

A correction on East Timor

1 June 2006

In the article “Why Australia wants a regime change in East Timor”, posted on May 30, the following paragraph appeared:

“The immediate focus of regime change is the consultative Council of State meeting presently being held in Dili. This body, convened under President Xanana Gusmao, has the power to sack the Alkatiri government and appoint a so-called ‘national unity’ government until the elections due to be held next May.”

A reader of the WSWS has since advised that this is not correct. The constitution provides that the dismissal of the government shall occur when: a new legislative term begins; the president accepts the resignation of the prime minister; the prime minister dies or is suffering from a permanent physical disability; its program is rejected for the second consecutive time; a vote of confidence is not passed; a vote of no confidence is passed by an absolute majority of the members.

The constitution also provides that the president shall only dismiss the prime minister in accordance with these provisions when it is deemed necessary “to ensure the regular functioning of the democratic institutions, after consultation with the Council of State.”

According to the WSWS correspondent, the conclusion from an overview of the constitution is “that the president has no unilateral powers of dismissal and that both the Parliament and the Council of State must also be involved in the process.”



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