

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

**March 6, 2012
Díli, Timor-Leste**



A loss for the Country and the People of Timor-Leste

It was with deep sadness and dismay that the Government of Timor-Leste learned of the passing of His Excellency Mr Francisco Xavier do Amaral, the first President of Timor-Leste and the Proclaimer of the Nation's Independence. On behalf of the Government, His Excellency the Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão presents heartfelt condolences to family, friends and colleagues.

Francisco Xavier do Amaral was born in Turiscai, Manufahi, in 1937. In 1974 he founded ASDT, which led to FRETILIN, a party he also founded. On 28 November 1975 he proclaimed, on behalf of the FRETILIN Central Committee, the Independence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, becoming its first President of the Republic.

Xavier do Amaral went on to be replaced by Nicolau Lobato, following the Indonesian invasion on 7 December 1975. Subsequently he was arrested by the invading country and was taken to Jakarta, spending long years working forcibly in the country of the occupying force.

He was a Member of Parliament since 2001, having been appointed Deputy Speaker of Parliament in 2002. He was always dedicated and steadfast in his ideals to contribute to the development of the country, being a presidential candidate in the elections to be held in March 17 of the current year.

Both during the fight for independence and later, when building a sovereign and independent State, Francisco Xavier do Amaral was always a man of courage, who fought for the principles of democracy and for the dignity of the Timorese.

Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão stated "Today we have lost a historic figure of our country, who dedicated his life to serving the People of Timor-Leste and who gave his very best to help building and strengthening our Nation. Our People are in mourning for the loss of the Proclaimer and the first President of the Republic. Our thoughts and prayers go to his family, friends and Party colleagues and supporters. In this difficult time we would like to convey to them our heartfelt condolences."

The Government of Timor-Leste has approved today a resolution declaring three days of National Mourning, due to the passing of the Proclaimer of Independence." **ENDS**

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