



## SPOKESPERSON V CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



## MEDIA RELEASE

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Dili, Timor-Leste

### **Prime Minister to receive Indonesia's highest medal of Honour on Friday**

The President of Indonesia, H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, is to present the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, H.E. Kay RalaXanana Gusmão with the Indonesia Medal of Honour during the Prime Minister's working visit to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Bali Democracy Forum.

The 'Bintang Republik Indonesia Adipurna' is Indonesia's highest medal of honour and will be presented in consideration of the Prime Minister's role as a Founding Father of Timor-Leste, as President 2002-2007 and as Prime Minister since 2007, in 'promoting the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Timor-Leste based on the principles of mutual respect, good neighbourly relations and mutual benefit.'

This award and the friendly relationship it honours is a testament to the extraordinary journey of both the Prime Minister and the nation of Timor-Leste.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1992 after 17 years of guerilla warfare Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão was captured by Indonesian forces and held as a political prisoner in Cipinang Prison. He was transferred under house arrest to Central Jakarta on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1999 and after the UN Sponsored referendum of 30<sup>th</sup> of August 1999 was finally released from Indonesian custody on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1999.

With independence restored, as President of Timor-Leste, Gusmão led a strategic policy of national reconciliation. He recalled recently "We wanted to achieve peace since without peace we could not feel free." Then in 2005 he took the initiative to establish the Commission of Truth and Friendship [CTF] Indonesia-Timor-Leste. The Commission's report, endorsed by both Presidents Gusmão and Yudhoyono was presented in July of 2008. It is still notable for being the first modern truth commission to be bilateral.

Only last month at the United Nations General Assembly in New York Prime Minister Gusmão noted:

"We have embraced Indonesia in order to achieve true and genuine reconciliation. Instead of feeding hatred and vengeance, we nurtured solidarity and tolerance between our communities. In this manner, we cultivated a sound relationship of cooperation between our States and our Peoples."



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The award ceremony, to be held in the Bougainville Room of the Bali International Convention Centre on Friday afternoon will include speeches by the President of Indonesia and the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste.

Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão returns to Díli when the Bali Democracy Forum concludes. **ENDS**



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