



**PRIME
MINISTER**

Dili, 6 December 2013

Excellency,

It is with great sadness that I write on the passing of a great hero, Nelson Mandela.

On behalf of the Government and the People of Timor-Leste, I extend our deepest condolences. Nelson Mandela's contribution to freedom for his people will never be forgotten. His fearless pursuit of a non-racial and democratic South Africa – even when it seemed impossible – leaves our world with a remarkable legacy. His optimism impacted me, personally, during my country's brutal occupation by Indonesia, and he indeed served as a moral compass for leaders across the world during the uncertainties and tragedies of the Cold War.

In Timor-Leste, Nelson Mandela was widely admired during our struggle for the restoration of our independence. I had the privilege of being visited by him during my incarceration at Cipanang Prison in Jakarta, a meeting which lifted my spirits immensely. I was guided by his unyielding fight for justice and his humility; and our people gained much needed clarity and strength from his example, often during our darkest moments.

In particular, I studied Nelson Mandela's call for his people to forget past differences and unite together. After we achieved the restoration of our sovereignty as a nation in 2002, as President I embarked on establishing a process of healing based on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The result of this exhaustive, often painful, nation-wide process was the exposure of past tragedies and injustices. We knew from South Africa's example that we could not rebuild our society without facing the past and encouraging people to forgive. This process led to the consolidation of peace and it laid the brickwork for the foundation of our democracy.

Our people and will not ever forget Nelson Mandela's contribution to world peace. The prayers of our people are with members of his family at this time and, indeed, with his wider family – the South Africans.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration and respect.



Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

**HIS EXCELLENCY
JACOB ZUMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRETORIA**



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