



## SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA  
RELEASE**

Dili, 19 August, 2015

### **Commemoration of 40 years of FALINTIL**

Celebrations are taking place this week that will culminate in special events on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup> of August when the Nation observes FALINTIL Day, this year commemorating 40 years since the formation of the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste.

Timor-Leste's resistance army fought for 24 years in the difficult struggle for freedom, a small and ill-equipped army without any external military support, against a giant and its allies. With great courage and against all odds FALINTIL soldiers maintained a persistent guerrilla campaign until the people of Timor-Leste were able to vote in the 1999 referendum on independence.

Reflecting on FALINTIL's impact, last year former Commander H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão noted "the sun rises every day over a free Timor-Leste because of the sacrifices of the combatants of national liberation and the martyrs that fell to make possible our dream of independence. We must never lose sight of this history and we must continue to honour their sacrifice and achievement."

In the lead up to Thursday events have included a series of sporting events, memorial walks, night vigils and a ceremony remembering the "Declaration of Armed Insurgency". This morning a conference on FALINTIL will be held at the Dili Convention Centre and in the afternoon a memorial Mass will be celebrated at 4:00pm at the Dili Cathedral.

The principal ceremony on FALINTIL Day will take place at Tasi Tolu beginning with a military parade at 8:30am. Eminent dignitaries of Timor-Leste will be joined by international guests including Australian veterans and officials along with representatives of veterans from g7+ countries including South Sudan, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau. Australian veterans have been invited in the context of an ongoing relationship of friendship and solidarity that has been examining ways to support veterans and memorialize the struggle and sacrifice of the people.

The President of the Republic, H.E. Taur Matan Ruak will speak at the ceremony in Tasi Tolu where there will be events marking the decoration, promotion and retirement of F-FDTL cadre, the presentation of commemorative plaques and a symbolic presentation of Special Identification Cards to Veterans involved for between 15 and 24 years of the struggle. Former Commander in Chief, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, will be awarded the highest medal of Timor-Leste, the Order of the Guerrilla.



**Ágio Pereira**

+670 77045002

[agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl](mailto:agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl)

[govtmedia@gmail.com](mailto:govtmedia@gmail.com)

[www.timor-leste.gov.tl](http://www.timor-leste.gov.tl)



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On Friday morning a final event will occur at the Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance when a ground breaking ceremony will be undertaken for the “Eternal Flame”, a memorial being developed as a poignant focal point honoring those lost in the struggle.

Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State Ágio Pereira noted “we are forever grateful for the sacrifices and achievements of those that have gone before us. On FALINTIL day we look back to remember, to honor and to pay our respects. Then we look forward, more inspired to serve our country, to walk with dignity and work toward a peaceful and prosperous Timor-Leste, always conscious of what those who lost their lives for our freedom expect from us.” **ENDS**



**Ágio Pereira**

+670 77045002

[agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl](mailto:agio.pereira@cdm.gov.tl)

[govtlmedia@gmail.com](mailto:govtlmedia@gmail.com)

[www.timor-leste.gov.tl](http://www.timor-leste.gov.tl)