

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

Dili, 16 July 2019

**FRETILIN PARLIAMENTARY BENCH WILL VOTE AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO BRING TIMOR-LESTE INTO DICTATORSHIP RULE**

Today, 16 July 2019, the FRETILIN Parliamentary Bench declares to the media and the general public that it will **VOTE AGAINST THE WHOLE LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE** the VIII Government submitted to the National Parliament last week to amend laws in relation to the Maritime Boundary Treaty.

FRETILIN Parliamentary Bench sees this act as a clear demonstration that the VIII Constitutional Government is bringing Timor-Leste into a dictatorship where respects to the Constitution and Laws are being diminished or eradicated. Changes are introduced to laws only to implement one person's wish and makes the whole State to conform and submit to one person's wishes.

On behalf of the Bench, Head of the FRETILIN Bench Aniceto Guterres Lopes MP, declared that this position has been taken for the following reasons:

1. In this legislative session, the Petroleum Activity Law would be amended twice. A law should not be altered more than once in one legislative session. This second amendment shows that the VIII Government and the benches that have approved the first amendment recognise they have made a mistake, and that these amendments were not made with appropriate studies and analysis, not well planned and were not in line with the interests of the State. This is only to conform to the interests of those who want to give us loans to put our resources and oil revenues as guarantee to them. The Petroleum Fund, our only sovereign fund, will become the warranty and with this we pawn our resources and open the way for losing our sovereignty.
2. The Petroleum Fund Law is a structural law that should not suffer amendments at will. To amend such an important law as petroleum fund, there should be dialogue, and consultations with all relevant parties including the Consultative Council for Petroleum Fund (CCFP) and civil society organizations. But this is not happening. Because it is a structural law, the first legislature established this law through dialogue with the whole society and we should have consultations as we used to do. It should not depend merely on the tyranny of a majority, worse still a majority composed by three minorities.
3. The Petroleum Fund law is not part of the legislation package we need to amend now for ratification of the maritime boundary treaty. The Petroleum Fund law does not have any link to the maritime boundary treaty as this law is regulating the management of the petroleum fund, an internal matter of Timor-Leste. FRETILIN bench disagrees with the amendment of the petroleum fund law, specially amending in such a hurry only to benefit some groups. FRETILIN suspects this is to pave the way for those with money to lend to Timor-Leste to control our sovereignty when the petroleum fund can be used to invest with them in different activities.
4. In February or March 2018, Mr. Xanana Gusmão sent a letter to H.E. President of Republic declaring that he did not recognise the VII Government and that the VII Government was unconstitutional when it was VII Government who signed the maritime boundary treaty on 6 March 2018. If Mr. Xanana Gusmão has any consistency, he should consider the treaty unconstitutional too, thus not warrant ratification now. This only shows Xanana is full of incoherence and inconsistencies. FRETILIN suspects that there are various manipulations in the background, for which FRETILIN demands dialogue to seek clarifications.

5. Everyone knows that throughout this current legislative session, the plenary sessions of Parliament have been held without agenda and running only with “período antes-da ordem-do-dia”. The VIII Government has not presented any legislations to the Parliament either. Nevertheless, the Government did not bring these laws to be amended in time for Parliament to approve when not even the Speaker of the National Parliament considered these laws as urgent. It was only last week that the government brought them in to force the Parliament to approve in a hurry and to force the President of Republic to promulgate it in a hurry in July. All these only to serve one person’s wishes and interests.
6. These acts clearly show violation of the Constitution and laws, and are strong indications that the ruling coalition parties want to take Timor-Leste into a dictatorship rule and a tyranny of majority. Forces the Government and obliges the Parliament to submit to one man’s wishes. It is evident that there is attempt to force the President of Republic to follow one man’s wishes. This is dictatorship.
7. FRETILIN Bench would like to also question some contents of the maritime boundary treaty. If the treaty defines the Greater Sunrise field to be within the territory of Timor-Leste, why does the treaty include resources sharing? Since resources sharing is included, why does the treaty exclude pipeline to Timor-Leste? And we now end-up having to buy the pipeline? FRETILIN Bench considers the inclusion of resource sharing but excluding pipeline to Timor-Leste in the treaty as pawn of the Timor-Leste’s resources and sovereignty.

FRETILIN would also like to question if this treaty about to be ratified is a maritime boundary treaty or a resource sharing treaty with Australia? What exactly will we be pawning in this treaty? Pawning our sovereignty or our resources?

With these reasons, FRETILIN Bench declares that it will vote against the whole proposed legislations package and resolution for the ratification of maritime boundary that the VIII Government brought here to force the National Parliament to approve in a hurry.

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