



**P R I M E
M I N I S T E R**

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AWARDING OF THE TIMOR-LESTE AND
UNITED NATIONS SOLIDARITY MEDALS TO GNR'S DETACHMENT
BRAVO**

Dili, 30 October 2012



Palácio do Governo,
Avenida Presidente Nicolau Lobato,
Dili, Timor-Leste

Your Excellency the Speaker of Parliament,
Your Excellency the Prosecutor-General of the Republic,
Your Excellencies, Members of Government
Your Excellency the Commander-General of PNTL,
Your Excellency the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency the Commander of UNPOL,
Your Excellencies the Ambassadors of Portugal and Brazil,
Your Excellency the Operational Commander of GNR,
Distinguished Guests,
Soldiers of the National Republican Guard,

My presence here today at this ceremony to award the Timor-Leste and United Nations Solidary Medals to the soldiers of the GNR's Detachment Bravo is more than a simple courtesy – it is my duty.

In 2006, when we were momentarily faced with the lack of means to maintain public order, Portugal was one of the countries that stood ready to provide personnel, at whatever cost.

The decision to give the National Republican Guard the noble task of coming to the assistance of their Timorese brothers and sisters proved to be a wise one.

We have no doubt that it was only thanks to the energetic and efficient support provided by members of the GNR during the troubled period of 2006 that public order could be restored without the loss of many lives. Throughout that period, the GNR soldiers never displayed any fear of the violence around them. On the contrary, they proved their mettle and their courage at all times.

Once social peace was attained, without having to resort to excessive violence, the GNR began to ensure crime prevention. This was done by way of efficient and ongoing patrolling, maintaining constant contact with the population.

In addition to their operational activities, the GNR soldiers provided proper training to the Special Police Unit. More recently, they also ensured basic training for new PNTL recruits.

I must also highlight the remarkable work they have done in terms of organizing special events, particularly in the areas of sports and culture, wherein they manage to actively involve the community. The GNR soldiers have also participated in humanitarian actions, focusing on the provision of support to young people and populations living in more remote areas.

As such, we Timorese are deeply thankful to the National Republican Guard for the work you have done here. And this is why I am here today, at this final public ceremony involving Detachment Bravo, so that I may express the appreciation of an entire People for all that you have done for us.

Dear General Mourato Caldeira,

Please convey to the Commander-General, who you represent today, and to the entire GNR family, our appreciation and gratitude for the remarkable work you have done for Timor-Leste and its People.

Kindly convey as well that we are firmly committed to continuing to cooperate with the GNR, now exclusively within a bilateral framework, so that you may continue to provide training to our police officers.

In September of last year, during my official visit to Portugal, I signed a cooperation agreement for internal security with His Excellency the Minister of Internal Administration. I also expressed to him, in person, my wish that the GNR may remain in Timor-Leste after the end of the United Nations' mission.

Previously, the Commanders-General of the GNR and the PNTL had signed a cooperation protocol focusing on the training of Timorese police officers.

Tomorrow we will have the official ceremonies marking the end of the operational activities of the ISF and UNPOL. This is a landmark for the Timorese Nation, as it signals the moment when we become once more a fully sovereign country, without the need for external support.

The Timor-Leste Defence and Security Forces are now able to successfully perform the mission given to them in the Constitution. They will only continue to need support in the area of training.

This is the type of cooperation we need to arrange with the GNR, so that we can determine as soon as possible the type and composition of the GNR force that will remain in Timor-Leste. This will enable the GNR soldiers to continue to share with their Timorese comrades the knowledge and experience they have acquired during a professional life dedicated to the public cause.

I cannot conclude without a word to honour the GNR soldiers who passed away during the mission they performed with such dedication. Second Lieutenant Daniel João Varela Simões and Warrant Officer Manuel Almeida Marques gave their lives because they believed in one of the most noble and heartfelt values there is: that of helping your fellow man and woman.

This is why they came to Timor-Leste, so that they might make a small contribution to help their Timorese brothers and sisters. This contribution turned out to be their very lives. May they rest in peace; we will never forget them.

I thank all GNR soldiers who were part of the thirteen contingents that contributed to improve the security of the people in Timor-Leste.

I also wish a happy return and the greatest personal and professional success to all those who will be leaving soon for Portugal.

Thank you very much.