

Timorese protesters demand 'good faith' from Australia over oil dispute

By **PMC Editor** - February 24, 2016



Timor-Leste protesters at a rally organised by the Movimentu Counter Okupasaun Tasi Timor - Mkott (Movement Against the Occupation of Timor Sea) in Dili yesterday demanding "respect" of international law from Australia over the maritime border between the two countries. Image: MKOTT

Protesters rallied outside the Australian Embassy in the Timor-Leste capital of Dili yesterday, demanding Canberra come to the table “in good faith” to end a long-running dispute over major oil and gasfields in the Timor Sea.

Hundreds of protesters, including students, activists and former resistance fighters, gathered peacefully outside the diplomatic mission to urge Australia to “respect East Timor sovereignty”, said rally organiser

Juvinal Dias.

“We are asking Australia to negotiate the maritime boundary based on good faith,” Dias said.

The Movimentu Counter Okupasaun Tasi Timor – Mkott (Movement Against the Occupation of Timor Sea) is calling for “respect” by Australia over the border according to sea international maritime law.

Ties between the neighbours have soured since Timor-Leste took Australia to the International Court of Justice to settle a dispute over the maritime boundaries governing lucrative undersea oil and gas reserves.

The half-island nation, which has a sluggish economy heavily dependent on oil and gas, wants a treaty which was signed in 2006 and set the maritime borders to be torn up. It claims Australia spied on ministers to gain commercial advantage.

The protesters want permanent maritime boundaries drawn up along the “median line” between Australia and East Timor, Dias said.

He urged Australia to abandon its “invalid” claim in the Timor Sea and promised further rallies if it refused to negotiate.

The 2006 treaty was signed between Canberra and Dili, four years after East Timor won independence following years of brutal Indonesian occupation.

In Australia, the Timor Sea Justice Campaign is planning a similar demonstration in Canberra next month — on March 24.



“Advance Australia ‘fair’, Mr Turnbull” message from the Timor-Leste protesters to the Australian PM. Image: La’o Hamutuk



MKOTT protesters call for "respect for Timor-Leste sovereignty" by Canberra. Image: MKOTT

Protesters in Dili want Australia to settle oil dispute with Timor-Leste

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