Presidential Election 2022

Polling Centre Presidents’ Handbook

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Welcome to the 2022 Election for the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

By working as a Polling Centre President, you will be helping your fellow Timorese citizens to exercise one of their most important and basic human rights: to make a free choice of who will be their leaders and representatives. Many Timorese have worked hard for this over decades, and to be trusted by your community to ensure that this right continues to be enjoyed is something in which you should feel great pride.

There are six critical principles of election administration by which you must be guided.

- **Respect for the law** - The electoral laws are, in effect, “the rules of the game” on which the community has agreed. Election officials are like umpires in a sporting game, whose obligation is to make sure that the rules are understood and followed.

- **Non-partisanship and neutrality** - The political neutrality of the administration of the election is of the utmost importance. The people of Timor-Leste expect electoral staff to act fairly and without fear or favour. On election day you cannot favour any candidate, regardless of any personal feelings you may have. All voters must be treated equally and decisions taken by you must be consistent and in accordance with the law.

- **Transparency** - A successful election is one in which all of the candidates and voters can confidently accept that the outcome is the result of a fair process. To enable them to have that confidence, every aspect of the polling and counting must be open to observation.

- **Accuracy** - Elections are sometimes won or lost by a small number of votes, and for that reason it is important that every aspect of your work be done with attention to accuracy and detail.

- **Inclusiveness** - A fundamental feature of democratic elections is that all voters have an equal right to take part. For that to be realised in practice, however, it is essential that the voting process be made fully accessible to voters who might encounter obstacles to their participation, such as women and girls, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

- **Service to voters** - By the time you see them, all voters will have had to make an effort to come to the Polling Centre, and for some - such as those who have a disability, or who may have had to walk a long way - it may have been a considerable challenge. For that reason, it is important that you make their voting experience as safe and convenient as possible.

There have been some significant changes to the electoral process since the last national election in 2018, so please make sure you read this Handbook carefully so you understand entirely what is required of you at your Polling Centre.

**Acilino Manuel Branco**
Director-General of STAE
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Part 1 - Introduction - purpose and structure of this Handbook

1.1 The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with detailed instructions on how to set up and manage your Polling Centre. It is part of a package of documents for you consisting of the following:

- this Handbook;
- forms to be completed by you; and
- the Polling Station Secretaries’ Handbook, which includes instructions for Polling Station staff.

1.2 This rest of this Handbook consists of the following Parts:

- Part 2 - Polling Centres and Polling Stations
- Part 3 - Changes to election procedures due to Covid-19;
- Part 4 - Your role;
- Part 5 - Maintenance of an orderly and politically neutral environment;
- Part 6 - Preparations before election day;
- Part 7 - Fiscais, observers, monitors and media professionals;
- Part 8 - Polling on election day;
- Part 9 - Counting on election day; and
- Part 10 - Handling problems and emergencies.

1.3 Separate packages of documents have been prepared for polling which will be taking place in unusual situations, such as in hospitals, in prisons, in places where people are in isolation due to Covid-19 infection or suspected infection, in Parallel Voting Centres set up in Dili, and in foreign countries where there are Timorese voters.

Part 2 - Polling Centres and Polling Stations

2.1 A Polling Centre is a place where voters go to cast their ballots. At least one Polling Centre is established in each suco, but some sucos with lots of voters may have more than one. Each Polling Centre has a “President” - you - who has overall responsibility for the conduct of the election there.
2.2 A Polling Station is a site within a Polling Centre at which the main activities on election day are undertaken. Specifically, it is at a Polling Station that a voter has his or her eligibility to vote confirmed, is given a ballot paper, marks it in secret, and places it in a ballot box. A process of “ballot paper reconciliation” is also undertaken after the close of the polling at each Polling Station. Those processes are described in detail in Parts 7 and 8 of the Polling Station Secretaries' Handbook. You must read that entire Handbook and ensure that you are thoroughly familiar with the procedures it specifies.

2.3 Each Polling Station:

- has a Secretary who manages its operation;
- is staffed by a team of polling officials whose roles are set out in detail in the Polling Station Secretaries’ Handbook; and
- is supplied with all necessary materials including lists of registered voters, ballot papers, voting screens and ballot boxes.

2.4 Your Polling Centre has a five digit identification code, to assist with the tracking of materials. Each Polling Station at your Polling Centre has a nine digit identification code: the first five digits are the code for your Polling Centre, and the last four uniquely identify each Polling Station in your Polling Centre. The codes must appear on the ballot boxes, lists of voters, and the records concerning the polling operation, counting and tabulation of votes. The STAE Municipal Director will advise you of the codes for your Polling Centre and its Polling Stations. You will then have to advise each Polling Station Secretary of the code for his or her Polling Station.

2.5 The majority of Polling Centres nationwide have just a single Polling Station. However, in major population centres, there may be multiple Polling Stations at a Polling Centre. The nature of your work is likely to vary slightly, depending on the number of Polling Stations at your Polling Centre.

- Where there is just one Polling Station, you and the Polling Station Secretary will be able to work as a team, though there are certain functions which, by law, are the responsibility of either the Polling Centre President or the Polling Station Secretary.
- Where there are multiple Polling Stations, you will be unable to be engaged full-time in supporting any single one, but will rather have to provide management support and guidance to all of them, as needed.

2.6 You also have responsibility for activities at the Polling Centre which do not relate to a specific Polling Station. Examples of these include:

- receiving and securing electoral materials;
- checking the identities of the Polling Station Secretaries and verifying the credentials of fiscais, observers and monitors;
• ensuring the Polling Centre Akta - the formal record of the conduct of the election there - is correctly completed and signed;

• handling major external security issues;

• managing the counting of the votes;

• liaising with the STAE Municipal Director; and

• managing the return of materials to the Municipal Tabulation Centre at the end of election day.

2.7 Your preparation of accurate records of what has happened at a Polling Centre is a critical element of the transparency of the election process. The Polling Centre “Akta” is the most important form which you will have to complete. A sample Polling Centre Akta is set out at Annex 1.

Part 3 - Changes to election procedures due to Covid-19

3.1 Covid-19 poses a challenge for the safe conduct of elections, because the Covid virus spreads from person to person, either directly or indirectly, and on election day large numbers of people come together in a short time at polling and counting venues which are often crowded.

3.2 The latest advice from the World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted the risk of airborne transmission of the virus, with particular concern about circumstances in which people gather in poorly ventilated rooms which can enable concentrations of virus in the air to build up. Unfortunately, many rooms in which Polling Centres or Polling Stations have been located at previous elections in Timor-Leste have been exactly like that.

3.3 For that reason, a number of changes have had to be made from the way in which Polling Centres have operated in the past, including the following.

• **Ventilation** - To the greatest extent possible, polling will be conducted in well-ventilated locations.

• **Vaccination** - All polling staff, monitors, fiscais representing candidates and election observers and monitors (national and international) entering your Polling Centre will be required to fully vaccinated. (The polling staff will have to prove their vaccination status prior to being employed, the rest when obtaining official accreditation - so polling staff will not have to require such proof from monitors, fiscais and observers with valid accreditations.) This is intended not only to provide protection against infection both for staff and for members of the public, but also to reinforce public confidence that voting will be safe.
• **Media professionals** - A different rule will apply to media professionals seeking access to Polling Centres. Their production of an accreditation document will not be sufficient to enable them to enter the Polling Centre; they will in addition have to produce either proof of full vaccination against Covid, or proof of a negative Covid test done in the five days preceding election day.

• **Gloves and face masks** - These will be worn by all polling staff whenever they are in the Polling Centre. Fiscais, observers, monitors and media professionals will also have to wear gloves and face masks, which (subject to availability of supplies) will be provided to those who do not bring their own. STAE will also attempt to provide gloves and masks to all voters, but that again will be subject to availability.

• **Sanitising of hands** - Everyone entering the Polling Centre will first have to sanitise his or her hands; STAE will supply the sanitiser.

• **Transfer of voters to isolation centres to vote** - Sub-articles 16(f) and (g) of Government Decree No. 7/2017 (*Regulation of Voting Procedures, Counting of Votes and Determination of Results*) as amended in 2022, contemplate a scheme by which voters with prescribed Covid symptoms will be prevented from entering a Polling Station. Specifically, the Decree includes the following duties in those listed for the Polling Centre President:

  “(f) Notify the competent authority of the Ministry of Health and the person in charge of the PNTL present at the location, for the purposes provided for in the legal document that introduces exceptional and temporary surveillance measures in response to the COVID-19 disease pandemic, of the existence of voters presenting symptoms compatible with COVID19 infection, as described in that legal document;

  (g) Inform the person responsible for the mandatory therapeutic isolation centre closest to the polling centre, of the transfer to that centre of citizens who have tested positive for COVID19, following tests carried out under the terms of the previous subparagraph, so that they can exercise their right to vote there, after being manually enrolled in the additional list of the isolation centre and deleted from the list of voters of the polling centre in which they were originally supposed to vote;”

If arrangements are made to implement this scheme, the STAE Municipal Coordinator will provide you with further detailed advice on how it will work.

**Part 4 - Your role**

4.1 You have a range of specific duties conferred by law, including the following.

• Declare the Polling Centre open, check the identities of Polling Station Secretaries, and verify the credentials of fiscais, observers and monitors.
• Ensure the smooth functioning of the Polling Centre in accordance with the laws and regulations in force.

• Order the display of the list of candidates at the entrance of the Polling Centre.

• Provide information and the necessary working guidelines for the proper conduct of the electoral operations in the Polling Centre.

• Suspend electoral operations in case of disturbances, aggression or violence, either in the Polling Centre or in the immediate vicinity of it.

• Use your “casting vote” whenever necessary to resolve issues, as discussed at paragraphs 7.10 and 7.11 below.

• Sign the Polling Centre Akta.

• Organize the candidates’ fiscais to sign the Polling Centre Akta.

• Announce the results of the counting and display a copy of them in a visible location inside the Polling Centre premises.

• Ensure the packaging of all election materials and their delivery to the Municipal Tabulation Centre.

• Implement any other duties that may be assigned to you by law, regulation or superior order which are not the responsibility of another body.

Part 5 - Maintenance of an orderly and politically neutral environment

5.1 A range of legal provisions are designed to ensure that operations on election day will be able to proceed in an orderly and politically neutral way.

• Voters who are visibly drunk or under the influence of drugs, who are carrying any type of weapon, or who are disturbing order and discipline by any means, are not allowed inside Polling Centres.

• Alcohol cannot be sold or drunk within 100 meters of a Polling Centre.

• Voters who have already voted are not allowed inside a Polling Centre, unless they are fiscais, media professionals or accredited observers or monitors.

• On election day, it is forbidden to place any type of electoral propaganda inside a Polling Centre, or within 100 meters from it. “Electoral propaganda” includes stickers, shirts, leaflets, symbols, signs, pins, posters and banners, among others, as well as activities promoting the candidates. If you become aware of such propaganda...
being positioned, distributed or otherwise directed at voters illegally, you should report it to the PNTL agent on site, who will take steps to deal with it.

- Fiscais cannot display any symbol or object that connects them with a candidate. Any fiscal who displays such a symbol is in the first instance directed by the Polling Station Secretary to remove it. If he or she refuses to do so, the Secretary will refer the matter to you. You should repeat the instruction to the fiscal, and if he or she again refuses to cooperate, you should order him or her to surrender his or her accreditation and leave the Polling Centre. You must record any such incident in the Polling Centre Akta, noting the details of the fiscal, and the time the incident took place.

- The presence of members of the armed forces and police forces in the exercise of their functions within Polling Centres is prohibited while voting is in progress (though they are permitted to enter after the voting has closed at all the Polling Stations in the Polling Centre, and also during the counting). PNTL members must stay at least 25 metres away from the Polling Centre.

- You may, however, request PNTL members to enter the Polling Centre if:
  
  o that is necessary to terminate any disturbance or to prevent any aggression or violence within the Polling Centre, Polling Stations or in the surrounding area; or
  
  o if someone to whom you have given a direction disobeys it.

Before making such a request, you must consult with the Polling Station Secretary, or one of the Polling Station Secretaries.

- You must make such a request for presence of the PNTL either through contact with a PNTL member in the vicinity of the Polling Centre, or, in the absence of such a person, by contact with the PNTL Municipal Commander.

- While PNTL agents are present in the Polling Centre, voting activities must be suspended. Polling should resume when the problem has been dealt with, and the Polling Station Secretaries have advised you that they are ready to recommence their operations.

- You must note in the Polling Centre Akta the reasons for the request, the period of presence of the PNTL (or its inability to be present), and the times at which polling was suspended and resumed.

5.2 It is your responsibility, supported by the Polling Centre and Polling Station staff, to be on a constant lookout for actions which constitute deliberate misbehaviour or breaches of the law. This includes any observed attempt by a voter to photograph his or her marked ballot paper. You should not hesitate to seek the support of PNTL members in dealing with any such cases.
Part 6 - Preparations before election day

6.1 On election day, it is critically important that the Polling Centre be ready to serve voters from 07h00, as the full eight hours of polling will need to be available to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to vote. For that reason, there are a number of important preparations which need to be made before election day.

Polling Centre layout

6.2 STAE is required by law to publish locations of Polling Centres at least 30 days before election day, with changes to the published locations being possible until 10 days before election day. You may be asked by the STAE Municipal Director to assist with the inspection and choice of sites. Generally speaking, a building or location will be identified: for example a school, or a government office. Other factors to be taken into account include:

- road access;
- availability of electricity;
- telecommunication network coverage;
- good airflow and ventilation, to help prevent viruses from becoming concentrated in the air being breathed;
- the size of available rooms (with larger rooms being preferable, other things being equal);
- the likelihood that at least 50 voters will attend; and
- the availability of human porters.

6.3 Particular attention needs to be given to ensuring that at least one Polling Station in each Polling Centre will provide the best possible access to voters with disabilities. Factors which can influence accessibility include (but are not limited to):

- the nature of any steps and stairs;
- the widths of the entrance and exit;
- the way in which queue locations are specified;
- the presence of obstacles; and
- the placement of voting screens and the ballot box.
6.4 Once the site has been determined, it is your responsibility, working in cooperation with the Polling Station Secretary (or Secretaries), to:

- familiarise yourself with the site, if you have not already done so; and
- plan the layout of the Polling Centre.

You should try to get that done as soon as possible after the publication of the notice of Polling Centre locations, to provide the maximum time to deal with any problems you discover. If you are of the view that there are major problems with the site, of the type which will make it unfit for use on election day, you must advise the STAE Municipal Director as soon as possible so that consideration can be given to the use of an alternative site. If you become aware of problems with the site which have arisen after your initial familiarisation visit - for example, storm or flood damage - you must also draw them to the urgent attention of the STAE Municipal Director.

6.5 You and the Polling Station staff will need to arrive at the Polling Centre on the day before election day. Tape to guide the positioning of queues of voters should be put in place using stakes or sticks, and if possible should have tags placed on it to indicate where people should stand so as to maintain social distancing of at least 1 metre. Where there are multiple Polling Stations, it is especially important to ensure that the locations of queues for their entrances are clearly identified.

6.6 A Polling Station works most effectively if it has a separate entrance and exit, so that the voters can make their way through the different stages of the polling process smoothly, as shown in the following illustration. You should attempt to use such a layout whenever possible.

6.7 Your plan for the Polling Centre layout needs also to identify the room in which counting will take place. That will then enable a plan to be made for the location of
furniture; the positioning of fiscais, observers and monitors; the display of the tally sheet on which a mark will be placed corresponding to each vote for a particular candidate; and the separate stacking of uncounted and counted ballots.

6.8 Rooms used for counting are usually crowded, and counting involves announcing loudly the vote marked on each ballot paper. They are therefore one of the highest risk venues for the transmission of Covid in the entire electoral process. You should therefore choose a room which is very well ventilated. If there are several such rooms available, the largest one should be used.

Staffing

6.9 The Polling Centre staff will need to have been selected and employed. Backup plans will also need to have been made to cover the risk that some staff may become unavailable at the last minute. Selection and employment of staff, and backup planning, is the responsibility of the STAE Municipal Director. You must ensure that you have the contact details of all of the staff who will be working in the Polling Centre, including any backup staff.

Training

6.10 All staff will have to undergo training. How this is delivered may vary across the country. You will be given further information and instructions about training plans by the STAE Municipal Director.

6.11 Regardless of the exact method of training to be used, it will be your critical responsibility to deliver the best possible training to all of the staff of your Polling Centre and its Polling Stations. You must ensure that all of the staff attend the training sessions and acquire a thorough understanding of the tasks they will be performing on election day.

Receipt of equipment and materials

6.12 Prior to the start of the polling, all of the equipment and materials needed at the Polling Centre will have had to have been delivered by STAE. How that delivery will be done will vary across the country. You will be given further information and instructions by the STAE Municipal Director about plans for the delivery of equipment and materials, and requirements for their secure storage until election day. You must ensure any such instructions for secure storage of materials are implemented in full.

6.13 If the materials have not arrived by the time you had anticipated on the basis of advice from STAE, you should contact the STAE Municipal Director and advise him or her of that.
6.14 Materials to be supplied by STAE fall into two main categories.

- “Sensitive” materials are items which, if stolen or misused, could damage the integrity of the election process. This category includes ballot papers, ballot boxes, ballot box seals, indelible ink, and lists of voters. Sensitive materials need to be well-secured and accounted for.

- “Non-sensitive” materials, though important for ensuring a safe and smooth election process, are unlikely to be able to be misused in a way which would damage the election’s overall integrity. Examples include hand sanitiser, gloves and masks, information posters and stationery.

6.15 A list of the materials to be supplied to each Polling Station is set out in the Polling Station Secretaries’ Handbook. Additional materials supplied for use at the Polling Centre are included in the list at Annex 2.

The day before election day

6.16 The day before election day represents the last opportunity to resolve any major outstanding problems which could interfere with the work of the Polling Centre and its Polling Station or Stations. You should arrange with your Polling Station Secretary or Secretaries to confer as early as possible on that day to confirm that all necessary arrangements are in place, and, if they are not, to agree on urgent action to fix any problems.

6.17 On that day, you and the Polling Station staff will need to position the tape which will guide the queueing of the voters on election day. (If, for any reason, that cannot be done on the day before election day, it will have to be done no later than 06h00 on the morning of the election.)

Part 7 - Fiscais, observers, monitors and media professionals

7.1 Apart from voters and polling staff, the following categories of people have a legal right to be present in Polling Centres to help to ensure the transparency and credibility of the election process, and it is an important part of your job to ensure that their work can be done effectively:

- fiscais nominated by candidates and accredited by STAE to observe the polling and counting on their behalf;

- independent observers (from Timor-Leste and other countries) accredited by STAE;

- supervisors deployed by CNE as part of its supervision of the entire election process;

- monitors from other organisations, accredited by STAE; and
• media professionals accredited by STAE who produce either proof of full vaccination against Covid, or proof of a negative Covid test done in the five days preceding election day.

7.2 As noted previously, everyone in these categories will be required to be fully vaccinated against Covid (except media professionals who can instead produce proof of a negative Covid test), and to wear masks while in the Polling Centre. They must also maintain social distancing, staying at least 1 metre away from anyone else. If someone fails to cooperate with these requirements, you should order them to leave the Polling Centre.

Fiscais

7.3 Each candidate may designate one main and one substitute fiscal for each Polling Station in your Polling Centre, as well as one main and one substitute fiscal for the Polling Centre as a whole. During the polling and counting, only one of them is entitled to be present at any given time. A fiscal has the following general rights:

• to monitor the conduct of voting operations, from the establishment of the Polling Centre and the Polling Station, until its final closure;
• to present questions to you, and obtain your answers, during the conduct of electoral operations;
• to follow, in his or her own vehicle, the transportation of ballot boxes and other Polling Centre or Polling Station materials;
• to monitor the process of counting votes and tabulation of the results;
• to sign the Polling Station and Polling Centre Aktas, and note all documents relating to voting and counting operations at which he or she is present;
• to file complaints and protests during the electoral process; and
• to deliver complaints and protests to CNE.

7.4 Fiscais are accredited by STAE for a specific Polling Centre or Polling Station.

7.5 Fiscais are required by law to:

• maintain impartiality in the course of their duties, not seeking unduly to favour the candidates that they represent;
• refrain from wearing any symbol or object which connects them with the candidate they represent;
• respect the Constitution, laws, and applicable regulations;
• cooperate with other fiscais so that the electoral process takes place in a transparent and orderly manner; and

• display their accreditation badge (see below) when requested by election officials or other competent national authorities.

![Fiscal Accreditation Badge](image)

Fiscais must not attempt to influence voters in any way, or to pressure or intimidate electoral staff.

**Observers and monitors**

7.6 Election observers and monitors have similar rights, and are subject to similar rules, to fiscais, except as follows.

• Observers and monitors are accredited to observe at any Polling Centre or Polling Station, not just a single designated one.

• They must not interfere with or obstruct the electoral process in any way, and, in particular, they must not seek to give instructions or orders to polling officials.

• While they may request clarification from you on any aspects of the electoral process, they have no separate right to lodge formal complaints or protests (though observers and monitors from Timor-Leste who vote at your Polling Centre do have the right to lodge complaints in their capacity as voters).

• They have the right to access and photograph any activity and any official documentation relating to the electoral process (but not in a way that is disrespectful of the voters, or could compromise the secrecy of the ballot).
7.7 Observers will have accreditation documents issued by STAE, and CNE supervisors will have CNE identity cards. Other monitors’ accreditations will be issued by STAE. Examples can be seen here.

7.8 As Polling Centre President, you must ensure that there is no interference with the legitimate activities of observers and monitors. If a dispute arises at a Polling Station regarding the rights or obligations of observers or monitors, the Polling Station Secretary will refer it to you for resolution.
Media professionals

7.9 Media professionals are identified by a credential document issued to them by STAE, examples of which are shown here.

They have the right to access Polling Centres and Stations to watch the polling and counting. Before entering, they must obtain your permission, to avoid disturbing the voting or counting operations. They must also produce proof of full vaccination against Covid, or proof of a negative Covid test done in the five days preceding election day. They must comply with all laws relating to behaviour in Polling Centres, and, in particular, must:

- respect the privacy of individuals;
- refrain from interfering in electoral operations, and especially from questioning or interviewing people within the Polling Centre;
- refrain from collecting images and information that compromise the secrecy of the vote; and
- during counting of votes, refrain from interfering in the process, and only report results of counting as provided by STAE.

If media professionals wish to film within your Polling Centre, you should facilitate their doing that in a way which is respectful of the voters, does not interfere with the Polling Centre’s operation, and protects the secrecy of the vote.

Questions, claims and objections

7.10 From time to time, voters or fiscais may seek to question or object to decisions made by you or one of your staff. Often such questioning is the result of a misunderstanding, so if a question or objection is put to you (or referred to you by a Polling Station Secretary),
you must in the first instance try to resolve the issue by giving a full and accurate explanation of why the decision has been made.

7.11 You must then ask the complainant if he or she wishes to lodge a formal complaint. If he or she does, the Presidential Election Law prescribes the following specific process for dealing with it.

- It is submitted by you to a vote of the electoral officers - that is, you, and (from the Polling Station in which the issue arose) the two Queue Controllers, the four Identification Officers, the Ballot Paper Controller, the Ballot Box Controller and the Indelible Ink Controller. The vote simply involves each of them stating whether the objection should be upheld or rejected; there is no need for a “secret” vote. The objection is considered accepted if it obtains a vote in favour from at least six of the electoral officers. (Even if, for some reason, there are fewer than 11 electoral officers present, an affirmative vote of six is still require for a complaint to be considered accepted.) You may consult with STAE if you need guidance on how to manage this process. Any fiscais, observers and monitors present must be invited to observe the process.

- The decision is then communicated to the complainant who, if he or she so wishes, may address the complaint to CNE. The complaint, accompanied by all the relevant documentation, must be submitted in writing to the CNE representative at the respective Polling Centre or Polling Station, and is returned to the Municipal Tabulation Centre along with all other documents relating to the Polling Centre.

- Thereafter, a decision on the complaint will be made by CNE, and is ultimately subject to review by the Court of Appeal.

If a complaint relates to activities at a specific Polling Station, the Polling Station Secretary must record in the Polling Station Akta:

- the details of any formal complaint, including the time it was lodged and how it was resolved using these procedures, and also the total number of such complaints; and

- the number of votes for accepting or rejecting the complaint (but not how each individual electoral officer voted).

If a complaint does not relate to activities at a specific Polling Station, those same details must be recorded by you, in the Polling Centre Akta.

Part 8 - Polling on election day

8.1 In broad terms, polling proceeds as follows.

- According to the Presidential Election Law, voting is both a right and a “civic duty”.

-
• The legal voting age is 17 (by election day). A voter who turns 17 between the first round of voting and a run-off vote in a presidential election can vote in the run-off, but not in the first round.

• Polling at Polling Stations takes place from 07h00 to 15h00. Voters who are queued to vote at 15h00 are able to vote.

• Voters must surrender “image capturing devices” (including cameras and smartphones) when they enter the Polling Station. That is to ensure that the secrecy of the vote is maintained.

• In order to vote, voters must first be registered. Each voter is registered for the suco in which he or she lives. A voter, when registered, is issued on the spot with a voter registration card containing his or her particulars, photograph and thumbprint, and is included in a database from which lists of voters registered for each suco can be printed.

• On election day, the voter must produce his or her voter card, and the data on it must match his or her entry on the Polling Station’s list of voters for the suco.
  
  o A person who cannot produce his or her voter card may instead vote by producing a Timorese identity card or valid Timorese passport, provided that the particulars shown on that identity card or passport match those shown on the list of voters for the suco. (Voters registered to vote at a Parallel Voting Centre in Dili will not be shown on the list of voters for the suco, and therefore will not be able to vote using this mechanism.)
  
  o A person who has been issued a valid voter card for the suco in which the Polling Station is located, but who for some reason has not been included on the list of voters for the suco, can still vote. In such a case, his or her name is added to an “additional list”. (This does not apply to voters whose names have been deleted from the list of voters for the suco because they had registered to vote at a Parallel Voting Centre in Dili.)

• A special rule applies to members of the armed forces, members of the security forces, fiscais, civil servants and agents of the public administration who are providing support to the administration of the election: they are able to vote at the Polling Centre closest to the place at which they will be serving. The same right is extended to election observers and monitors, media professionals covering the election, and local staff of diplomatic missions (who may be supporting the observation of the election process by foreign diplomats). You will be provided by STAE with a list of registered voters in these categories who will be able to vote at your Polling Centre. If for any reason that list is not available, the details of such voters should instead be added to the “additional list” of voters.

• The polling officials check the voter’s age to ensure that he or she has turned 17 by election day.
• The voter’s hands are checked to ensure that they do not bear indelible ink marks indicating that he or she has already voted.

• A polling official signs and stamps the back of a ballot paper to indicate it has been validly issued, and gives it to the voter.

• The voter then goes to an empty voting screen, into which other people cannot see, and marks his or her choice by putting a mark in, or punching, the square printed on the ballot adjacent to the candidate for whom he or she wishes to vote.

  o A voter who is blind or prevented by physical disability from marking his or her own ballot paper may be assisted in doing so by another voter chosen by him or her. (The Secretary of the Polling Station must check if the assistant was freely chosen by the voter.)

  o Alternatively, blind voters may choose to use a “template” provided by STAE (if available), which enables them to locate (by touch) the square on the ballot paper which they need to mark or punch to vote for the candidate of their choice.

• A voter who spoils or makes a mistake on his or her ballot is entitled to return it and be given a replacement.

• After the voter has placed the ballot paper in the ballot box, one of his or her fingers is marked with indelible ink to indicate that he or she has voted. That having been done, the voter then leaves the Polling Station.

8.2 As noted earlier, these activities are undertaken at the Polling Stations, in accordance with the detailed procedures set out in the Polling Station Secretaries’ Handbook. This rest of this Part therefore focuses on functions which you or the staff under your direct control are specifically required to perform.

Preparations prior to the opening of the poll (06h00 to 07h00)

8.3 Activities at the Polling Centre start at 06h00, and all staff will have to arrive by then.

• At 06h00, you are required to confirm the identities of the Polling Station Secretaries.

• You must also confirm that any fiscais are not carrying any symbol or object which connects them with a candidate. If one of them is found to have such a symbol or object and refuses to remove it, you must withdraw his or her accreditation and eject him or her from the Polling Centre (and make a record of having done so).
Polling Station Secretaries are required to inform you by 06h30 of any absences of electoral officials, so you can commence replacement procedures. At 06h35, you must inform the STAE Municipal Director of the names of any absent electoral officials, and request their replacement. He or she will then appoint as a replacement any voter with a well-known reputation, as agreed with the majority of the electoral officials present. All such replacements must be recorded in the Polling Station and Polling Centre Aktas. After replacement, the appointment of the absent electoral officials is considered void. (This also applies to you: if you do not arrive on time, you will be replaced by a Polling Station Secretary.)

At 06h45, preparations for the start of polling are undertaken in each Polling Station, under the direction of its Secretary. These activities are spelt out in detail in the Polling Station Secretaries’ Handbook, and include the counting of ballot papers received, the display of the empty ballot box, and its subsequent sealing. You need to be prepared to support this by advising on any points of uncertainty.

Prior to 07h00, you need to ensure that the Polling Station Queue Controllers understand their duties, and have with them the materials they need for their work, including in particular the gloves and face masks (if available) to be supplied to voters. You must also check that all of the Polling Centre staff are wearing their gloves and face masks.

Also prior to 07h00, you must ensure that the list of candidates is displayed at the entrance to the Polling Centre. You must also check that any other information posters supplied by STAE are also on display.

Immediately before 07h00, you must check that your Polling Stations are ready to open and receive voters. Provided that at least one Polling Station is ready, you should declare the Polling Centre open and record the opening time in the Polling Centre Akta.

If you are advised by a Polling Station Secretary that some of the materials which should have been supplied by STAE are missing, you must immediate inform the STAE Municipal Director.

If for some reason no Polling Station is ready at 07h00, you must:

  o  take all practicable steps to ensure that at least one is prepared to accept voters as soon as possible;

  o  advise all fiscais, observers and monitors;

  o  tell the Polling Station Queue Controllers to advise any waiting voters that there will be a short delay; and

  o  note in the Polling Centre Akta the time at which polling started.
If the start of polling is delayed by more than 30 minutes, you should advise the STAE Municipal Director as soon as practicable.

8.4 At all stages of the process, you should be prepared to explain to the fiscais, observers, monitors and CNE supervisors what is being done.

**Part 9 - Counting on election day**

9.1 The counting of all the votes cast at all the Polling Stations in your Polling Centre is done as a single operation managed by you. Counting is often the point on election day at which difficulties arise. The counting officials are required to make hundreds of individual decisions which affect the number of votes which will be credited to the candidates, and fiscais may well be more motivated to dispute decisions than was the case during the polling. Everyone present tends to be tired, becoming more so as a long count proceeds, and for that reason tempers sometimes become frayed. All of these problems become worse if the counting process does not proceed transparently, and with clinical efficiency.

9.2 To minimise the risk that these sorts of problems will occur, you can take the following steps.

- The counting needs to be pre-planned with the same care as the polling.

- You must brief the fiscais, observers and monitors before the counting starts, explaining the various stages of the process, and who will be doing what. As the counting proceeds from one stage to another, you should explain each upcoming stage again.

- You must be prepared to give an explanation of any decision you make which has the potential to be contentious, especially in relation to the validity or invalidity of votes.

**Pre-planning of counting**

9.3 Because of the Covid risks associated with indoor activities, planning for counting needs to be clearly focused on Covid-safety measures.

- A spacious, well-ventilated counting room will be much better, and safer, than a small one with limited air flow.

- Access to the count will need to be limited to the staff strictly required to undertake it, and others authorised to be there, such as fiscais, monitors, observers and media representatives.

- The presence of members of the public wanting to witness the counting presents a significant potential Covid transmission threat, and if any do attend, they should be
kept outside the room in which counting is taking place, far enough from any windows or doors to ensure that they are not blocking the flow of air. They will also need to maintain social distancing, undertake disinfection, and wear masks. You must ensure that crowd control is rigorously enforced.

- In both the planning and implementation of counting, social distancing of 1 metre (both of count staff and of others officially present) will need to be factored in. Fiscals, observers, monitors and media professionals will similarly need to be spread out.

- The counting process will need to incorporate standard Covid-safety disinfection and hygiene measures such as hand sanitising, and the wearing of masks and gloves.

9.4 More generally, you will need to plan where ballot papers are to be handled. There must be a separate place on a table (or on multiple tables) for the stacking of the votes for each candidate, blank votes, null and void votes, and votes to which an objection has been made. The stacks need to be spaced in such a way that ballots cannot accidentally be moved from one to another. Each stack also needs to be labelled clearly, so that all present can see that each ballot paper has been placed in the correct stack.

9.5 Similarly, a tally sheet on which votes for each candidate are recorded needs to be on a wall in a spot where all present can see it, but close enough to the place where votes are being counted to ensure that the staffer marking the tally sheet can easily hear as it is announced for which candidate a vote has been cast (or alternatively, that the vote is blank or null and void).

Broad outline of counting

9.6 In broad terms, counting proceeds as follows.

- Prior to the start of the count, each Polling Station Secretary is required to undertake a “reconciliation” count of unused, cancelled and abandoned ballot papers. The purpose of the reconciliation process is to determine how many ballot papers should be in the ballot box. Details of how that is done are set out in the Polling Station Secretaries’ Handbook.

- Any fiscals, observers, monitors and media professionals present have the right to witness all aspects of both the reconciliation and the counting processes.

- After the reconciliation has been done, each Polling Station Secretary will deliver to you the ballot box or boxes, along with the Polling Station Akta.

9.7 The process then involves the following steps.

- You must inspect the seals on each ballot box, confirm they are intact, read aloud the seal numbers, ask the fiscals to confirm the seal numbers, invite the fiscals,
observers and monitors to note those numbers, and then break the seals and open the ballot box. All of these steps must be taken in the presence of the electoral officials, fiscais, observers, monitors, media professionals and voters who are there at the time.

- Staffers designated by you must then remove the ballot papers from the ballot box. If your Polling Centre has two or more Polling Stations, the contents of the ballot boxes from different Polling Stations must not at that point be mixed.

- The staffers then inspect the ballot papers, unfold them and place them on the counting table in neat bundles of 50, with the back side facing up, so that you can verify if they have been duly stamped and signed by the Ballot Paper Controller.

- You then determine the total number of ballot papers taken from the ballot box. If the number so determined differs from the number of ballot papers which the reconciliation implied should have been in the ballot box, the ballot papers must be physically counted again to confirm the accuracy of the count. If there remains a difference between the number of ballot papers counted and the number which the reconciliation implied should have been in the ballot box, you must note that on the Polling Centre Akta.

- You enter in the Polling Centre Akta the number of ballot papers inside the ballot box duly stamped and signed by the Ballot Paper Controller.

- The ballot papers inside the ballot box that are not stamped or signed by the Ballot Paper Controller are separated from the remaining ballot papers, stamped as “rejected” and counted aloud by you, and placed in the separate envelope provided for the storage of rejected ballots; and the number of such ballot papers is entered in the Polling Centre Akta.

- Where there is more than one Polling Station at the Polling Centre, the ballot papers inside the ballot box that are not stamped as “rejected” are then mixed with other ballot papers with the same characteristics coming from the other Polling Stations, being subsequently grouped in neat bundles of 50.

9.8 You then read aloud the vote marked on each ballot paper, show its front side to the people present, and group them in batches corresponding to each candidate, with separate batches for null and void votes, blank votes, and votes to which an objection has been made.

**Counting of individual votes**

9.9 The individual counting of the votes recorded on the ballot papers is the most critical part of the counting process. The details of how it should be done are as follows.

- A Polling Centre staffer designated by you is handed a ballot paper from among those uncounted.
• He or she inspects it, holds it up so that it can be seen by the fiscais, observers and CNE supervisors, and announces the name of candidate for whom the vote has been cast.

• A ballot paper is “invalid” (and therefore is not counted to any candidate) if:
  
  o it is a “blank vote”, i.e. a ballot paper that has not been marked or punched by the voter;
  
  o it is “null and void”, that is:
    
    ➢ it has been marked or perforated in a way which makes it impossible to understand the choice made by the voter;
    
    ➢ it allows the identification of the voter;
    
    ➢ it indicates the choice of a candidate who has died or withdrawn from the election; or
    
    ➢ any cut, drawing or erasure has been made, or any word written, upon it.

• If the ballot paper is invalid, the staffer doing the counting announces that, and states the reason for the invalidity. “Blank” and “null and void” votes are then placed in separate stacks.

• If a fiscal wishes to object formally to the decision on validity, or regarding the candidate for whom a vote has been cast, he or she must say so immediately.

• The ballot paper is then handed to one of the staffers responsible for storing the counted ballots, who places it in a stack corresponding to the candidate for whom the vote was cast (or, in the case of an invalid ballot, in a stack corresponding to the cause of its invalidity (blank, null and void, etc.)). Ballots subject to a formal objection are placed in a separate stack.

• Another designated staffer places a mark on the tally sheet against the candidate for whom the vote was announced. Marks should be grouped in fives, as shown in this example.
• Where there has been a formal objection, no mark is placed on the tally sheet.

• The process is repeated until all ballots have been counted.

9.10 Formal objections to a decision in relation to a ballot paper are resolved as soon as they arise using the process described at paragraphs 7.10 and 7.11, and a mark is placed in the appropriate place on the tally sheet reflecting the outcome of that process. The ballot papers to which objections were raised are placed in a separate envelope marked “Claimed Ballot Papers”.

9.11 The marks on the tally sheet are then added up. If it appears from the addition, and from a physical count of the blank votes and null and void votes, that the total number of votes for each candidate and the number of blank votes and null and void votes is different from the earlier physical count of all ballot papers, you must direct the ballot papers in each candidate’s stack, and the various categories of invalid ballots and claimed ballots, to be physically counted again to resolve the issue.

9.12 To avoid difficulties with this process, it is critical that uncounted and counted ballots be kept in well-separated areas, along the following lines.
9.13 In practice, you may be assisted by staff of the Polling Centre to undertake physical tasks such as emptying of ballot boxes, unfolding of ballot papers, mixing of ballot papers, announcing of votes, and placing of ballot papers in stacks for the various candidates, and stacks for blank votes, null and void votes, and votes subject to challenge. You must, however, be in a position to confirm that all ballot papers have been correctly identified as accepted or rejected, and that all accepted ballot papers are counted to the correct candidate.

9.14 While the vote counting is proceeding, you should take the opportunity to transcribe the details of the reconciliation conducted in each Polling Station from the relevant Polling Station Akta to the Polling Centre Akta. You should total the figures and check them for any inconsistencies or anomalies, investigating further and making corrections if necessary.

9.15 Once the counting is complete, you must enter the results into the Polling Centre Akta, and invite the fiscais to sign it if they wish. The Polling Station Secretary or Secretaries must also sign.

- If your Polling Centre has only one Polling Station, you will simply check and copy across the reconciliation data (including the count of unused, cancelled and abandoned ballot papers) from that Polling Station’s Akta to the Polling Centre Akta.

- If your Polling Centre has more than one Polling Station, you will have to check and copy across the reconciliation data from every Polling Station Akta onto the Polling Centre Akta, add them up to obtain overall figures for the Polling Centre, and check the figures for any inconsistencies or anomalies, investigating further and making corrections if necessary.

9.16 If, as a result of the identification of such a difference, any fiscal wishes to lodge a complaint or objection, it must be dealt with using the process described at paragraphs 7.10 and 7.11 above.

Conclusion of the counting process

9.17 At the end of the counting, and after any discrepancies have been resolved, you must complete the Polling Centre Akta, ensuring that the following details are correctly recorded:

- the votes polled by the various candidates, and the numbers of ballot papers which fell into each category of invalidity;

- the numbers of the security seals for each ballot box;
• the venue and code of the Polling Station;

• the opening and closing time of voting;

• the names of the electoral officials and the candidates’ fiscais; and

• the total number and details of any objections and claims filed and the decisions taken.

9.18 As you make each entry of vote figures in the Akta, you must:

• place, in a separate envelope for each candidate, the votes for that candidate; and

• again in separate envelopes, place
  
  o the blank votes;

  o the null and void votes; and

  o the votes which had been the subject of formal objections by fiscais.

9.19 You must then close and sign the envelopes and ensure that they are properly labelled to indicate the number of ballot papers they contain, the name of the Polling Centre and its corresponding code, and the municipality and suco in which the Polling Centre is located.

9.20 You must then post a notice showing the results in a visible place in the vicinity of where the Polling Centre has operated.

9.21 You must then, in accordance with instructions which STAE will provide:

• advise STAE of the result of the count;

• package all the materials from the Polling Centre; and

• return the materials to the Municipal Tabulation Centre.

Part 10 - Handling problems and emergencies

10.1 This Part covers a number of difficulties and emergencies which can arise during the polling and counting. Since it is impossible to foresee every conceivable problem, this list does not purport to be complete. Difficulties not mentioned here need to be addressed in consultation with the STAE Municipal Director, keeping in mind at all times the need to operate in an open and transparent way.
Shortages of critical materials

10.2 Polling Station Secretaries are responsible for monitoring the use of critical materials, including in particular ballot papers and indelible ink, as well as materials needed for Covid-safety, such as masks, gloves and supplies for sanitising. They are required to notify you as early as possible about any looming shortages, so that you can take remedial steps. These could include:

- transferring materials from one Polling Station in the Centre to another; and/or
- requesting a resupply of materials from the STAE Municipal Director.

10.3 If critical materials actually run out at Polling Station, the Polling Station Secretary must notify you, and advise the fiscals, observers and CNE supervisor of what has happened and what remedial steps are being put in place. You must then announce to the voters that polling will have to cease for a short time, and inform the Polling Station Queue Controllers of the cessation; and if the Polling Centre has more than one Polling Station, incoming voters must be directed to the Polling Station(s) still operating, until advised that the Polling Station which had run out of materials has been resupplied. You must note in the Polling Centre Akta the times at which polling ceased and resumed.

Accidents or illnesses

10.4 If a person at the Polling Centre suffers an accident such as a fall, or is taken suddenly ill, the polling staff should provide all possible assistance. Steps which could be taken will depend on the exact circumstances, but could include:

- providing immediate first-aid, or seeking the assistance of nearby PNTL agents to do that;
- contacting local health authorities, or the person’s family members;
- where the Polling Centre has two or more Polling Stations, directing voters away from the Polling Station at which the problem has arisen.

10.5 In cases involving a death or serious injury or illness, you must advise the STAE Municipal Director as soon as possible of what has happened. In all cases, you need to make a note in the Polling Centre Akta of the steps taken.

Cases in which polling is impossible, or needs to be suspended

10.6 In certain circumstances it may not be possible to commence or continue operations at your Polling Centre. In such cases the local CNE delegate must be immediately advised.

10.7 If any natural disaster occurs during the three days before election day, you must advise the STAE Municipal Coordinator as soon as possible so he/she can decide, with the
agreement of CNE’s local delegate, to move the Polling Centre to a safer location. Voting at the new location will then take place on the second day after election day.

10.8 If, on election day:

- the Polling Centre or Polling Station cannot be set up; or
- any riot or natural disaster interrupts voting for more than two hours

you must close the polling, seal the ballot boxes containing the ballots already cast, and send them to the Municipal Tabulation Centre. Voters who have not yet voted and fiscais must be sent to another Polling Centre in the same suco, if any, or to the nearest Polling Centre outside the suco, and you must send staffers from your Polling Centre there as well, along with the list of voters, a new ballot box and all other electoral material. You must also advise the STAE Municipal Director of the circumstances of the closure of the Polling Centre and relocation of voters, and record the relevant details in the Polling Centre Akta.

10.9 You also have the power to suspend the polling at your Polling Centre to deal with a serious issue which in your judgement prevents polling from proceeding in an orderly and effective way. Examples of this could include a medical emergency, a serious accident, imminent danger from flooding or from lightning strikes, the presence of a dangerous animal, or an outbreak of disturbance, aggression or violence within, or in the vicinity of, the Polling Centre. A suspension should be no longer than the circumstances make necessary.

10.10 If you suspend polling, you must advise the PNTL members in the vicinity, and instruct the Polling Station Queue Controllers to advise the voters (if that is practicable). You must also advise the STAE Municipal Director, and record the details of the suspension in the Polling Centre Akta.

10.11 If a suspension of polling at the Polling Centre continues for more than two hours, you will not be able to resume polling. You must act according to the procedures noted at 10.8 above and advise the local CNE delegate.

10.12 If there are multiple Polling Stations at your Polling Centre, it may, depending on the circumstances, be possible to suspend polling at only one of them, while continuing polling at the others. Polling should resume at the affected Polling Station when the problem has been dealt with, and the Polling Station Secretaries have advised you that they are ready to recommence their operations.
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#### (ii) Buletin Votu ne’ebé aumenta iha Votasaun nia klaran
#### (iii) Buletin Votu ne’ebé hamenus iha Votasaun nia klaran

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B. Buletin Votu hira maka la uza
C. Buletin votu Kanseladu
D. Total buletin votu ne’ebé maka uza (A-B-C)
E. Buletin Abandonadu
F. Total Votantes ne’ebé Vota iha Estasaun Votu
G. Total Buletin Votu iha Kaixa Vota Estasaun nian (F-E)

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## OBSERVASAUN

**Aktividade no Nia Lalaok Durante Prosesu Eleitoral**

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**Data, de Março de 2022**

**Prezidente Sentru Votasaun**

*Naran no Asinatura*
# AKTA REZULTADU SENTRU VOTASAUN
## ELEISAUN PARLAMENTAR 2022

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A. TOTÁL VOTU VÁLIDU
B. TOTÁL VOTU NÚLU
C. TOTÁL VOTU BRANKU

D. TOTÁL VOTU REZETADU
E. TOTÁL VOTU REKLAMADU

## TOTAL ELEITOR MAI VOTA

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Data, de Março de 2022
Prezidente Sentru Votasaun

Naran no Asinatura
Annex 2 – Materials to be supplied to each Polling Centre and Polling Station

The following materials are listed in the Annex to Government Decree No. 7/2017 (Regulation of Voting Procedures, Counting of Votes and Determination of Results) as amended in 2022.

1. Ballot boxes with the corresponding numbered security seals;
2. Ballot papers;
3. Indelible ink;
4. Sufficient voting compartments;
5. Electoral operations minutes form, with the following documents:
   6. Electoral results sheet;
   7. Electoral officials attendance list;
   8. Confidentiality declaration to be signed by electoral officials;
9. Remarks book;
10. Voters list;
11. Additional list of voters;
12. List of voters on duty;
13. Itinerant list;
14. Tabulation of results form for public display;
15. Materials delivery form;
16. Polling station signs;
17. Advice sheet for the names of the electoral officials;
18. Large format ballot paper sample;
19. Claim and objection forms;
20. Labels for electoral officials, candidates' agents and observers;
21. Stamp with the word “CANCELLED”;
22. Stamp with the word “CLAIMED”;
23. Stamp with the word “BLANK”;
24. Stamp with the word “NULL AND VOID”;
25. Stamp with the word “UNUSED”;
26. Stamp with the word “REJECTED”;
27. Stamp with the word “ABANDONED”;
28. Stamp with the phrase “Presidential Election 2022”;
29. Envelope for valid ballot papers;
30. Envelope for blank ballot papers;
31. Envelope for null and void ballot papers;
32. Envelope for ballot papers subject to claims;
33. Envelope for cancelled ballot papers;
34. Envelope for unused ballot papers;
35. Envelope for rejected ballot papers;
36. Envelope for abandoned ballot papers;
37. Full list of presidential candidates and substitutes;
38. Calculator;
39. Sufficient staplers, pens and nails;
40. Tape;
41. Polling Station Akta form;
42. Polling Centre Results Akta form;
43. Ballot box delivery form from the Polling Centre to the National Tabulation Centre;
44. Claim and objection form;
45. Numbered security seals;
46. Ballots boxes to transport minutes and votes subject to claims, if any;
47. Envelopes;
48. Other stationery.
49. Personal protective material against COVID-19, which includes face masks, gloves, visors, complete protective suits, disinfectant liquid and body temperature measuring devices.

It is intended that the following items to assist in preventing the transmission of Covid will also be supplied.

1. If available, disposable gloves and masks for voters - rated covid appropriate;
2. Free standing garbage bags 75cmX75cm;
3. Hand sanitizer - 500 ml; and
4. Disinfectant.