

**Law No. 11/2009  
of 7 October**

**TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION**

The Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste provides that local government is constituted by territorial corporate bodies vested with representative organs whose organization, competence, functioning and composition are to be defined by law.

This law establishes the Local Government units, i.e. the municipalities, based on the following objectives:

- To promote institutions of a strong, legitimate and stable State throughout the territory of Timor-Leste;
- To promote opportunities for the local democratic participation of all citizens;
- To promote a more effective, efficient and equitable provision of services for the social and economic development of the country.

The current administrative jurisdictions, i.e., the present informal territorial division, which includes sub-districts and districts levels, shall be merged to form new, consolidated and efficient administrative units at the district level, with assemblies of representatives, which may provide adequate services to citizens with sufficient capacity to perform their functions.

The municipalities are being established based on the guarantee that each one of them:

- Keeps the ethno-linguistic homogeneity as well as the respective local cultural identity;
- Shows a balance between development potential and resources;
- Has an administrative centre capable of accommodating the Municipal Assembly as well as the municipal services;

- Has a minimum of population that enables it to have a certain level of efficiency in the administration and provision of services.

The establishment of democratic representation systems and procedures at the municipal level, including a reformulation of the administration as well as the establishment of measures that ensure a solid financial management shall be important elements for this reform.

Thus, pursuant to subparagraph g) of article 95.2 of the Constitution of the Republic, the National Parliament enacts the following to have the force of law:

## **CHAPTER I GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

### **Article 1 Establishment of municipalities**

The territory of Timor-Leste is divided administratively into municipalities, with each municipality comprising one local government unit, pursuant to the Constitution.

### **Article 2 Concept**

Municipalities are territorial corporate bodies vested with administrative and financial autonomy and with elected representative organs aimed at pursuing the interests of their respective populations for the benefit of national unity and local development.

### **Article 3 Border with a foreign State**

Delimitation of the borders of the municipalities on the occasion of the territorial administration division shall not imply a recognition of boundaries with a foreign State, which is to be established pursuant to the Constitution.

## **CHAPTER II MUNICIPALITIES OF TIMOR-LESTE**

**Article 4**  
**Municipalities of Timor-Leste**

1. The following are municipalities of Timor-Leste:
  - a) Aileu;
  - b) Ainaro;
  - c) Baucau;
  - d) Bobonaro;
  - e) Covalima;
  - f) Dili;
  - g) Ermera;
  - h) Lautém;
  - i) Liquiçá;
  - j) Manatuto;
  - k) Manufahi;
  - l) Oe-Cusse Ambeno;
  - m) Viqueque.
  
2. Municipalities shall be composed of the territorial area of the districts and shall be implemented in accordance with the law of local government.

**Article 3**  
**Municipality of Aileu**

The area denominated District of Aileu and the sub-districts of Aileu, Laulara, Liquidoe and Remexio, shall now constitute the Municipality of Aileu, with the administrative headquarters in Aileu.

**Article 6**  
**Municipality of Ainaro**

The area denominated District of Ainaro and the sub-districts of Hato Udo, Ainaro, Hatu Builico and Maubise shall now constitute the Municipality of Ainaro, with the administrative headquarters in Ainaro.

**Article 7**  
**Municipality of Baucau**

The area denominated District of Baucau and the sub-districts of Baguia, Baucau, Laga, Quelicai, Vemasse and Venilale shall now constitute the Municipality of Baucau, with the administrative headquarters in Baucau.

**Article 8**  
**Municipality of Bobonaro**

The area denominated District of Bobonaro and the sub-districts of Atabae, Balibó, Bobonaro, Cailaco, Lolotoe and Maliana shall now constitute the Municipality of Bobonaro, with the administrative headquarters in Maliana.

**Article 9**  
**Municipality of Covalima**

The area denominated District of Cavalima and the sub-districts of Fatalulik, Fatumea, Fohorém, Maucatar, Suai, Tilomar and Zumalai shall now constitute the Municipality of Covalima, with the administrative headquarters in Suai.

**Article 10**  
**Municipality of Dili**

The area denominated District of Dili and the sub-districts of Ataúro, Cristo-Rei, Dom ALeixo, Nain Feto, Metinaro and Vera Cruz shall now constitute the Municipality of Dili, with the administrative headquarters in Dili.

**Article 11**  
**Municipality of Ermera**

The area denominated District of Ermera and the sub-districts of Atsabe, Ermera, Hatolia, Letefoho and Railaco shall now constitute the Municipality of Ermera, with the administrative headquarters in Gleno.

**Article 12**  
**Municipality of Lautém**

The area denominated District of Lautém, the Islet of Jaco and the sub-districts of Iliomar, Lautém, Luro and Tutuala shall now constitute the Municipality of Lautém, with the administrative headquarters in Lospalos.

**Article 13**  
**Municipality of Liquiçá**

The area denominated District of Liquiçá and the sub-districts of Bazartete, Liquiçá and Maubara shall now constitute the Municipality of Liquiçá, with the administrative headquarters in Liquiçá.

**Article 14**  
**Municipality of Manatuto**

The area denominated District of Manatuto and the sub-districts of Natarbora, Lacló, Laclubar, Laleia, Manatuto and Soibada shall now constitute the Municipality of Manatuto, with the administrative headquarters in Manatuto.

**Article 15**  
**Municipality of Manufahi**

The area denominated District of Manufahi and the sub-districts of Alas, Fatuberliu, Same and Triscaí shall now constitute the Municipality of Manufahi, with the administrative headquarters in Same.

**Article 16**  
**Municipality of Oe-Cusse Ambeno**

The area denominated District of Oe-Cusse Ambeno and the sub-districts of Nítibe, Oesilo, Pante Macassar and Pássabe shall now constitute the Municipality of Oe-Cusse Ambeno, with the administrative headquarters in Pante Macassar.

2. The Municipality of Oe-Cusse Ambeno shall govern itself by a special administrative policy and economic regime to be defined by law.

**Article 17**  
**Municipality of Viqueque**

The area denominated District of Viqueque and the sub-districts of Lacluta, Ossú, Uatolari, Uatucarbau and Viqueque shall now constitute the Municipality of Viqueque, with the administrative headquarters in Viqueque.

**Article 18**  
**Capital of the Nation**

Dili shall be capital of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

**CHAPTER III**  
**ESTABLISHMENT, MODIFICATION AND EXTINCTION OF**  
**MUNICIPALITIES**

**Article 19**  
**Criteria**

The establishment, modification and extinction of municipalities shall depend on the law and shall take into account:

- a) The will of the majority of the populations covered and expressed through popular consultation;
- b) Preservation of ethno-linguistic homogeneity and local cultural identity;

- c) A balance of the potential and the resources for development;
- d) Geographical, demographic, economic, social, cultural and administrative factors;
- e) Interests of a national, regional, or local order at stake;
- f) Existence of an administrative centre that enables the establishment of municipal organs;
- g) Certification that revenues from the original municipality and the new municipality are sufficient for pursuing its attributions.

**Article 20**  
**Requirements for establishing a municipality**

The establishment of new municipalities and the maintenance of the current one shall depend on the cumulative verification of the following requirements:

- a) The number of residents in the area of the new municipality shall be higher than thirty thousand;
- b) The area of the future municipality the establishment of which is being sought shall be larger than three hundred square kilometers.

**Article 21**  
**Establishment and modification of municipalities**

1. New municipalities may be established through:
  - a) The merging of two or more municipalities;
  - b) The splitting of a municipality into two or more municipalities.
2. Municipalities may be modified by integration of a part of one municipality into another municipality.

**Article 22**  
**Initiative to modify or establish a municipality**

1. Any initiative to propose the modification or establishment of a municipality, including the respective name or administrative headquarters, may originate from:

- a) A subscription to a petition by a minimum of thirty percent of the voters of the municipality concerned;
- b) A decision by the absolute majority of the Municipal Assembly;
- c) A proposal by the Council of Ministers;
- d) A member of the National Parliament.

2. Only one initiative to modify or establish a municipality shall be admitted during the term of the municipal organs, pursuant to the municipal electoral law.

3. The initiative shall include provisions on the borders, the name of the municipality, as well as on its administrative headquarters.

4. The modification or establishment of a municipality cannot occur within the six months prior to national or municipal elections.

### **Article 23** **Municipal borders**

1. A municipality may border with more than one municipality in case it is geographically continuous is not established near the maritime border or a border with a neighbouring country.

2. It shall be incumbent upon the Government, through the organ in charge of State Administration and Territorial Planning, to make the topographic description of the borders of the municipalities delimited by this law.

### **Article 24** **Administrative headquarters**



Each municipality shall have an administrative centre which shall be located at the place with the largest number of infrastructure and population concentration.

**Article 25**  
**Regulation of criteria**

It shall be incumbent upon the Government to regulate the criteria and procedures for the establishment, modification or extinction of municipalities.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**FINAL AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 26**  
**Installation of municipalities**

It shall be incumbent upon the Government to take the necessary measures and carry out the necessary acts for the installation of the municipalities and the District Administrators to continue working in the Municipal Administration until such a time as the first Municipal Assembly is installed.

**Article 27**  
**Extinction of the current district and sub-district administrations**

1. District and sub-district administrations headquartered in the area of the respective municipalities are hereby abolished.
2. The property, the rights, the obligations as well as the personnel of the administrations are automatically transferred to the services under the organs of local government and subject to their respective reorganization.

**Article 28**  
**Organs of local government**

The organs of local government and their organization and election shall be determined by the law of the local government and by the municipal electoral law.

**Article 29**  
**Revocations**

Any legislation contrary to this law is hereby revoked.

**Article 30**  
**Entry into force**

This law shall enter into force on the day after its publication.

Approved on 10 June 2009.

The Speaker of the National Parliament *ad interim*,

**Vicente da Silva Guterres**

Promulgated on 7 /10 / 09

For publication

The President of the Republic

**Dr. José Ramos-Horta**