

**The Secretary of State for the Council of Ministers and  
Official Spokesperson for the Government of Timor-Leste  
Ágio Pereira**

May 20, 2010  
Dili, Timor-Leste



**Timor-Leste celebrates the 8th anniversary of the Restoration of Independence.**

Today marks the eighth anniversary of the restoration of the sovereignty and independence of Timor-Leste. After 24 years of struggle against illegal occupation and three years of United Nations administration, democratic self-governance was established on May 20, 2002.

Many events have taken place today to commemorate this special day remembering the past and embracing the future. A day of thanksgiving, reflection and honoring those who sacrificed in the struggle fighting for liberation.

Ceremonies began yesterday with a special Mass in the Dili Cathedral, Vila Verde. Early this morning the President of the Republic, H.E. Dr. José Ramos-Horta, along with H.E. Mr. Fernando Lasama de Araujo, the President of the National Parliament and H.E. Mr. Claudio Ximenes, President of the High Court, welcomed the Armed Forces at the Presidential Palace, followed by an inspection of the troupes, the raising of the Flag, the presenting of arms and a proper Homage to the Heroes that fell for their Nation. The President of the Republic gave a speech.

The "Princess Grace Medal Ceremony" hosted by the National Parliament took place after lunch where medals were awarded to Timorese in recognition of their humanitarian work. In the late afternoon a Flag Lowering Ceremony was held at the Presidential palace.

On 22 May, there will be an evening concert for the public with performances by Timorese artists at the Government Palace.

The Prime Minister, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, is celebrating Independence Day with the people of the of Same sub-district in the foothills of Timor-Leste's mountainous country on the southern side of the island. Prime Minister Gusmão is in the middle of a visit to all districts of Timor-Leste to consult with the people on the national Strategic Development Plan.

Spokesperson for the Government, Ágio Pereira noted "From the shores of Dili to the rugged country of the Same sub district, from the eastern tip of Jaco Island to our western borders and Oecusse, we look to our past recognizing the sacrifices and efforts it took to gain our liberty and to restore the independence which we enjoy today. As we look to the future with determination, hope and confidence, we can be thankful for the independent and sovereign Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. **ENDS**

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