



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
RELEASE**

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Gordon McIntosh visits Dili for Veterans Day

At the invitation of the Government of Timor-Leste former Australian Government Senator and champion for Timorese self-determination, Gordon McIntosh, is visiting Dili to participate in activities surrounding Veterans Day, celebrated today, the 3rd of March 2016.

Mr. McIntosh, now in his 90's, travelled to Timor in 1983 as part of the first Australian Parliamentary delegation to visit what was then Indonesian occupied Timor-Leste. After the trip Senator McIntosh wrote a dissenting report on the delegations findings, effectively neutralizing attempts to show that the situation in 'East Timor' was no longer a significant political issue. His petitioning of the United Nations Decolonization Committee in 1982 was crucial in keeping Timor on the list of the Committee and his various activities over many years made a major contribution to the cause of self-determination.

Mr. McIntosh's trip to Dili this week follows the discovery of a letter last year that has remained missing for 27 years. The ten-page letter was typed in 1988 by Commander in Chief Xanana Gusmão and sent to Mr. McIntosh via resistance cadres based in Australia.

The letter is a detailed history and update of the struggle for self-determination and criticizes the Australian Government of the day as being motivated by a desire to "safeguard the economic interests of Australia at the expense of principles that befit a democratic country" and observes that "everything suggests that Australian policy towards Timor-Leste was determined by the Indonesian offer of joint exploration of the Timor Gap."

It is noteworthy that Minister Gusmão released the letter publically in Dili last Monday, the same day that he officiated in the launch of Timor-Leste's Maritime Boundary Office website. During the launch, Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo expressed his "regret" in the current lack of progress with the Government of Australia in regards to the delimitation of Timor-Leste and Australia's maritime boundaries under international law. The Prime Minister reconfirmed that it is Timor-Leste's national priority "to delimit our maritime boundaries as part of our struggle to reach full sovereignty."

During this visit it is planned that Mr. McIntosh will meet the man who as a young boy, at risk to his own life, collided with the Senator's delegation in 1983 on Atauro Island, in order to secretly pass a note listing the



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names of political prisoners being detained and tortured.

Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted “it is a great honor for the Government of Timor-Leste to host the visit of former Senator Gordon McIntosh. He is amongst friends today as he participates in the Veterans Conference and will be greeted by many of the veterans as “Ulun Tos” a name affectionately bestowed upon him in the 1980’s by Falintil guerillas who admired his “stubbornness” and “hard headedness” in not accepting the views of his colleagues visiting in 1983. The former senator was awarded the Order of Timor-Leste in 2014 for his efforts towards Timor-Leste’s self determination and it an honor to have him attend the events of Veterans Day today.”**ENDS**



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