

Thursday, 21 February 2008 - Strasbourg

East Timor

Ana Maria Gomes, author . - (PT) On behalf of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, I want to express our solidarity with the people of East Timor and our strong condemnation of the barbarous attacks against the democratically elected institutions of the President and Prime-Minister of East Timor.

I also want to call for an independent investigation, as requested in the motion for a resolution before us which we support, to find out who carried out the attacks, what they represented and what has failed in the security system of East Timor, both within East Timor and, in particular, internationally.

I believe that this episode indicates that the international community must make further efforts to reinforce the state institutions of East Timor and, in particular, to reform the security system which was also called into question in the 2006 crisis.

In addition, the issues relating to justice, compliance with justice and law and order must be considered. In this context, I must say that the attempts at national reconciliation with the rebel groups may have given a negative and counterproductive signal of impunity which has led the rebels to carry out this miserable attack.

East Timor is not a failed state and bears no similarities to Somalia with which Mr Onyszkiewicz has tried to associate it. East Timor gained its independence heroically, despite the international community's silence, and the East Timorese people have already demonstrated on several occasions that they are committed to democracy. They once again demonstrated this in an exemplary manner in the presidential and legislative elections that took place last year during which I had the honour of heading up this Parliament's mission.

The international community now has a responsibility to show its support for East Timor, to coordinate this support which it clearly failed to do in relation to the security system, and to resolve the basic issues of the structure of the East Timorese state. In terms of the signals given by the East Timorese people, there is no doubt that they want democracy and the rule of law.