

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

- On 14 April 2002, East Timor voted for the first time for a President. Out of an estimated voter population of about 439,000, **86.2 per cent** went to the polls, according to UNTAET's **Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)**.
- **Independence leader Xanana Gusmão** won in a landslide over **Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker Francisco Xavier do Amaral**. Gusmão won the most votes in 12 of 13 districts and garnered **82.7 per cent** of the total valid votes cast. Do Amaral won his home district, Aileu, and received the remaining 17.3 percent of the total valid votes.
- “By the decision of the majority of our people, I am the elected President, and I become a president for the whole nation, not only those who voted for me,” Gusmão said on 17 April. “The next five years will constitute a great challenge, a serious challenge – not only for our government, but also for all civil society and all the democratic institutions of our country. It will also be a challenge for me as President. And of course, it is a challenge for all our people.”
- The European Union Electoral Observer Mission – the largest of **35 international observer groups** – declared afterward that it had “**full confidence**” in the election result. Nearly 3,000 party and candidate agents were accredited by the IEC to monitor the balloting and vote count, as well as more than 2,000 East Timorese and international observers. No official complaints were filed after the counting was completed.
- “The (IEC) Board of Commissioners did not have a difficult task in concluding that the criteria for a free and fair election have been met,” **IEC Board Chairperson Maria Aurora dos Reis** said as the results were certified and forwarded to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 21 April. “Our own observations have been fully supported by the many electoral observer statements and other commentaries made so far.”
- National and foreign leaders congratulated Gusmão on his victory. East Timor Chief Minister Marí Alkatiri pledged to work together with the President-elect, a sentiment reciprocated by Gusmão.
- In this ballot – the third administered by the United Nations in East Timor – the **emphasis was placed on “Timorization” to ensure the sustainability of the electoral process**. Unlike previous UN-run polls, East Timorese held three of the five seats on the IEC Board of Commissioners, chaired all 13 district offices of the IEC and participated in the counting of ballots.

