grave and vulnerable. The ground situation was still fragile and volatile security posed a challenging task for the Government of Timor-Leste in conducting the 2007 national elections. Low level of violence continued to occur especially in Dili during the beginning of 2007. Keeping this in mind the Security Council directed UNMIT to extend necessary support and assistance.

Prior to the 2007 general election, the UNMIT undertook comprehensive measures in advance to ensure smooth conduct of the 2007 general election. As of November 2006 the UN was deploying a core group of 39 electoral United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) consisting of three members. The team was stationed in the district capitals to support the operations and logistics, imparting voter education and

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18 Ibid., p. 16.
19 Ibid., p. 17.
training. The UNVs team was also working and advising the Technical Secretariat for Election Administration (STAE) staff. The other UNVs were tasked with the responsibility to provide administrative support to the electoral bodies such as STAE, Chief Electoral Officer, National Election Commission (CNE) and the Certification Team.\textsuperscript{22}

In addition, a number of measures were taken by UNMIT to create awareness especially at the district level. UNMIT and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided language assistants and translator to ensure vital link between UNVs with the local population.\textsuperscript{23} The role which UNMIT played during the election period included providing technical electoral assistance, observing the electoral process, certifying the electoral process and promoting public confidence in the STAE and CNE.\textsuperscript{24} UNMIT technical assistance were provided in the areas of general election administration and policy advice, assist in voter registration and information technology, gender issue such promoting equal participation of women, operational planning and logistics. UNMIT provided the STAE and CNE with a total 285 international experts in the above areas.\textsuperscript{25}

On the security front, UNPOL took the responsibility to provide public security in the country. The UN police cooperated with the PNTL during the election period in all the 13 districts to instil public security and to ensure a safe voting


\textsuperscript{25}Ibid.
environment in both the elections. Officers from UNPOL and PNTL were present in all the polling centres. Voting went on smoothly despite few violence incidents during the campaign period.

The ability of UNMIT in fulfilling the responsibility of supporting the GoTL during the 2007 general election was reflected in the large turn-out of voters in two round presidential election held in March-April and as well as in the parliamentary election which was conducted on 7th July 2007. More than 81 per cent voters participated in the national elections. This outcome was achieved primarily due to the positive relation maintained by UNMIT and the local communities. In the presidential election, Jose Ramos Hoarta secured victory by defeating his nearest rival Francisco Guterres. Meanwhile, in the parliamentary election the mandate was fractured and no party secure majority seats. However, the outcome from the parliamentary election did not hamper the formation of government. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao led party, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) and its political allies from Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Democratic Party (PD) were able to negotiate in forming a coalition government called the Alliance for a Parliamentary Majority (AMP). This paved the way for CNRT chief, Xanana Gusmao to be sworn in as the prime minister on 8th August, 2007.

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(A) UNMIT’S Limitations

Though UNMIT was able to extend vital support and assistance to the GoTL and its electoral management bodies, in holding 2007 national elections, yet there were some challenges which UNMIT faced and encountered especially on the security front. The UNMIT which was deployed in August 2006 was mandated with executive policing prior and during the national election and to maintain law and order in the country. The task of maintaining law and order was challenging for the UN police who was entrusted by the UN Security Council to oversee the country’s security, stability and to restore normalcy as Dili prepared to hold the national election in the months of April-May and June of 2007. The existence of political rivalry between the major parties such as the FRETILIN and the CNRT caused grave concern for UNMIT. Between May and August 2007 violence escalated in the country in spite of a code of conduct mandating political parties to abjure violence actions. At least two deaths and more than 100 people suffered injuries. Around 7,000 families were uprooted by the violence.\textsuperscript{31} UNPOL was also constraint by the unfamiliarity with the location and areas as they performed their assignment in manning public security throughout the country.\textsuperscript{32}

The other limitation was the failure of UNMIT to thwart and prevent the outbreak of violent clashes in August 2007, after Xanana Gusmao was appointed as the Prime Minister. The violent remained for several days which were accompanied with arson and rioting caused by the FRETILIN supporters against the appointment of CNRT chief to head the coalition government called the Alliance for a Parliamentary


\textsuperscript{32}Ibid.,
Majority (AMP). The violence was a result of a long political feud between Xanana Gusmao with the FRETILIN leaders such as Mari Alkaitiri. The FRETILIN rejected the formation of the new government under the leadership of Gusmao as unconstitutional and threaten to boycott the National Parliament. The violence and unrest ignited from the capital city of Dili which was later spread to eastern districts of Baucau and Viqueque. It took days for the UN police and the ISF to contain and brought the situation under controlled.

3.3: UNMIT Strategy Prior to the 2012 National Election

The year 2012 marked the first decade of Timor-Leste independence. It also proved to be a critical year for Timorese with full round of national elections and the formations of a new government that would take forward the country beyond the era of international peacekeeping. On 1st October 2010, the Government of Timor-Leste officially requested UN support for the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections in key technical electoral areas. Addressing the Security Council in February 2011, the Prime Minister’s of Timor-Leste requested UNPOL to participate alongside with PNTL in the maintenance of public order in the country in the election period and anticipated that UNMIT would also provide logistical support to the Timorese government.

In connection with the request put forward by the government of Timor-Leste, the Security Council adopted the resolution S/RES/1969 in February 2011 by which it

33See, Andrew McWilliam and Angie Bexley, op.cit.
35See, Andrew McWilliam and Angie Bexley, op.cit.
requested UNMIT to support, within its current mandate, the preparation of parliamentary and presidential elections planned for 2012. The assistance and support to be rendered by UNMIT would include the following viz. provision of technical assistance to the electoral management bodies and security and logistical support; the need for an effective political role throughout and beyond the electoral process; and a specific focus on civic and voter education. Besides, the UN support to the 2012 elections would also consist of the following measures such as political facilitation through the good offices of the SRSG, UNPOL support to PNTL in providing electoral security, Technical, legal and advisory support to the electoral process was jointly provided by UNMIT and UNDP through the UN Electoral Support Team (UNEST), UN Women and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) support in their respective areas of responsibility, i.e. women’s political participation and youth and first time voters respectively in close coordination with UNEST and UNMIT logistical support as requested by the national electoral management bodies. This step to request UNMIT support was taken by the Timorese authority to ensure a credible, transparent, and inclusive electoral cycle. The Security Council took the decision as per the request by Timorese authorities and urged the international community to assist in the process as well.

38 Security Council Resolution on Timor-Leste S/RES/1969 (2011), para.3: Security Council requests UNMIT to extend the necessary support, within its current mandate, for the preparation of the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2012, as requested by the Government of Timor-Leste, and in accordance with the recommendations of the planned electoral assessment mission and encourages the international community to assist in this process.


40 Ibid., pp. 135-136.

41 See, Derek Carnegie, Marie Doucey , Sara Jacobs, Aaron Pangburn and Inbok Rhee, op.cit., p. 12.

The national election scheduled to be held in 2012 assumed significant for the both the UN and the Timorese Government. The UN Special Representative and Acting Special Representative of the UN Secretary General played a constructive role through their good offices by holding regular meetings with the President, the Prime Minister, the President of Parliament and the Secretary-General of FRETILIN to discussed and deliberate the major issues of preparations for and conduct of the national elections, support for strengthening the capacity-building and institutional development of PNTL, and the ongoing transition process and planning for the UNMIT drawdown by end of 2012.43 The UN representatives also host meetings with representatives of all political parties, women political party representatives and civil society representatives. During the meetings they consistently underlined the importance of constructive and responsible political participation and emphasised that successful elections could be a defining milestone in the country’s recovery from the events of 2006.44

3.4: UNMIT Preparation for the 2012 Presidential Election

Prior to the commencement of the national election schedule in March-April, i.e. first and second round of Presidential election and June parliamentary election in 2012, a number of programmes and initiatives was undertaken by the Timorese government which include the election commission in collaboration with UNMIT and other UN agencies. The basic objectives of these programmes were primarily meant to create awareness and educate Timorese citizens relating to the importance of participating in the election, women participation, highlight key issues

44Ibid.
that concerned the country, awareness on free and fair contest without coercion, threats to the right of free expression etc.

As part of the Commission’s programme to prevent conflict and strengthen peace during the electoral period, the National Election Commission (CNE) in collaboration with UNMIT also organised an event on 28th February 2012 prior to the beginning of the presidential election campaigned in which over 1000 participants attended the event, 12 of the 13 presidential candidates (with Francisco Xavier do Amaral absent for health reasons) and 22 of the 24 registered political parties also took part in the meeting. The participants signed a national-level agreement pledging to adhere by all electoral laws and regulations, promote human rights and gender equality, and respect the election results. Similar pacts and peace ceremonies in all 13 districts were signed, which demonstrated an impressive commitment to ensuring peace and stability during the electoral period.45 UNMIT also extend support to the grass-roots dialogue and civic participation, leaders from district administrations and villages organized 45 democratic governance forums throughout the country between 7th January and 20th September. The events saw an active engagement of 2,785 participants of which 569 were women. The forums focused on topics such as ensuring peaceful elections, citizens’ expectations of their elected officials, and their own contributions to the country.46

Efforts to enhance women’s participation in political and electoral processes were also made top priority. To highlight and create an awareness on this issue the steering committee which composed of Members of Parliament as well as representatives of the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Equality, the electoral

45Ibid., para. 9, pp. 3-4.
46Ibid., para. 10, p. 4.
management bodies, civil society, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNMIT, organised a national conference on the on 22nd September 2011, in national capital Dili. The theme of the conference was “Women’s leadership leads us to peace and stability”. The conference resulted in the adoption of a strategic framework for enhancing women’s leadership and participation in the 2012 elections, including 14 action points for the Government, political parties and civil society.\textsuperscript{47} The electoral management bodies, with continued support from UNMIT, UNDP, UN-Women and UNICEF, led voter and civic education efforts targeting women and youth, and first-time voters.\textsuperscript{48}

An integrated team of 170 personnel from UNMIT and the UNDP provided support to the STAE and the CNE. A total number of 130 United Nations Volunteers were employed in operational planning, voter and civic education, capacity-building and logistics. Besides, UNMIT also extended limited air transport to electoral officials and air lifting electoral materials to inaccessible areas on election days. But, the extent of United Nations support was much less, compared to the 2007 elections. The capacities of the electoral management bodies have increased significantly.\textsuperscript{49}

Meanwhile, the Deputy Special Representative for Security Sector Support and Rule of Law took charge of overseeing the law and order situation and reviewing the security situation along with the Secretaries of State for Security and for Defence to discuss issues of policing and broader security sector issues, particularly UNMIT’s

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}, para. 11.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, para. 12.
capacity-building support in the priority areas of the PNTL-UNMIT Police Joint Development Plan.\(^{50}\)

### 3.5: Formation of the Steering Committee

UNMIT also instituted the steering committee that would be chaired by the Special Representative of Secretary-General and including the Senior Management Team (Special Representative of Secretary-General, Deputy Special Representative of Secretary-General Governance Support Development Humanitarian Coordination, Security Sector Support & Rule of Law, Chief of Staff, Police Commissioner Chief of Political Affairs Office, Chief of Democratic Governance Support Unit, Communication and Public Information Office and Chief of Mission Support).\(^{51}\) The steering committee receives regular updates, progress and challenges in their respective areas of responsibility and its role include providing policy guidance and political direction to the working group setup for the purposed to oversee different activities related to the preparation of the national election. The steering committee managed the political aspects of the support to the Timor-Leste elections process and reviewed all political assessments provided primarily by Political Affairs Office (PAO) and coordinated the function. It also managed the relationship with the national leadership, UN Headquarter (UNHQ) and the diplomatic corps in regard to political and related issues. The committee advises the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in regard to the role played by good offices of the SRSG. The steering committee would be serviced under a joint secretariat provided by the three substantive pillars SRSG, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) Governance Support Development Humanitarian Coordination

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\(^{50}\) See, Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste for the period from 7th January through 20th September 2012, (S/2012/765), op.cit., para. 8, p. 3.

(GSDHC) and DSRSG Security Sector Support and Rule of Law (SSRoL), which organised meetings and supported the flow of information between the steering committee and the working groups in between meetings.52

(A): Working group on electoral processes

The working group on electoral processes was constituted with an objective to further consolidate democracy in Timor-Leste. To achieve this objective the national electoral management bodies i.e. STAE and CNE need to deliver a technically well-administered electoral process which was inclusive, transparent and credible. The UN technical support to the electoral process would aid in addressing the following issues which include: (1) technical, legal and advisory support to the electoral management bodies (EMBs) (2) support to the institutional capacity of political parties (3) youth and first-time voters programmes (4) enhanced women’s participation in electoral processes (5) coordination support to national and international electoral observers.53

The DSRSG GSDHC chaired the working group on electoral processes which monitors developments and coordinates the activities of the UN electoral assistance in the areas highlighted above, including the development of electoral regulations and procedures, outreach and civic and voters education, planning and implementation of voters registration, candidate nomination, party agent and observer registration, electoral campaign, polling, counting, tabulation, etc.54 In order to foster youth and women participation in the national election this working group was divided into two sub-groups. The sub-group on youth and first-time voters, chaired by United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) was entrusted to supports initiatives, programmes such as dedicated voter education, mobilization and promotion campaign, targeting the

52Ibid., p. 136.
53Ibid.
54Ibid.
population below 25 years of age. The sub-group on women’s participation in the electoral processes, co-chaired by the Gender Unit and UN Women handle the responsibility to monitors developments and coordinate activities in support to women participation in the elections.\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{(B): Working group on security}

The institution of the working group on security was taken primarily on the ground to ensure successful election and to provide overall security and stability in the country. Appropriate and effective security arrangements were very critical for the success of the elections. In this context UNMIT had to provide support to the PNTL in guaranteeing public safety and security throughout the electoral period.\textsuperscript{56} Electoral training and support extended by UNMIT to PNTL forces include: General Elections Course, Introduction to Operations Planning, Incident Command and Control System, Desk Top exercise and 2012 Elections Training/briefing course on electoral legislation, electoral offences, STAE elections plan, guidelines for police officers; assistance and support to the development of national security operations plan, provision of technical and logistical support. UNMIT also provide training in operational back-up to PNTL forces if required during the whole electoral process.\textsuperscript{57} The working group on security which coordinates UN planning and support to the PNTL in the lead-up to the election, during the elections and during the formation of the new government was chaired by the DSRSG and SSRoL. This group also monitored main developments in the area of security.\textsuperscript{58} A sub-group or a parallel mechanism was also established, under the lead of PNTL and UNPOL, to coordinate

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., p. 137.
\textsuperscript{57}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58}Ibid.
operational involvement of all actors\(^\text{59}\) including Timorese armed forces, the F-FDTL and International Stabilisation Force (ISF).\(^\text{60}\)

(C): Working group on logistics

The working group on logistics was created to enhance logistical support to the Timorese Government. The role of logistics group formed an important part of UNMIT’s support to the elections albeit more limited than in 2007 national elections. This working group follow and assisted the development of logistical plans for the elections by STAE and CNE and coordinate the provision of UN logistical assistance during the elections.\(^\text{61}\) The Chief of Mission Support (CMS) chaired this group or designated representative with UNEST as co-chair. UNPOL was also part of this group in view of the logistical arrangement that would impact on security arrangements. Other component from UNMIT Mission Support such as air operations (Air Ops) was also included. An appropriate coordination arrangement with the ISF was also entered which they may or may not provide logistical support.\(^\text{62}\)

(D): Deployment of UNV Electoral Advisors

The basic purposed of deploying UN Volunteers as electoral advisors was meant to provide assistance to Timorese electoral officials and ensure smooth conduct of election. The group of electoral UNVs composed of a total of 130 UNVs distributed to all 13 districts, with a percentage of 56% men and 44% women. The teams composed of four CNE Electoral Adviser and four STAE Electoral Advisers in each district. The remaining UNV Electoral Advisers were working in STAE, CNE and UNEST Headquarters in Dili.\(^\text{63}\)

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) International Stabilisation Force (ISF) consisted of Australian forces, New Zealand forces, Malaysia and Portugal forces which took part in the peacekeeping mission during 2006-2012.

\(^{61}\) See, Compendium of the 2012 Elections in Timor-Leste, \emph{cp.cit.}, p. 137.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., p. 138.

\(^{63}\) Ibid.
(E): Political Party/Candidate Teams Resource Centres

The other activities that were undertaken under the lead of UNEST\textsuperscript{64} include the assistance provided to the political party representatives during the preparation of the Presidential and Parliamentary 2012 elections. UNEST responsibility was to build and implement a meaningful political campaign, compete in a positive and tolerant environment and find neutral ground to develop their programs.\textsuperscript{65} In the end of February 2012 UNEST launched a Political Parties/Candidates Teams Resource Centre in Dili. The main objective of the Political Parties/Candidates Resource Centre was to provide coordinated and coherent assistance to candidate teams and political party members’ (five members of each party/team) in planning their activities for the national elections in 2012.\textsuperscript{66} It also provided necessary support such as well-equipped office, meeting rooms, training workshops, briefing space and information kits. Furthermore, UNEST organised and conduct a series of trainings and presentations for the political members’ in preparation of the political campaigns in the districts and for the candidates and party agents assigned to monitor and observe the proceedings in the Election Day. The other objective was to enhance the institutional capacity of the candidate teams and political parties to create and develop positive and effective campaign strategies and plan comprising meaningful political activities aiming towards fair and tolerant 2012 elections.\textsuperscript{67}

The main activities provided to the political party/candidates teams include:

\textsuperscript{64}The United Nations Electoral Support Team (UNEST) was form by UNMIT and UNDP primarily to oversee and coordinate the 2009 community election and 2012 national election. UNEST played an important role in providing technical and operational support to the Timorese electoral authorities in managing, coordinating and ensuring peaceful community elections in 2009 and as well as in the presidential and parliamentary elections which was held in 2012.

\textsuperscript{65}See, Compendium of the 2012 Elections in Timor-Leste, \textit{op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{66}Ibid., p. 138.

\textsuperscript{67}Ibid.
Meetings: the political party/candidates team’s members’ can use the facilities to organise their meetings.\textsuperscript{68}

Trainings: the trainings and presentations for the political candidates involved members of the party, candidates’ agents assigned to monitor and observe the proceedings on Election Day was facilitated by senior personnel and technical experts. The trainings revolved on the electoral legal framework as well as preparation of the political campaigns in the districts\textsuperscript{69}

Workshops: the workshops focussed on the organisation and preparation of the 2012 elections as well as security information.\textsuperscript{70}

(F): Observers Support Centre

The UNEST Program to support the forthcoming elections includes the Electoral Observers Resource Centre to support National and International observer groups by giving assistance throughout the electoral process. The Electoral Observers Resource Centre gives the national and International Observers access to relevant briefings and office and communication equipment, for example computers, photocopy machines, printers. The Observers Resource Centre provided necessary support in coordination with STAE, in the accreditation of national and international observers, trainings, briefings and information kits.\textsuperscript{71}

The Observers Resource Centre performed its duties by providing: Information Kits with operational, legal and statistical information. Those kits were suitable for both the presidential (1st and 2nd Round) and the parliamentary elections. Briefing Sessions by senior personnel and technical experts working on the preparation and organisation of the 2012 elections were held on security information

\textsuperscript{68}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., p. 139.
\textsuperscript{71}Ibid.
to enable the observers to have the necessary tools to develop an operational plan in
the field. Communications support by creating and providing a database with
information on all national and international observers in order to give them
information on the electoral process in real time.\(^{72}\)

(G): Monitoring of Human Rights Situation

During 2012 elections, the Human Rights and Transitional Justice Section
(HRTJS)\(^{73}\) took the responsibility to monitor the human rights situation prior to,
during and immediately after the national elections. This initiative was taken in order
to facilitate peaceful exercise of their right to vote and prevent any sorts of coercion
on the Timorese electorate. On polling days i.e. on the first and second round of the
presidential election and the parliamentary election in June 2012, the HRTJS
deployed a team of approximately 30 persons around the country to monitor the
exercise of the right to political participation, rights to freedom of expression and
opinion, the right to peaceful assembly, the right to freedom of association, the Right
to obtain information and other related rights.\(^{74}\) Monitoring were given special
focussed on accessibility to vote for all Timorese citizens who were eligible to cast
their vote on an equal basis, including security forces and vulnerable groups which
comprised of women, elderly, prisoners, persons in hospitals and persons with
disabilities.\(^{75}\)

\(^{72}\)Ibid.
\(^{73}\)Human Rights and Transitional Justice Section (HRTJS) is a unit of UNMIT which looks after human
rights violation in Timor-Leste during the 2006 conflict.
\(^{74}\)See, Compendium of the 2012 Elections in Timor-Leste, op.cit., p. 142.
\(^{75}\)Ibid.
(H): Security support: The Role of UNPOL and Military Liaison Group in the elections

Providing public security during the election period assumed top priority for UNMIT. This was taken as a precautionary step to instil a sense of security and to enable people to exercise their franchise during the presidential and parliamentary election as scheduled in the months of March 17th and April 16th of 2012 and July 7th 2012 respectively. The Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) with the support of UN police helped and assisted in maintaining public order during the presidential election. After the successful conclusion of the presidential election in March and April, UNMIT also formulated plans to further prepare PNTL for the parliamentary election in July 2012.76

In the context of the mission-wide electoral strategy, UNPOL77 was tasked with the responsibility of supporting PNTL in the preparation for ensuring security to the electoral process; provide technical advice and training in security areas.78 UNPOL also supported in the following areas: to provide additional Vehicles during the elections. It remained as standby forces to provide MREs, tents, other support items for UNPOL who were deployed in remote areas.79 This was for the first time since the establishment of UNMIT in 2006 that PNTL took the lead for the provision of looking after security in a national electoral process.

The other additional support that UNPOL rendered consist of distribution and retrieval of sensitive material, conduct aerial recce of inaccessible locations in the

77 UNPOL refers to the United Nations Police which is a unit of UNMIT. The UNPOL was contributed by troop contributing countries (TCC) to participate in the UN peacekeeping mission formed in 2006 and rendered a vital support in maintain law and order and provide training and reform to the PNTL forces during its stint in Timor-Leste from 2006-2012.
79 Ibid.
country, prepared a detailed movement planning together with STAE and the availability of a helicopter for Oecusse for all Presidential Candidates and Political Parties.\textsuperscript{80} To further enhanced the electoral officials with the used of Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, UNPOL organised GPS training to 109 electoral participants for the period 2011-2012 and provide six GPS units to electoral advisers to cross check GPS data. They also conducted individual training to six electoral staff members to refresh their GPS training and provided maps of the polling centres in the districts.\textsuperscript{81}

Meanwhile, the Military Liaison Group (MLG) would support UNEST in providing coordination and remained as standby to conducting patrols to inaccessible polling stations/polling centres. The MLG would perform its primary role of observing and reporting on the general security situation and liaising with the F-FDTL and ISF during the election period.\textsuperscript{82}

The following table illustrate the distribution of UNPOL personnel deployed in thirteen districts of Timor-Leste along with their means of transportation, reinforcement number etc during the 2012 first round and second round of presidential election which began on March, 2012 and culminated in April, 2012. UNPOL personnel forces were part of UNMIT and handed over the responsibility to assist PNTL in maintaining law and order, ensured security and performed myriads of activities relating to electoral process.

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., p. 143.
\textsuperscript{81}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82}Ibid., p. 144.
Table 1
No. of UNPOL deployed by district as of 14 March 2012 for the Presidential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Vehicles assigned</th>
<th>Reinforcement</th>
<th>Vehicles deployed</th>
<th>Total Personnel</th>
<th>Vehicles deployed for Election</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacau</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Covalima</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lautem</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>Liquica</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufahi</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oecusse</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viqueque</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>126</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>256</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-17*</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Democratic Governance Support Unit of UNMIT.\textsuperscript{83}

The number of vehicles from Dili District deployed with personnel to outlying districts include *17.

\textsuperscript{83}Democratic Governance Support Unit (DGSU) emanates from the goals of the Security Council resolution 1704, which call for 'enhancing a culture of democratic governance and facilitating political dialogue among Timorese stakeholders.' DGSU functions in an integrated UN mission and helps to serve these goals by monitoring Governmental and civic activities, analysing sources of information and providing recommendations concerning the progress and concerns in democratic governance in Timor-Leste. The DGSU electoral team continues with providing legal advice, civic education, training, logistical and IT support to the STAE and CNE. DGSU in collaboration with the Timorese Government develops and organises workshops on democratic governance. Further, DGSU facilitates the exchange of information among all groups, including the Timorese Government, international donors and UN agencies.
3.6: Presidential Election in 2012

The constitution of Timor-Leste designate the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste to the Head of State and the symbol and guarantor of national independence and unity of the State and of the smooth functioning of democratic institutions in the country. As head of state the President discharge and acts as the Supreme Commander of the Defence Force. The presidency is a ceremonial role without political power and has a term of office of 5 years. The President of the Republic shall be elected by universal, free, direct, secret, and personal suffrage.

The once-restive country was heading for the presidential polls in March-April of 2012, as UN peacekeepers, deployed since its historic 1999 referendum vote for independence from Indonesia’s brutal 24 year occupation, prepared to withdraw from the country by 31st December 2012. As the polling date draw closer a minor violence incident occurred in the capital city. On 20th February 2012, the offices of the CNE and the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration were firebombed in the national capital of Dili. The attack also damaged the UNMIT vehicle. The sense of fears griped the country that might relapsed back to violence conflict as happen in 2006 and even faced the possibility of sliding into civil war following an assassination attempt on Ramos-Horta in 2008.

The first round of the Timore-Leste presidential election was scheduled to take place on 17th March, 2012. While the president’s role was largely symbolic, and

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84 See, Section 74 (1) of the Constitution of Timor-Leste.
85 See, Section 74 (2) of the Constitution of Timor-Leste.
86 See, Section 75 (2) of the Constitution of Timor-Leste.
87 See, Section 76 (1) of the Constitution of Timor-Leste.
government would be formed after the parliamentary elections in July, yet the election assumed important in several respects. Firstly, it will set in place part of the leadership that will take Timor-Leste beyond more than a decade of major international state-building and security assistance. Both the United Nations police mission and the Australian-led International Stabilisation Force are set to withdraw at the end of 2012. Though Timor-Leste has been relatively stable since the attack on President Jose Ramos-Horta in early 2008, this transitional period will test the nation’s young democracy, fractious political elite and its reformed security institutions. The world was watching attentively to see how Timor-Leste manages the process of participatory democracy in view of the unrest and discontentment between the East and West Timorese.

The prominent presidential figures who had entered the race to contest and compete for the constitutional post includes the incumbent president Jose Ramos Horta, the former commander of the armed forces, Taur Matan Ruak, Vice Prime Minister Jose Luis Guterres, the then sitting president of the National Parliament, Fernando Lasama and Lu Olo, the president of the main opposition party FRETILIN. In total, there are 13 candidates running, including two women.

The main opposition party, FRETILIN, was led by the old guard Lu Olo and Marí Alkatiri as president and secretary general of the party, respectively. On the other hand, the Congresso Nacional da Reconstrucao de Timor (CNRT), one of the main parties in the coalition government, has done very little to change its party

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92Ibid.
structure. The leadership decided to maintain its course with the same individuals in leadership positions, with the then Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao still at the helm of the party. A similar situation can be seen in the Democratic Party as well, arguably the third largest party in the country. Economic issues top the agenda. Around 41 per cent of the voters of Timor-Leste’s 1.2 million people live on less than $0.88 per day, according to a World Bank report.

The first round of voting was held on 17th March, 2012. About 620,000 people out of a population of 1,100,000 were eligible to cast their vote. There were 13 electoral districts in the country. Voting took place between 7:00 am and 15:00 pm with no reports of untoward incidents. The poll passed off peacefully and streets were largely deserted on Sunday, with many businesses remained closed. A high voter turnout was also recorded with some polling stations needing to use their reserve ballots.

The first round was declared free and fair by all observer missions. But the poll participation which was pegged at 78 per cent was relatively low by East Timorese standards. The actual participation rate was higher in 2007 and had dropped more substantially, by 10 or even 12 per cent. This has been widely attributed

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93 Ibid.
to the new requirement that citizens returned to their home districts to vote, necessitating lengthy and expensive journeys on poor roads.\textsuperscript{98}

The result of the first round of the presidential election declared the following day saw the opposition FRETILIN party’s candidate Francisco Lu Olo Guterres of the traditionally strong leftist FRETILIN party, leading with 28 per cent, followed by the independent candidate, a recently retired defence force commander, Taur Matan Ruak, with 25 per cent.\textsuperscript{99} Incumbent President, Jose Ramos-Horta, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning leader who polled 18\%, was voted out of office and could not qualify for 16\textsuperscript{th} April runoff. The outcome of the first round raised the prospects of a withdrawal of the Australian-led mission of about 400 UN peacekeeping troops that was deployed to Timor-Leste in 2006 to quell the chaotic unrest.\textsuperscript{100}

Lack of major party support and backing in 2012 had added a major setback for Ramos-Horta defeat in the first round of the presidential election unlike in the 2007, when he was supported by Prime Minister Gusmao’s party, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction. Their formerly close political alliance had broken down since, the president an outspoken and often critical commentator on issues of government performance and transparency.\textsuperscript{101}

As no candidate received 50 per cent, Lu Olo and Taur Matan Ruak had to face a run-off. Both were well-regarded “twenty-four year” veterans of the East Timorese guerrilla force Falintil, who fought in the mountains from the Indonesian

\textsuperscript{98}Ibid., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{101}Michael Leach, “Timor’s Change of Leader”, op.cit., pp. 1-2.
invasion of late 1975 until the historic independence referendum in 1999.\textsuperscript{102} The second round of the presidential election was held on 16\textsuperscript{th} April 2012.\textsuperscript{103} The country's supreme court of appeal, which has to vet election results, declared the poll result that Jose Maria Vasconcelos known as Taur Matan Ruak had won the 16\textsuperscript{th} April runoff. The court chief Claudio Ximenes said Ruak had won 61\% of the vote, defeating his rival Francisco Lu Olo Guterres of the FRETILIN party.

While the president had no direct power over policy issues, the national mandate gives the president considerable influence to comment on matters in the public realm. The president also retains the key executive power of appointing a prime minister after parliamentary elections, a veto over legislation, and the right to make appointments to key positions, such as the prosecutor-general.\textsuperscript{104}

The Security Council has welcomed the second round of presidential elections in Timor-Leste calling it “an important milestone for the consolidation of peace and stability” in the country, as well as a reflection of the commitment of its people to democracy and the rule of law.\textsuperscript{105} The Council members also commended the national electoral authorities and all those responsible for the successful management of the elections, including the National Police Force (PNTL), “for their role in ensuring an orderly and calm environment throughout the electoral process.”\textsuperscript{106} The members of the Council also expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) during the election process. Electoral

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{102}Ibid., p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{104}Michael Leach, “TimorLeste: The Presidential run-off”, op.cit., p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{106}Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
assistance, institutional development and capacity-building of the PNTL were part of the peacekeeping mission main tasks. In addition to congratulating Timor-Leste’s people for the peaceful, smooth and orderly manner in which the elections were conducted.\textsuperscript{107}

The government of Timor-Leste had commended and lauded its people after completing the process of voting for their head of state and electing a new President for the country. They have exercised their democratic right to vote through both rounds of the election in a calm and orderly way, showing the world that the nation was committed to stability, peace and national unity.\textsuperscript{108} The Government of Timor-Leste also thanked the electoral management body, the STAE, led by Mr. Tomas Cabral for their excellent organisation. The Government of Timor-Leste also extended its appreciation to UNMIT and all those who provided technical support and to the election observers for their part in monitoring this successful process.\textsuperscript{109}

It was imperative to note that this was a sign of political maturity that Presidential candidates conducted themselves throughout their campaigns with integrity and dignity. In the run-off both candidates campaigned with great passion whilst encouraging their supporters to act responsibly. In this way they have shown their willingness to prioritize the welfare and stability of Timor-Leste.\textsuperscript{110}

3.7: UNMIT Support for the Preparation of 2012 Parliamentary Election

The acting Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Timor-Leste, Finn Reske-Nielsen, handed over election materials to the Technical Secretariat

\textsuperscript{107}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{109}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{110}\textit{Ibid.}
for Electoral Administration (STAE). These election materials comprised of 5,000 bottles of indelible ink, 2,000 T-shirts for the National Observers, 2,000 vests for the International Observers, 2,000 vests for polling staff, voter education posters and billboards. Commenting on the support and assistance of the UN in preparing the parliamentary election, the Director-General of STAE Tomas Cabral says, “STAE together with the UN have one single objective, to deliver transparent and impartial elections.” Meanwhile, acting Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to Timor-Leste, Finn Reske-Nielsen states, “The UN is committed to supporting the electoral process in Timor-Leste,” He further express, “I am fully confident that under the leadership of STAE, and with the support of stakeholders, these parliamentary elections will be fair, peaceful and successful.” The election materials were procured by the UN as part of the long-term institutional support and technical assistance provided to Timor-Leste’s electoral management bodies. On the hand, logistical and operational support is provided by the UN through a joint UNMIT and UNDP team, with funding from Japan, Sweden, Norway and Ireland.

UNMIT support during the parliamentary election also includes in providing logistic support to the Timorese electoral officials. The logistical and operational support provided by UN through a joint UNMIT and UNDP team was funded by Japan, Sweden, Norway and Ireland. It UN was also using its helicopters to support

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112Ibid.

the deployment and retrieval of sensitive electoral material such as ballot papers and voter lists in remote areas of the country during the election day.\textsuperscript{114}

The other areas of support which UNMIT extended as part of the preparation for the parliamentary election include providing technical advice to the electoral management bodies i.e. the STAE and CNE. UNMIT supported in the areas of voter registration, operations, public information, information technology, civic and voter education, training, administration and management, electoral monitoring etc. The UN also advised the electoral bodies in drafting and revision of electoral legal framework and subsidiary.\textsuperscript{115} In addition the UN via UNMIT was supporting political parties through training in various resource centres set up in five districts of Dili, Ainaro, Baucau, Bobonaro and Oecusse. The objective of these resource centres was to provide political parties with the basic facilities, information and spaces for holding meeting with the electorates.\textsuperscript{116} Besides, the UN also supported local NGOs as an effort to encourage greater participation of women during the electoral process. The UN gave vital assistance and training to potential candidates in leadership, public speaking and in addressing the problems and requirements faced by women in the country.\textsuperscript{117}

It should be noted that the UN was also making staunch endeavour to encourage the youth of the Timor-Leste and first time electorates to come forward in exercising their universal franchise during the parliamentary election.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{115}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118}Ibid.
A: UNPOL Support for Parliamentary Election

After the successful completion of the Presidential election in April, the UNPOL were gear up for the parliamentary election which was held on 7th July, 2012. UNPOL was responsible for maintaining law and order and ensuring public security since the beginning of the mission, had to extend their support to the PNTL forces in maintaining public security. UNPOL also provided training activities to and the development of joint national security operation plan. The UN provided security support by deploying their personnel i.e. through UNPOL forces in the thirteen districts as given in the following table.

Table 2

No. of UNPOL deployed by district as of 10th June 2012 for the Parliamentary Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Vehicles assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aileu</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacau</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobonaro</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covalima</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautem</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquica</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufahi</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oecusse</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viqueque</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dili</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Democratic Governance Support Unit of UNMIT.

\(^{119}\text{Ibid.}\)
The support that UNMIT rendered for the preparation of the parliamentary election which was held in July 2012 was limited. In fact, the UN through UNMIT had already imparted extensive preparation and training of Timorese electoral officials to conduct the presidential election in March and April. UNMIT also organised various awareness programme for the people to familiarise them with their rights in electing their representatives to the national assembly. Besides, UNMIT also provided training for the political parties and the candidates in organizing campaign. Hence, in the parliamentary election there were no major initiatives that UNMIT provided except in providing security, electoral materials to the Timorese election body.

The 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary election were often described as Timor-Leste’s first normal elections and it assumed very significant which would determine the UN withdrawal. Unlike the 2001 Constituent Assembly election which was hurriedly organised to meet a UN deadline for withdrawal and was the first nationwide ballot since the violence-scarred referendum on independence in 1999. The 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections took place under the shadow of nation-wide crisis. But the 2012 general elections were significant which was held in an environment of stability created by the presence of UN peacekeeping mission in the country for the last six years. It was remarkable achievement for the first time that the Timorese electoral bodies taking the lead in their administration and supervision.\textsuperscript{120}

3.8: Timor-Leste Parliamentary Election 2012

The successful conduct of the presidential polls commencing from March and culminated in April had raised hope and enthusiasms among the Timorese citizen who longed for the successful conduct of parliamentary poll so as to fulfil people’s aspiration to elect their government according to their wisdom through their right to vote as enshrined in the constitution. The National Parliament of Timor-Leste is an organ of sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of East Timor that represents all Timorese citizens with legislative supervisory and political decision making powers. The National Parliament is elected by universal, free, direct, equal, secret and personal suffrage. The National Parliament is constituted by a minimum of fifty-two and a maximum of sixty-five Members. Members of the National Parliament have a term of office of five years. It is incumbent upon the National Parliament to make laws on basic issues of the country domestic and foreign policy. Under the country’s semi-presidential system, where executive power is overwhelmingly weighted toward the prime minister, the parliamentary election was the most critical elections scheduled in July 2012. Eighteen parties and three coalitions will hit the hustings, competing for berths in the 65 seats National

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122See, Article 92 of the Timor-Leste Constitution state the definition of the National Parliament.
123See, Article 93 (1).
124See, Article 93 (2).
125See, Article 93 (4).
126See, Article 95 (1).
Parliament.\textsuperscript{127} It was expected that a successful and widely accepted result in the parliamentary elections would be the key to democratic consolidation.\textsuperscript{128}

Similarly, the July 2012 parliamentary election was conducted by Timor-Leste’s Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat (STAE), overseen by the National Electoral Commission (CNE), with limited support from the UN. The elections were organised smoothly, if not flawlessly, and the conduct of the elections was marred only by minor technical issues.\textsuperscript{129}

Election officials distribute ballot boxes in Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste. Polling on voting day was opened from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm with a total of 645,000 registered voters. The Timorese authorities declaring that the elections had been peaceful in the country. Initially, there had been concerned and fear that violence could reignite in the energy-rich but underdeveloped state.\textsuperscript{130} But such was apprehension got evaporated after the election with no major untoward incidents that would destabilise the country in view of the UN decision to depart from the country by the end of the year.\textsuperscript{131}

The polls were well attended by the electorates. The voter turnout was estimated at 482,792 out of an electorate of 645,624, with an overall participation rate of 74.78\%.\textsuperscript{132} The outcome of parliamentary election showed only four political parties contesting in the election manage to secure seat in the parliament. The

\textsuperscript{128}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{131}Ibid.
Conselho National para Reconstrução de Timor or National Council for Timor-Leste Reconstruction (CNRT) party, led by Gusmao, received 46.15% of the vote. The main opposition, Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente or Revolutionary Front for Timor-Leste Independence (FRETILIN) party secured second spot with 38.46%. The Partido Democrático or the Democrat Party (PD) came third with 12.31% and emerged as key ally to form a coalition government with Gusmao. Frente Mudanca or the Front of National Reconstruction of Timor-Leste was the fourth party to make it to the parliament with 3.08% of the votes. Seventeen parties which received a total of 20.02% of the votes were unable to reach the 3% threshold.133

The distribution of seats in the National Parliament of Timor-Leste is as follows:134

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNRT</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frente Mudanca</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRETILIN</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Democratic Governance Support Unit (DGSU) UNMIT.

The CNRT which fall shorts of three seats to secure majority and formed the government on its own had to ally with Democratic Party and Frente Mudanca to form a coalition government.135

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134Ibid.
135Ibid.
there were reports of minor incidents of violence in the post-election period in which one person was killed and a number of houses and vehicles were burnt and destroyed. The incident was not alarming and the overall post-election situation in the country and the ability to form the government without a major violence was achieved due to the presence of the United Nations Peacekeeping mission in Timor-Leste.  

Meanwhile, the FRETILIN party which was left out of the coalition government took the opportunity to play a constructive role as an opposition party in the 65 member parliament. FRETILIN resolved to discharge its duty in checking the government action, scrutinising policies, programmes of the government and providing opposition to them in the parliament.

The United Nations which supported the election through its mission in Timor-Leste argued that the national elections were the last big test that decided the remaining 1,300 peacekeepers and other security staffs scheduled to be withdrawn by end of December. The successful conclusion of the national elections had given a sigh of great relieved to the UN which had played a key role in the preparation and constant assistance throughout the election period. Commenting on the outstanding feat which Timor-Leste had achieved, Luis Carrilho, the commissioner of the United Nations Police (UNPOL), lauded the Timorese and congratulated the citizens of Timor-Leste who in a free way cast their valuable vote. It was a very peaceful with no untoward incidents of violence. The National police (PNTL) chief Longuinhos Monteiro also corroborated that the election went well during the voting hour and that the PNTL forces were vigilant in ensuring law and order in the country until the

137 Ibid.,
formation of a new government. The national police chief also re-iterated his firmed commitment to ensure stability and tranquillity of people.\textsuperscript{138}

### 3.9: Women Participation in the Election

It should be noted that as a part of Timorese policy to usher parity and narrowed the gap of inequality, the young nation had strived to improve gender equality and women’s empowerment through policy reform, legislation, institutional mechanisms and public awareness campaigns. Timor-Leste had also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW).\textsuperscript{139} The Convention was legally binding document prepared by UN Commission on the Status of Women and approved by the General Assembly on 18\textsuperscript{th} December, 1979. It entered into force as an international treaty on 3\textsuperscript{rd} September 1981.\textsuperscript{140} In Timor-Leste equality for women and men were enshrined in the Constitution and that they “shall have the same rights and duties in all areas of family, political, economic, social and cultural life.”\textsuperscript{141} The New and amended laws relating to women quota in parliament reflect the commitment to improve the situation of women. Provisions in the Electoral Law (2006) establishing quotas for women’s participation had resulted in one of the highest rates of female representation in parliament in the world (29% in 2011).\textsuperscript{142} The Electoral Law states that for every four candidates a political party field, at least one must be a woman.\textsuperscript{143} As of 31\textsuperscript{st} July, 2012, out of 65 total seats, women

\textsuperscript{138}See, Peaceful Vote in E. Timor, \textit{op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{140}See, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{141}See, Section 17 of the Constitution of Timor-Leste. This section relate to equality between women and men.
\textsuperscript{142}See, Timor-Leste: Situation of women-overview, \textit{op.cit.}
representations in the parliament were pegged at 25 with 38.46 per cent. In fact Timor-Leste was one of the three countries in 2012 with the highest electoral gains for women Member of Parliaments (MPs) along with Senegal and Algeria with all three countries using legislated quotas for the first time to enhance women participation in parliamentary election.

The efforts to promote women's rights underlined the importance of women capability and contribution. Timor-Leste understands the important role women had in sustaining peace, first hand. For this reason the quota system was introduce and made part of the Election Laws, to ensure women's political participation. The national election in 2012 had increased the number of women in parliament from 29% to 38%. This percentage had exceeded Timor-Leste Millennium Development Goals (MDG) target of 35%. Prior to elections efforts to increase participation at every level of Government were initiated, with the support of UN Women and including Timorese partners. These efforts bore fruit in that voter participation almost reached parity at 49% women, 51% men in both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. At the Suco or village level women's representation had increased and guaranteed through a quota system ensuring 2 women and 1 female youth in every Suco Council.

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147 Ibid.
Women had consistently engaged in political processes in Timor-Leste. They were an integral part of the struggle for self-determination, including the resistance to 24 years of Indonesian occupation. In 2001, several women unsuccessfully stood as independent candidates for the Constituent Assembly (the body elected to write the constitution). However, a women's coalition did campaign and obtained gender equality in the constitution. The constitutional language regarding the presidency is gender neutral and election laws for the office are gender sensitive.\textsuperscript{148}

The increased in number of women representatives was partially the product of tireless efforts put in by Civil Society Organisations (CSO) throughout the years to campaign and lobby for additional rights. The Women Caucus for Politics (WCP) in Timor-Leste was one of the CSOs that helped to shape and improved women situation through three activities. These include: WCP had lobbied to secure a female candidate quota in the electoral law, prepared women candidates to contest in the elections and sensitised the media to increase coverage of women’s campaign. The WCP actively lobbied women MPs from multiple parties to convince their male counterparts to support the government draft bill on women quota in parliament. After a marathon deliberation and overcoming the opposition by many parties, the bill was approved by a majority of MPs and went into effect from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} May 2012, prior to the parliamentary election.\textsuperscript{149}