



Xanana Gusmao shares his joy with the beloved people of Timor-Leste after the Maritime Boundaries negotiations

TIMOR GAP, E.P.

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MARITIME BOUNDARIES

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On September 4th, the People of Timor-Leste mobilized en masse to welcome Timor-Leste's Chief Negotiator for Maritime Boundaries, H. E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, and expressed their gratitude and joy for the work done towards a permanent maritime boundary and the Sunrise gas development.

The latest round of maritime boundary negotiations between Timor-Leste and Australia took place in Copenhagen with the Conciliation Commission, between August 28th and September 1st. The Permanent Court of Arbitration shared information about the process in a press release dated September 1st, announcing that the two nations have reached agreement about the central elements of delimiting their maritime boundary in the Timor Sea. While the specifics of the agreement between Timor-Leste and Australia remain confidential until October, Xanana Gusmão's triumphant return to Timor-Leste anticipate a positive and advantageous outcome for the country and its future generations.

Both countries commended the agreement, with Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, H.E. Julie Bishop, calling it a "landmark day" and thanking the Commission for "bringing the parties together". The Minister of State and Council of Ministers and one of the members of Timor-Leste's negotiation team, H.E. Ágio Pereira, expressed pride and a great satisfaction with the success of the conciliation process, stating that "Timor-Leste and Australia have set a positive example for the international community at large".

In 2006 the CMATS treaty was signed between Timor-Leste and Australia, establishing a framework for the joint development of the Greater Sunrise oil & gas field (at one time estimated to be worth US\$40 billion) and putting a moratorium on permanent boundary maritime delimitation. In April 2015, Timor-Leste initiated UN Compulsory Conciliation (UNCC) proceedings under Annex V of UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to assist in resolving the long-running dispute. Despite the non-binding nature of the conciliation, both states have entered talks in good faith. As part of the 'confidence building measures' that emerged from the meetings held in Singapore, both states agreed to terminate the 2006 Treaty on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS).

As a result of the conciliation process, both nations have finally resolved their bitter and longstanding dispute over maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea. This agreement will enable the goal of Timor-Leste in bringing the planned pipeline to the south coast and its mega development project, Tasi Mane.

Timor-Leste's Chief Negotiator Gusmao said the "dream of full sovereignty" by settling on a boundary with Australia had been achieved.

