



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
RELEASE**

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Celebration of “Desluto Nacional”

Today Timor-Leste is commemorating the 16th anniversary of the outcome of the Popular Consultation. On the 4th of September 1999 the result of the 30th of August independence referendum was announced with an overwhelming 78.5% of voters declaring their desire for Timor-Leste to be an independent state. On this day the global community understood that Timor-Leste had chosen to be a free and independent country, beginning a new phase in the history and affirmation of the Timorese identity.

The day marks a new chapter in the story of Timor-Leste, a new phase of working to stop violence, end oppression, put down weapons, pursue order and stability, and mobilize the necessary means to build the Nation.

This morning a solemn mass was held at the Díli Cathedral and after traditional ceremonies, including the distribution of national mourning symbols and cultural presentations were performed at the Government Palace. Similar activities took place in each of the country's thirteen municipalities.

The ceremonies form part of a “Desluto Nacional”, a four-month period of celebration and commemoration with events taking place throughout the nation until the 31st of December, the “Day of the Heroes”, when a foundation stone will be laid for the construction of a “National Monument to those Sacrificed in the War”. This period is a time to look back on the past, recognizing the struggle, and then to look forward, to embrace the future with unity, committed to the journey of nation building and development.

Spokesperson for the Government, Minister of State Ágio Pereira reflected “Our national flag is a symbol of all these things; the red a constant reminder that the ultimate goals of independence and sovereignty could not have been achieved without sacrifice, the black and yellow a reminder that we must continue to struggle against poverty and illiteracy and to build a nation with well-educated and skillful people, and the white star a symbol that epitomizes the commitment of our nation to strive for peace, working to ensure the consolidation of long lasting peace for our people.”

A high point of this period will be the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the unilateral declaration of independence on the 28th of November and the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Portuguese at Lifau;



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both monumental events in the shaping of Timorese identity.

The Spokesperson noted “Our ancestors are watching. In this time we mourn the past and acknowledge our loss. Then we honor the struggle by moving forward, faces uplifted, unified as we develop our nation. By remembering and then pressing on together to build Timor-Leste we know that those that went before us would be proud and those to come after us can enjoy a promising future.”**ENDS**



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