East Timor (Timor Leste)
Rice

East Timor's road to independence from Indonesia was rocky. In 1999, after the Timorese voted for independence in a referendum, a group of militia, aided by the Indonesian military, began a widespread campaign of retribution, during which over 1000 Timorese were killed, 300,000 were forcibly relocated, and most of the island's infrastructure was destroyed. A UN peacekeeping forced stepped in to stop the violence, and after two and a half years under the authority of the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, the country became fully independent in 2002. The government has both a President and a Prime Minister, but the President appears to be the head of state.

The first president, Xanana Gusmao, was an independent candidate (and therefore listed as nonpartisan). In 2006, a group of military personnel petitioned Gusmao to address their claims of discrimination. When they were dismissed by the commander of the armed forces, their demonstrations turned violent. This violence then evolved into mob and gang violence, which in turn threatened a full- scale collapse of civil order (US Department of State, 2010). Gusmao requested security forces from nearby countries (Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Portugal), and the UN also created the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste to help restore stability and the security sector in East Timor. The UNMIT also helped to oversee the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Gusmao declined to run for reelection (instead, he ran for election as Prime Minister, which he won later that year).

José Ramos-Horta (also an independent candidate) won the Presidential election of that year and assumed office. Ramos-Horta had previously served as Prime Minister (he assumed that post in 2006, after Prime Minister Alkatiri resigned), and ran with the endorsement of Gusmao (US Department of State, 2010). Therefore, we have chosen not to code this transition as a SOLS change. In 2008, Ramos-Horta survived an assassination attempt perpetrated by the former military police commander Alfredo Reinado. Ramos-Horta was injured in the attempt, and was flown to Australia for surgery. The government was temporarily headed by Vincento Guterres, the Vice President, followed by Fernando de Araújo, the President of Parliament. Araújo was in power until 17 May 2007. He was very clearly serving in an "acting" role, and gave up power as soon as Ramos-Horta returned from Australia. Ramos-Horta resumed his presidency on May 20, 2008, and remains in office in the present day. Because Archigos does not code the two interim leaders, we don't either.

In 2012, Ramos-Horta lost the election to Ruak. East Timor is a democracy in this period, thus we use the political affiliation of a leader to determine whether a SOLS change occurred. Both Ramos-Horta and his successor Ruak were non-party candidates. Following the coding rules, we determine whether Ruak was the pre-designated successor of Ramos-Horta or backed by the same support coalition to determine whether a SOLS change occurred. Ramos-Horta was a candidate in the 2012 election that Ruak ended up winning (Associated Press 2012). We therefore conclude that Ruak was not the pre-designated successor nor backed by the same coalition of support, thus we code a SOLS change.

Sources

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