



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS

BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER

KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

**ON THE OCCASION ON THE CEREMONY MARKING THE TRANSFER OF
EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FROM UNPOL TO THE PNTL IN THE
DISTRICT OF LAUTÉM**

14 May 2009

Lospalos

Your Excellency the Secretary of State for Security, Dr Francisco Guterres,
Your Excellency the Chief of the Defence Force, Brigadier-General Taur Matan Ruak,
Your Excellency the Commander of the PNTL, Commissioner Longuinhos Monteiro,
Your Excellency the Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Dr Atul Khare,
Your Excellency the Commander of the United Nations Police, Superintendent Luís Carrilho,
Your Excellencies the Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps,
Illustrious guests,
Officers, NCOs and Members of the PNTL,

Today is an historical day for the National Police of Timor-Leste. We are starting the gradual transfer of the executive responsibility for the internal security of the Country from the United Nations Police to the PNTL.

From now on the PNTL will be responsible for conducting police operations throughout the entire District of Lautém, with all members spread out through this administrative region reporting directly to the District Commander of the PNTL.

This is not a right we are earning, but rather a heavy load we are taking on our shoulders. We Timorese will be directly responsible for ensuring the safety of our population and assets, and this brings increased obligations to us all.

I would remind you that this is not the first time this task is transferred from UNPOL to the PNTL. In 2004, two years after Timor-Leste had its independence acknowledged by the international community, the PNTL assumed all its functions, becoming the only police force responsible for the internal security of the Country.

This is not the time or the place to reopen wounds and to go into detail regarding what went wrong. Suffice to say that the procedure was conducted in an improper manner, starting with a clear lack of preparation by the PNTL at the time to be able to comply efficiently with the mission given to it.

Negligent and rushed training, along with a police model not adjusted to the Timorese reality, were among the main reasons for failure. This failure was evidenced by the PNTL's response, or lack thereof, to the incidents that started in late April 2006.

It is usually said that History is a cycle of repetitions. And it may very well be that in most cases this expression is true. However, in this specific case, I am sure that we will prove it not to be so, because we shall not allow our Police to fail again!

We are strongly committed to reorganizing and restructuring the PNLT, providing it with greater operational capacity and discipline levels befitting its condition as enabler of the Rule of Law set in the Constitution.

I said on the occasion of the 9th Anniversary of the PNLT, celebrated last 27 March, and I will say it again here, that the Timorese Police will now have three things that are essential for its affirmation as a modern police force, respected by the community in which it is inserted, and respectful of the rights and guarantees of the citizens: a chain of command, hierarchy and discipline.

For this we have recently approved a new Organic Law, wherein these three principles are set. A Chain of Command assumes that in each command echelon the respective Commander is the sole person responsible for making decisions, which must be obeyed promptly by all staff under him or her.

Hierarchy implies the compulsiveness of every officer, NCO and member of the PNLT reporting directly to the Commander above them, without the possibility of bypassing the hierarchy without previous authorization.

Discipline means prompt and full obedience to every order and regulation issued by the chain of command in which all PNLT elements are inserted, under penalty of severe disciplinary measures, which in the most serious cases shall imply the immediate departure from the Police and the consequent return to civilian life.

Officers, NCOs and Members of the PNLT District Command in Lautém,

On your shoulders you shall bear an enormous responsibility: you will be the first to exercise in full all tasks usually attributed to a police force, and therefore all eyes shall be on your performance.

Should the PNLT District Command of Lautém fail in the mission it will be performing starting today, that will mean the failure of an entire Institution that we want to be effective and efficient. And all of us Timorese will be ashamed of your acts.

Thus I want to make you a heartfelt plea: do your job with honour, pride, honesty, competence and with permanent dedication and availability to the public cause.

From now on it is you who must perform all tasks that come your way, from the adoption of measures to prevent the occurrence of criminal acts and others, to prompt and efficient responses regarding any breach of the Law.

Nevertheless, I want to remind you that you are not alone in the field. UNPOL will continue to provide you with invaluable support, but this time this support will be limited to consultancy. UNPOL will not do your work for you, but rather advise you on the most adequate way for you to do it.

No one is born knowing everything already; in our professions, no matter how prepared we may be, we can always use an impartial and timely advice from those who have more experience than us.

Therefore I ask you to accept all help that your international colleagues wish to provide. Let us not be so arrogant as to consider ourselves the sole proprietors of truth and wisdom. Naturally you shall have the final word, and the decision will be the one your Commander makes. Let us then make it a decision based on common sense and the sharing of experiences and knowledge.

To all of you, without exception, I wish the greatest happiness and personal success in this new stage of your lives, serving the Police and the Nation.

Thank you very much.