



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH

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 OECUSSE**

30 June 2009

Oecusse

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 Deputy Commander of the PNTL, Commissioner Afonso de Jesus,
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,

My first words are for the men and women of Oecusse. This is an orderly, friendly and hospitable land, where I feel especially proud to be.

This is a land removed from the political power and inserted within another country, without geographic borders with any other part of the national territory, but a land that is nevertheless as Timorese as any other that makes up our Motherland.

This is also the land where – let no one forget it – the country that is now Timor-Leste started to be created.

I want to tell you, men and women of Oecusse, that sometimes you are forgotten by your rulers. I admit this, and I want to tell you in all sincerity that one of my concerns as Head of Government will always be the development of this entire district.

I tell you this from the bottom of my heart. This is not another one of those promises that politicians make and sometimes forget to deliver. No, this is a strong resolve by this Government to compensate this piece of Timorese land for all the neglect throughout the years.

PNTL Officers, NCOs and Members in the District of Oecussi,

Today you shall take on a new burden; the burden of responsibility for the execution of police operations in all the area under your command.

Starting today, the Oecusse PNTL will be responsible for itself in operational terms. Your colleagues from UNPOL, who up until now had been responsible for conducting all police activities in this district, shall become your advisors. They shall no longer have command responsibilities.

The main task of your colleagues from UNPOL will now be to advise you. Advising means, naturally, imparting knowledge, and this is exactly what we expect from those who are here to support us. We must be open to learn from them, and in turn they must be available to share with us the knowledge they have acquired all through their professional lives.

This is a great responsibility, but it is also an enormous challenge; the time has come for you, PNTL Officers, NCOs and Members in Oecusse, to prove that you are mature and responsible enough to take on by yourselves the tasks given to you today.

I want to remind you that we are all committed to building a new Police force. A Police force that is respected and admired by the entire population. A Police force that is considered effective and efficient by all. A police force that is acknowledged by the international community, which has given us so much support, as a case of success.

In short, we want a Police force in which every Timorese can be proud.

Let us forget the vicissitudes of the past, let us forget those not so good moments that diverted you for a while from the mission given to you, and let us give our best to enable the PNTL, in the district of Oecusse, to ensure the safety of the populations and the security of their assets; to ensure the maintenance or reestablishment of the public order; and to give prompt and effective assistance in the event of any disaster or calamity affecting the wellbeing of the populations.

Precisely one month ago I was present in the first ceremony for transferring executive responsibility from the UNPOL to the PNTL, which took place in the district of Lautém. Then, as well as now, I urged the police officers to respect the three basic principles we want to be the image of the new PNTL: chain of command, hierarchy and discipline.

Chain of command means that you must obey your commander at all times, and that it is only to him that you must report your actions.

You must not accept orders from anyone outside your chain of command.

The final decision, to be obeyed by all, is the one made by your commander and by no one else.

Hierarchy means that your entire service must be performed within a well defined echelon of command. Any requests you wish to present, whether regarding service or not, must always be referred to the echelon immediately above you.

As for discipline, I do not need to tell you what this means. You all know it. And you know that without discipline the PNTL is a weak institution. Therefore you must comply promptly with all legitimate orders given to you, enforcing them with effort, abnegation and the utmost dedication.

Orders are not discussed, murmured or even questioned. They are complied with immediately and in full.

Timor-Leste cannot afford to have a fragile Police force. The State requires a Police force that is able to deal with the security problems of the Country, and this cannot be done without discipline and cohesion. Therefore, and speaking now as your Minister, I shall tolerate no breach of discipline that might jeopardize the fulfilment of the mission of the PNTL.

I hope that all of you working here in the district of Oecusse will meet with the greatest success in the tasks that are now given to you.

Dedicate all your knowledge to the cause of public safety; be courageous and firm in all works you are required to perform; and most of all remember that if you want to be truly respected by the people you must yourselves respect the populations, their rights, freedoms and guarantees, their beliefs and their yearnings.

Do not forget that a police officer is a part of society, rather than a separate caste. You are also part of the population of this land, so respect all persons, regardless of their origin, because by respecting them you are also respecting yourselves.

And you will also be contributing towards the construction of this State.

Thank you very much