

Election Monitoring is a world observatory of electoral ballots. A guide that, time after time, will make public the electoral results and strategies of countries to which the western media don't give a voice. Everything will be accompanied by a summarized report on the socio-economic as well as political conditions of the countries under scrutiny

ELECTION MONITORING

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Contrasto/Reuters

VIETNAM

■ The country on the eve of elections

Vietnam, which was reduced to rubble by the tragic series of Indochina wars in the mid-1970s, had to face serious financial difficulties engendered by the U.S.-imposed embargo following Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia with the aim of overthrowing Pol Pot's bloodthirsty regime. Beijing, an ally of the Khmer Rouge, retaliated by launching a brief and bloody incursion into Vietnamese territory, which ended in a major defeat and tens of thousands of deaths. International isolation and a precarious economic situation led to the introduction in 1986 of economic reforms known as "doi moi" or "renovation": private ownership of farms and companies and the deregulation of foreign investments based on the Chinese model were inserted into the context of the Vietnamese Communist Party's consistent monopoly on power. The results obtained were similar to China's: the country has experienced an uninterrupted economic boom for the past twenty years, with one of the highest growth rates in the world. The manufacturing sector, the main element of the Vietnamese economy, has also specialised in high-tech production and agriculture is also doing extremely well. The country has one of the world's lowest unemployment rates and a poverty level lower than that of its main neighbours. Hanoi has also carried out

_In May, Vietnamese citizens over 18 years of age elected the 493 members of the National Assembly, which holds legislative power

fruitful oil field exploration campaigns and is now the third-largest oil producer in South East Asia. The country became a member of the WTO on 7 November 2006. In recent years, the asphyxiated political system has shown signs of renewal, too. Although the party, led by a 14-member politburo and an 8-member secretariat, continues to determine guidelines for the country's development, the parliament has won greater autonomy and come a long way from its past status as a decorative body.

■ Voting: how and for whom

On 20 May Vietnamese citizens over 18 years of age elected the 493 members of the National Assembly (Quoc-Hoi). Members are elected through a two-round majority system in 182 multi-member constituencies divided into electoral units. Each unit may elect no more than three deputies. Each electoral unit in provinces and cities directly under the central Government is allotted at least three seats. Within each electoral unit, candidates exceed the number of seats to be filled. Those obtaining the most votes and more than 50% of the vote are declared elected. If all seats are not filled or if the number of voters is less than half of those regi-

VIETNAM IN FIGURES

Area	331,689 sq. km
Capital	Hanoi (3,145,300 inhab.)
Population (2007)	85,262,356
Ethnic groups	Vietnamese 86.2%, Tay 1.9%, Thai 1.7%, Muong 1.5%, Khome 1.4%, Hoa 1.1%, Nung 1.1%, Hmong 1%, others 4.1%
Religions	Atheist 80.8%, Buddhist 9.3%, Catholic 6.7%, Hoa Hao 1.5%, Cao Dai 1.1%, Protestant 0.5%, Muslim 0.1%
Languages	Vietnamese
Currency	1 dong = 0.0000461949 € (31/05/2007)
International dialling code	+84
Web domain	.vn

Sources: Cia, Ecb, Wb

FREEDOMS IN VIETNAM

Death penalty	Retentionist
Index of political rights ¹	7
Index of civil liberties ¹	5
Status	Non-free country
Assessment of the elections by international observers	/

points go from 1 (total freedom) to 7 (lack of freedom)

Sources: Amnesty International, Freedom House

ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

GDP (PPP), 2006	192.39 bln €
GDP growth, 2006	+7.8%
GDP per capita (PPP) - 232 countries, 2006	2,256 € (157)
Competitiveness index (125 countries), 2006	77
Human development index (177 countries), 2006	109
Index of women's representation in power, (75 countries), 2006	n.a.
Year women received active and passive right to vote	1946
Life expectancy, 2006	70.8
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment	63%

Sources: Undp, Wb, Wef

stered, a simple majority second-round vote takes place. The National Assembly, in which legislative powers are vested, nominates the President of the Republic and approves the list of ministers chosen by the Prime Minister.

■ The elections

153 candidates presented by the central structures of the Party and 340 from the peripheral structures were elected. Statistics published by the Communist Party indicate that 87 of those elected belong to national minorities, 43 are non-Party members and 68 are young. 138 MPs were re-elected. Based on official data, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung was the favourite, with 99.07% of the votes.

POLITICAL ELECTIONS OF MAY 20

Party	seats 2007	seats 2002
Vietnamese Fatherland Front (Mttqvn)*	493 ¹	493 ²
Total (women)	493 (127)	493 (136)

* this coalition includes the Communist Party and minor allies

1. comprises 43 non-party members and 1 self-nominated

2. comprises 51 non-party members and 3 self-nominated Source: Cpv

PHILIPPINES

■ The country on the eve of elections

The Philippines were a Spanish colony until 1898 and, after 15 years of guerrilla warfare cut short by the Marines in 1913, an American colony until 4 July 1946. Ferdinand Marcos, elected President in 1965 and re-elected in 1969, declared martial law in 1972, leading the country with an iron fist until 1986, when he was overthrown by the so-called Edsa (People Power Revolution). The return to democracy was unable to eradicate the country's endemic troubles, from income inequality to poverty and foreign debt to corruption. The Philippines also suffer from continuing political instability caused by the intrinsic weakness of the political system and the presence of various armed groups of political and religious inspiration. In addition, the Abu Sayyaf group, considered to have links with international terrorist networks, is active in the country. In this scenario, worsened by the 1997 South-East Asian financial crisis, a second Edsa erupted in 2001, directed against the corrupt President Joseph Estrada, who was forced to resign and imprisoned. The current President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is also the focus of accusations of corruption and electoral fraud and has come up against a long series of revolts and public protests. In fact, while the country's economic performance is fairly good, it remains heavily dependent on remittances from over 11 million emigrant workers. A recent VAT reform has had a beneficial effect on the peso's stability and prospects of economic growth are also estimated to be improving. Senatorial elections witnessed a clash between a variegated opposition coalition named Genuine Opposition (Go) and supporters of the President, grouped together in the Together Everybody Achieves More (TEAM) Unity alliance. Elections to the Lower House, on the contrary, are regulated in such a way as to encourage fragmentation, resulting in the participation, in open order, of nearly a hundred different lists; besides, some parties are divided into pro and anti-Arroyo factions. The opposition leaders sought to obtain control of both Houses so as to start an impeachment procedure against the Head of State, accused of having won the 2004 presidential elections as a result of massive fraud.

■ Voting: how and for whom

On 14 May Philippine citizens over 18 years of age and residing in the country for at least a year and in their home constituencies for at least six months elected the 236 members of the House of Representatives (Kapulungan Mga Kinatawan) and half of the 24 members of the Senate (Senado). Representatives are elected via a mixed system: 212 are elected in as many single-member constituencies through a simple majority

ELECTION MONITORING

PHILIPPINES IN FIGURES

Area	300,000 sq. km
Capital	Manila (1,581,082 inhab.)
Population (2007)	91,077,287
Ethnic groups	Tagalog 28.1%, Cebuano 13.1%, Ilocano 9%, Bisaya/Binisaya 7.6%, Hiligaynon Ilonggo 7.5%, Bikol 6%, Waray 3.4%, others 25.3%
Religions	Catholic 80.9%, Muslim 5%, Evangelic 2.8%, others 11.3%
Languages	Filipino, English
Currency	1 peso = 0.0161257 € (25/05/2007)
International dialling code	+63
Web domain	.ph

Sources: Cia, Ecb, Wb

FREEDOMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Death penalty	Abolitionist
Index of political rights ¹	3
Index of civil liberties ¹	3
Status	Partially free country
Assessment of the elections by international observers	/

1 points go from 1 (total freedom) to 7 (lack of freedom)

Sources: Amnesty International, Freedom House

ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

GDP (PPP), 2006	329.66 bln
GDP growth, 2006	+5.4%
GDP per capita (PPP) – 232 countries, 2006	3,620 € (130)
Competitiveness index (125 countries), 2006	71
Human development index (177 countries), 2006	84
Index of women's representation in power, (75 countries), 2006	45
Year women received active and passive right to vote	1937
Life expectancy, 2006	70.7
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment	82%

Sources: Undp, Wb, Wef

system while the remaining 24 are elected in a single national constituency under a party list proportional system. A party must win at least 2% of the vote. Lists present candidates selected by national minorities; each list can win a maximum of 3 seats. Representatives have a three-year mandate. Senators are elected directly in a single national constituency with a simple majority. Senators have six-year terms and half of the seats are renewed every three years. Voting is compulsory. The Senate and the House share legislative powers.

■ The elections

The election results did not provide the expected political clarification. Although the opposition gained a significant victory in the Senate, with only two pro-President senators elected over twelve, Mrs Macapagal-Arroyo's followers managed, thanks in part to the muddled electoral system, to retain control of the House. The number of pro-President representatives has gone from 167 to 169. This situation casts a deep shadow over the country's future: the opposition has the strength to

SENATE

lists	2007	2001
Genuine Opposition (Go)	7	/ ¹
Together Everybody Achieves More (TEAM) Unity	2	6 ²
Independent	2	7
Total (women)	11? (1)	13 (0)

1. not present in 2001

2. date referring to lists subsequently grouped under TEAM Unity

3.2 seats are currently vacant: Mindanao, where voting will be held afresh because of fraud, and a Manila senatorial seat whose holder became mayor of the capital in May 2007; the legal disputes relating to his replacement have not yet been resolved.

Sources: Ipu, Comelec

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

party	seats 2007	seats 2004
Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-Cmd)*	87	79
Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi)*	50	26
Nationalist People's Coalition (Npc)*	27	53
Liberal Party (Lp)	24	34
Nationalist Party (Nacionalista)	8	5
Philippines Democratic Party-National Struggle (Pdp-Laban)	5	1
Struggle of Democratic Filipinos (Ldp)*	4	7
Democratic Socialist Party of the Philippines (Pdsp)*	1	2
Others and independent	30	29
Total (women)	236 (n.d.)	236 (37)

* members of TEAM Unity

Sources: Ipu, Comelec

reject legislative measures that are not to its liking but does not have sufficient numbers to formally accuse the President of her alleged electoral fraud in 2004.

EAST TIMOR

■ The country on the eve of elections

East Timor became independent on 20 May 2002 after over three centuries of Portuguese colonisation and 25 years of brutal Indonesian occupation, which caused 200,000 deaths. The fall of the dictator Suharto in 1999 led the new Indonesia President Habibie to hold a referendum in which the East Timorese voted for independence. Violent clashes instigated by extremist Indonesian military circles broke out soon after. Pro-Indonesian militias destroyed 70% of the island's property, production facilities and infrastructure, forcing 75% of the population to flee. The arrival of an international contingent and a United Nations mission contributed, however, to easing tensions and laying the ground for the birth of the new State.

East Timor has the highest rate of population increase in the world today, an element that further worsens the scourge of poverty and unemployment, which

EAST TIMOR IN FIGURES

Area	15,007 sq. km
Capital	Dili (150,000 inhab.)
Population (2007)	1,084,971
Ethnic groups	Austronesian, Papuan, Chinese
Religions	Catholic 98%, Protestant 1%, Muslim 1%
Languages	Tetum, Portuguese, others
Currency	1 USD = 1.3666 (25/05/2007)
International dialling code	+670
Web domain	.ti

Sources: Cia, Ecb, Wb

FREEDOMS IN EAST TIMOR

Death penalty	Abolitionist
Index of political rights ¹	3
Index of civil liberties ¹	4
Status	Partially free country
Assessment of the elections by international observers*	Regular

points go from 1 (total freedom) to 7 (lack of freedom)

Sources: Amnesty International, Freedom House

*European Commission Electoral Observation Mission

ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

GDP (PPP), 2004	275 bln
DP growth, 2005	1.8%
GDP per capita (PPP) – 232 countries, 2004	254 € (223)
Competitiveness index (125 countries), 2006	122
Human development index (177 countries), 2006	142
Index of women's representation in power, (75 countries), 2006	n/a
Year women received active and passive right to vote	2002
Life expectancy, 2006	56
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment	71.7%

SOURCE: UNDP, WB, WEF

now affects one of two Timorese. The current population will double within the next 18 years and the only hope of avoiding dramatic consequences is the growth of coffee plantations and, above all, the rich gas and oil resources off the Timorese coast. However this area is disputed by Australia, which had signed a very advantageous resource-sharing agreement with the old Indonesian regime. Timor cannot stake its own claim at international courts

because the government of Canberra refused to acknowledge its authority on the issue of maritime controversies shortly before the little island became independent. A temporary agreement on a single methane field signed by the two governments in 2005 has given the Timorese economy a respite. However, in 2006, groups of dissatisfied soldiers clashed with troops loyal to the government, sparking off a serious crisis and a fresh intervention by international troops. This episode had major repercussions on Timorese political life, dominated by FreTiLin (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor). The charismatic President Xanana Gusmão and the then Foreign and defence minister José Ramos Horta, Nobel Prize for Peace winner and founder of FreTiLin, resigned from the party they had contributed to founding. Having been named Prime Minister, Horta conducted a victorious electoral campaign, beating his opponents in the second round on 9 May to be elected President of the Republic. The June parliamentary elections were experienced as a rendering of accounts between the Horta-Gusmão duo's new National Congress for the Reconstruction of East Timor (Cnrt) and the ongoing leadership of FreTiLin.

■ Voting: how and for whom

On 30 June Timorese citizens over 17 years of age elected the national Parliament. The 65 MPs were elected through a proportional party list system in 13 national constituencies. Each party must win at least 3% of the vote to be assigned seats. Parties are required to present one female candidate for every four male candidates. MPs have a five-year mandate. They name and deny confidence in the Prime Minister. The new parliament replaces the constituent assembly elected in 2001, which was transformed into the national parliament at the 2002 elections.

■ The elections

While it was predictable that FreTiLin would no longer have a monopoly on power after the split headed by the historic leaders Gusmão and Horta, the party nevertheless managed, under the leadership of Mari Alkatiri, to retain its position as the largest single party, although it lost nearly half of its voters. Cnrt, on the other hand, obtained about a quarter of the votes, a somewhat disappointing result. Former President Gusmão, Prime Minister "in pectore", started wide ranging talks aimed at forming a coalition government including all the parties having obtained seats except for FreTiLin, which, for its part, has excluded any possibility of collaborating with Cnrt and wishes to set up a minority government.

EAST TIMOR: POLITICAL ELECTIONS OF JUNE 30, 2007

parties	I° turno	II° turno
Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FreTiLin)	21	55
National Congress for the Reconstruction of East Timor (Cnrt)	18	/
Social Democratic Party-Timorese	11	12
Social Democratic Association (Psd-Asdt)		
Democratic Party (Pd)	8	7
National Unity Party (Pun)	3	/
Democratic Alliance (Ad)	2	4
National Democratic Unity of Timorese Resistance (Undertim)	2	/
Others	/	
Total of seats (women)	65 (18)	88 (22)

Source: cne