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Díli, Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste affirms its intention to terminate the "Documents" case in the ICJ and reactivate the "Espionage" Arbitration

The Prime Minster of Timor-Leste, H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo, has affirmed today that the State intends to terminate the case concerning "Questions relating to the Seizure and Detention of Certain Documents and Data" [Timor-Leste vs. Australia] filed with the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

This decision follows the return of all the seized documents and data by Australian officials on 12 May 2015.

After defending their right to seize and hold the documents for sixteen months, the Australian Government wrote to the International Court of Justice in April this year stating that it wished to return them.

The return of the documents and data earlier this month was supervised by Timor-Leste's Ambassador to Australia H.E. Abel Guterres.

The Prime Minister also affirmed that the Government intended to reactivate the Arbitration being held under the Timor Sea Treaty registered with the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. This is the case concerning Australian espionage activities conducted during the negotiation of the CMATS Treaty.

In September 2014, Timor-Leste agreed to a request from Australia to adjourn both cases for a period of six months to allow for substantive dialogue. That six-month period elapsed in March.

Timor-Leste's expectation that the dialogue would produce a road map for structured talks on the delimitation of permanent maritime boundaries has not been met.

Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted "Timor-Leste's preference is always to avoid legal confrontation and focus all of our energy and resources on national development. However, it is also the mandate of the Government to defend the national interest. Timor-Leste is focusing on moving forward in its relationship with its neighbor to substantive dialogue to finalize a permanent maritime boundary based on the principles of International Law." **ENDS**

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