



## SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



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### **Inaugural Veterans Conference to be held this week**

For the first time ever a Conference of the Veterans and Combatants of the National Liberation is to be held in Timor-Leste. Hosted by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Conference will commence this week on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March and conclude on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, a day proposed as Veterans Day in Timor-Leste.

Veterans and Combatants of the National Liberation will be participating including the Senior Cadres of the Armed Front. They will be joined by the cadres of the Clandestine Front of the Resistance and the Diplomatic Front of the Resistance along with mass organizations, women's organizations and youth organizations of the Resistance. Participants will travel from all over Timor-Leste to join their comrades with others flying in from Darwin, Sydney Melbourne, Macau, the United Kingdom, Mozambique and Portugal. Over 400 people are expected to attend.

The Governor General of Australia and former Commander of INTERFET, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, MC (Retd), will attend the final day of the Conference along with Mr. R D White AM RFD, State President of the Returned Services League of Australia (New South Wales Branch) representing the National President of the Returned Services League, and a representative of the National President of the War Widows Guild. The Returned Services League and War Widows Guild have supported and assisted Timor-Leste veterans in the process of establishing a national veterans organization.

The Conference will consider important issues for the veteran community such as the process of Registration of the Veterans and the content of the draft Decree Law on the Establishment of the Council of Combatants of National Liberation. In keeping with the Veterans deep interest in the progress of the Nation they fought so hard to liberate, other areas of discussion will be matters of "National Interest" including stability and development.

The draft Decree Law on the Establishment of the Council of Combatants of National Liberation proposes the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March as National Veterans Day. In doing so it recognizes the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1981, a day which marked the beginning of the reorganization of the resistance, a milestone in the struggle which occurred at one of the most difficult periods in the fight for National Freedom.

Spokesperson for the Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted "this conference is an important



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step to honor, serve and engage the combatants who fought for the liberation of our country. As well as being a monumental and moving reunion the gathering will enable important discussions to be conducted that will shape the organization and functions of our veteran community. At this time we pay our respects to all who in their various ways contributed to the struggle so that today we can live in peace in a free and independent Timor-Leste." **ENDS**



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