



PRIME
MINISTER

**SPEECH BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER
KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE
25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL POLICE OF TIMOR-LESTE**

Government Palace

27 March 2025

Your Excellency the President of the National Parliament
Your Excellency the President of the Court of Appeal

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Members of Parliament and
Members of Government

Your Excellency the Chief of the Defence Force and Chief of Staff of
the F-FDTL

Esteemed Guests from the Diplomatic Corps and Civil Society
Honoured Guests from Foreign Police Forces and the Portuguese
National Republican Guard (GNR)

Your Excellency the General Commander of the National Police of
Timor-Leste

Commanders of Units and Heads of Departments
Officers, Sergeants, Agents, and Civil Staff of the PNTL,

It is with pride and honour that I join you in celebrating the 25th
Anniversary of the National Police of Timor-Leste – an institution that stands
as a cornerstone of the country's security and stability.

To all members of the PNTL, I extend my heartfelt congratulations!
This is a unique opportunity to recognise and thank you for your
professionalism and unwavering dedication to the people of Timor-Leste.

Today, 27 March 2025, we not only mark the anniversary of your
institution, but also a historic moment of institutional transformation.

As you know, the PNTL was established in the early days of our nation-
building process, even before the official restoration of independence. Since
then, this institution has overcome obstacles, crises and exceptional
challenges – day after day, year after year.

Much like other institutions of our nation, the National Police rose from the ashes to become what it is today: a fundamental pillar of democracy, at the service of the people!

This process of assuming ever greater responsibility for national security and stability has not been without its growing pains. However, despite the many challenges faced, we can count even more successes.

Today, therefore, is not only a celebration of another year of existence, but also of an entire legacy of perseverance and maturity in the service delivered by PNTL members to all Timorese.

Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guests,

The PNTL has played a vital role in maintaining public order, ensuring that we may live in safe and peaceful communities. This steadfast commitment to public security commands our deepest respect.

The promotions we witness today represent not only this sentiment, but also a duty of the State. They reflect the Government's commitment to fostering an institutional culture that values courage, sacrifice, discipline and dedicated service, ensuring the continued strengthening of the institutional capacity of our police force.

These promotions, as provided for in the relevant Statutes, aim to correct historical imbalances, strengthen the command structure, recognise extraordinary contributions and acknowledge leadership demonstrated during difficult times.

The process culminating today represents an unprecedented national effort: over 2,763 police officers promoted, thus profoundly transforming the structure of the PNTL.

This generational transformation will help forge a more capable and professional security force, guided by fundamental values such as hierarchy, discipline and integrity.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight that the entire promotion process followed rigorous criteria, under the supervision of a commission free from any political or social influence (that is, from martial arts groups). It was a process based on the participation of all PNTL members, thereby ensuring full transparency and meritocracy in every decision.

These promotions honour different forms of service to the nation, including seniority and experience, participation in the struggle for independence and institutional loyalty during the 2006–2008 crisis, when these PNTL members stood firm in the face of threats to the very existence of the institution, risking their lives to protect the people, the symbols and the sovereign bodies of the nation.

Accordingly, and as part of our ongoing commitment to excellence, this renewal of the hierarchical structure provides a significant strengthening of command and leadership with transformative effects.

Transformative, because we must not only ensure continuity in service delivery but also address shortcomings, particularly through the transmission of core values and practices to the new generation of police officers.

This generational progression provides meaningful consolidation of the senior command and leadership structure. The institution now counts among its ranks a cadre of officers and middle management who possess extensive experience and deep institutional knowledge, which are essential elements for ensuring professional service delivery and discipline.

And yet, promotions represent not merely recognition but also increased responsibilities. The newly promoted officers and sergeants are

now entrusted with the mission of leading by example and raising the standards of professionalism within the PNTL.

The significant expansion of the command structure now allows for the implementation of long-overdue operational reforms, enhancing response capacity across the entire national territory.

Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that today marks not the conclusion of a process, but the beginning of a new era for the PNTL.

An era in which a renewed and strengthened command structure ensures greater preparedness to face institutional and national challenges, including those arising from our integration into organisations such as ASEAN and other multilateral bodies.

An era that brings improvements in planning capacity, training and resource management, adapted to a rapidly changing world where challenges evolve in unpredictable ways.

And an era of better crime prevention and enforcement, contributing to increased public trust in democratic institutions, not only through protection and assistance to citizens, but through the steadfast safeguarding of human rights.

The country requires not only that the PNTL promotes the well-being of its citizens, but also that it draws closer to the people of Timor-Leste and to those who, though not Timorese, reside in our country.

Let me remind you, however, that the PNTL does not act alone! Its effectiveness, and our national security, depend on the coordinated efforts of the State, the Government, and the Defence and Security Forces, in accordance with the law and the Constitution.

Moreover, the collaboration of local communities and leaderships is vital to everyone's security. In a spirit of partnership, we must build mutual trust so that all may work together for peace and prosperity in our country.

And speaking of partnership, I must express my appreciation to the donor countries and friends who have been indispensable in international cooperation since the PNTL was created.

Today, we are also celebrating these bonds of historic cooperation that have enabled us to develop and empower our police forces.

I am particularly grateful for the GNR's presence at these celebrations and endorse the award. For 25 years, the GNR has contributed to peace and stability in the country and to the training of our security forces.

The Australian Government has also supported the PNTL to strengthen its skills and capacity through the Timor-Leste Police Development Program which has been operating for over 20 years now.

Timor-Leste is also grateful to New Zealand for its support to the PNTL through the Community Policing Support Programme.

In conclusion, I hope that the insignia awarded today serve not only as symbols of recognition for past achievements, but also as solemn commitments to a future defined by excellence, integrity, discipline, and dedication to the Timorese people.

I urge you to continue being a source of pride to your communities and families. Continue to inspire all Timorese in building a peaceful, tolerant and prosperous society – the dream we have shared for over 25 years.

Long live the PNTL! Long live Timor-Leste!

Thank you very much.

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão