



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



MEDIA RELEASE

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Government expresses support on World Press Freedom Day

The Government of Timor-Leste has expressed its support for press freedom on the occasion of [World Press Freedom Day](#), a day proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993 and celebrated around the world on the 3rd of May. This year's theme of "Critical Minds for Critical Times: media's role in advancing peaceful and just societies" connects directly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and particularly Goal 16, championed by Timor-Leste, which includes a target to "ensure public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms".

Last week the Prime Minister, H.E. D. Rui Maria de Araújo, met with the President and officials of Timor-Leste's [Press Council](#) to offer congratulations on its one-year anniversary, hear about its latest activities and discuss the role of the free and independent media as a contributor to achieving the SDGs. The independent Press Council promotes freedom of expression and the independence of the media as well as supporting the development of professional, technical and analytical skills of journalists. The Prime Minister accepted the invitation of the Press Council to participate as a keynote speaker in an International Conference themed "Promoting Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Expression in South East Asia and the Pacific" to take place on the 9-10 of May.

The Sixth Constitutional Government has encouraged the growth of the media sector and the development of its professional standards. It has also sought to improve access to Government information and is currently establishing the "[Access Regime to Official Documents](#)" which seeks to guarantee "the rights of access of interested parties, to official documents, integrated in an open Government model." This year's recently released [World Press Freedom Index](#) compiled by Reporters without Borders rates Timor-Leste as the top nation in South East Asia for "level of freedom available to journalists" with a ranking of 98 out of the 180 all countries assessed.

Spokesperson, Minister of State Agio Pereira, noted "there is no doubt that a free and independent media plays an important role in developing the just and inclusive societies at the heart of Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government of Timor-Leste continues to consider areas for improvement, is acting to facilitate access to information, and remains committed to support the development of our dynamic media sector. Today we also pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty, remembering particularly those whose lives were lost in reporting the story of our struggle for self determination." **ENDS**



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