

**The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers and  
Official Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste  
Ágio Pereira**

**February 24, 2012  
Dili, Timor-Leste**



**Tribute to Marie Colvin**

The Prime Minister, His Excellency Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, on behalf of the Government and people of Timor-Leste extends his deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of American journalist Marie Colvin, killed on Wednesday by artillery fire in the besieged city of Homs in Syria. Marie was 56 years old.

Marie Colvin holds a special place in the hearts of the Timorese people. In 1999 she was one of three journalists, all women, who refused to leave a UN compound holding 1,500 Timorese women and children after it came under attack by militias. All of their lives were in grave danger. Her reporting in through newsprint and global television helped to avert a tragic massacre and after four tense days the group were evacuated to safety. This act of courage and solidarity has never been forgotten.

Prime Minister Gusmão said “Our sister, Marie Colvin, showed great courage in her work and a deep humanity in the face of violence and hatred. We will always remember her willingness to sacrifice her own life to protect those 1,500 Timorese in 1999. Her 30 years of journalism were motivated by a desire to uncover the truth and reveal the pain of conflict. We have lost a great one and it is with deep sadness in our hearts that we hear of her passing.” **ENDS**

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