



PRIME
MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE,
DR RUI MARIA DE ARAÚJO,
AT THE ORDER OF TIMOR-LESTE MEDAL AWARD CEREMONY**

Dili
23 May 2017

Your Excellencies

The Former President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Dr José Ramos-Horta

Fellow Government Members

Dear friend António “Tony” Cabral

Veterans of the Struggle for National Liberation

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank Congressman António “Tony” Cabral for making the trip to Timor-Leste. We are very happy to receive him in our country and I am very pleased to see him again. We had last been together in the United States of America.

Being an act of public recognition, the attribution of an honorary title is always a cause for joy both for the person receiving the title and for the person awarding it.

The “Order of Timor-Leste” is the most prestigious and dignified award granted by the nation, seeking to “recognise and thank those nationals or foreigners who, by way of their conduct or acts, have made a significant contribution to benefitting the country, the Timorese or Mankind.” (Article 2.1 of Decree-Law no. 20/2009).

We were fortunate to have the support of a few US Representatives during our struggle, whose influence was vital in supporting our cause. Being of Portuguese descent, Member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives António “Tony” Cabral has a long history of support to Timor-Leste, including during our struggle for independence.

He was tireless in advocating the rights and freedoms of the Timorese people at the highest level in the United States of America. As stated in the Presidential Decree, it was he who led the submission of legislation to the Massachusetts Legislature sanctioning companies and businesses in or with the Republic of Indonesia in the late 1990’s.

At that time, the courage, commitment and determination of António “Tony” Cabral were crucial for encouraging an international resolution to the Timor-Leste crisis.

Although it is true that the independence of Timor-Leste was only possible thanks to the determination and resilience of the Timorese People, the support by our friends and partners throughout the world was instrumental in changing the course of events in Timor-Leste in favour of independence.

Since then, “Tony” Cabral has continued to be a good friend, working to promote peace and stability both in Timor-Leste and in the region. His efforts towards the democratic consolidation and the development of Timor-Leste, including the strengthening of friendship

and cooperation relations between the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the United States of America, deserve to be recognised by the State of Timor-Leste.

As such, and by way of Presidential Decree no. 8/2017 of 22 February, His Excellency Taur Matan Ruak, then President of the Republic, awarded the Medal of the Order of Timor-Leste to our friend António “Tony” Cabral, whom we are very happy to receive in Dili.

Being unable to be here today, His Excellency Former President of the Republic Taur Matan Ruak designated me to bestow the Medal of the Order of Timor-Leste upon the illustrious Representative António “Tony” Cabral.

Thus, it is with great pleasure that I have bestowed upon our dear friend António “Tony” Cabral the Medal of the Order of Timor-Leste for his tireless contribution to our struggle for independence.

Thank you very much. Once again, I welcome you to Timor-Leste and trust you will have an enjoyable stay.

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo
23 May 2017