

MOVIMENTU KONTRA OKUPASAUN TASI TIMOR (MKOTT)

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Press Release

Timor-Leste Government should use the Celebration of 20 Years after the Referendum to Call for Freedom for Bernard Collaery and “Witness K”

Movimentu Kontra Okupasaun Tasi Timor, MKOTT, wishes to congratulate the government of Timor-Leste, who have declared, via the Chief Negotiator for Maritime Boundaries, Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, that they will ratify the Maritime Boundary Treaty with Australia before 30 August 2019. MKOTT is pleased as MKOTT has called many times for the Parliaments of Australia and Timor-Leste to ratify the treaty that was signed in March 2018.

The struggle that united all of us is nearing a victorious conclusion. We appreciate that, on the same day, the people of Timor-Leste will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the day when they exercised their right to decide the destiny of their country.

“MKOTT Wishes to call on the VIII Constitutional Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak to do everything within its power to realize this ratification”, a representative of MKOTT states.

MKOTT would like to remind the people of Timor-Leste that the 30 August 1999 referendum came about because of our struggle by the armed front, the clandestine front and the diplomatic front. However, MKOTT would also like to recall that the United Nations came to conduct the referendum in Timor-Leste, partly due to support from solidarity movements around the world.

While the people of Timor-Leste prepare to celebrate this important event, MKOTT appeals to the Prime Minister and the VIII Constitutional Government to seize this opportunity to express the solidarity of the people of Timor-Leste with a dear friend of ours, Mr. Bernard Collaery and “Witness K” who are facing judicial prosecution and threat of imprisonment in Australia for telling the truth.

Bernard Collaery, an Australian lawyer, contributed greatly to Timor-Leste’s struggle for independence. After independence, Bernard Collaery was part of the international legal team that represented Timor-Leste in disputes with Australian government at the international court.

A legal client of Bernard Collaery, known only as “Witness K”, blew the whistle on the espionage activities that the Australian government carried out against our negotiating team during the negotiations for the CMATS Treaty in 2004. It was this truth that the government of Timor-Leste used as evidence that obliged the Australian government to come to the table and negotiate a permanent maritime boundary with Timor-Leste.

“Bernard Collaery’s contribution to the maritime boundary treaty which Timor-Leste and Australia are to ratify this coming 30 August is immense.”

“Therefore, the State and People of Timor-Leste must not forget this dear friend of ours. The State and the People of Timor-Leste should not let our dear friend Bernard Collaery be imprisoned merely for telling the truth in defense of Timor-Leste’s rights according to international law.”