

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

**August 23, 2011
Díli, Timor-Leste**



**Two Nations in South East Asia demonstrate historic show of
Reconciliation a little over a decade since war ended**

Over 60 Indonesian delegates including Generals, members of the army, Government officials, veterans and VIP's stood side by side with their counter-parts from the small nation of Timor-Leste during a historic ceremony to mark the demobilization of FALINTIL, some 236 surviving Timorese resistance veterans who led the country to independence through a 24 year war of national liberation. Each surviving veteran whom had served between 15 to 24 years submitted their weapons from the war period and received highest honours for valour and service to country.

Following the ceremony the Republic of Indonesia handed over the uniform, personal belongings and weapons carried by the leader of Timorese national resistance, Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, when he was arrested and imprisoned in 1992. His Excellency Xanana Gusmão, former President of Timor-Leste and current Prime Minister, wept as he turned these belongings over to the State of Timor-Leste to be archived in remembrance of the Timorese who lost their lives in the struggle for independence. This was a historic moment marking the moment where the living heroic guerrilla fighters of Timor-Leste reaffirmed their commitment to the transformation of the nation into a sovereign state embracing the new challenges inherent in nationbuilding.

Delegates from Indonesia as well as Australia, Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, S. Tomé e Príncipe and Singapore, along with other regional neighbours came to share the momentous occasion; noting the symbolic nature of reconciliation between States that had a historic past of violence and conflict and have worked successfully over the last decade in the spirit of good faith and regional partnership to promote tolerance, concord and national development.

Prime Minister Gusmão noted the moment was a humbling lesson in reconciliation for all nations that have survived war and thanked all the men and women of FALINTIL for their years of strength, dedication and courage in their service to the nation and people. He emphasised that the he and the nation hold dear the memory of those who did not survive the struggle in pursuit of freedom with grateful hearts.

The Prime Minister also thanked Indonesia and all the nations for their support and attendance at the ceremony in celebrating the veterans of Timor-Leste. **ENDS**

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