

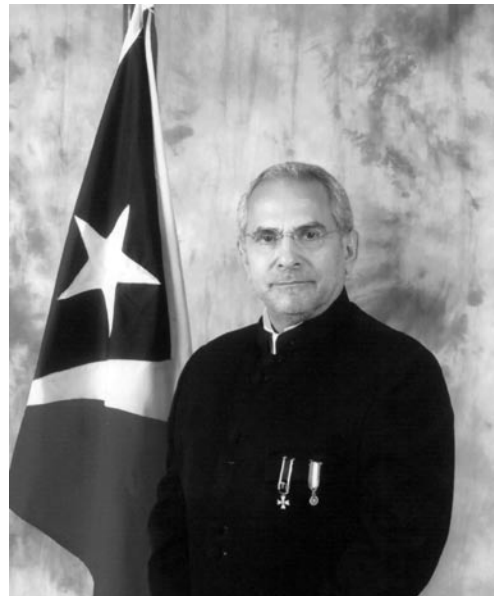
Self-determination in Timor-Leste



**Extract from *Chega!* the report of the Timor-Leste Commission for
Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR)**

Foreword

President José Ramos-Horta



There have been many major turning points in our long history, but the Popular Consultation of 30 August 1999 must be ranked as one of the most significant. That single day climaxed a protracted and painful struggle to achieve our basic right of self-determination and marked a fundamental change in the course of our history. After generations of colonialism, it set the stage for us to join the community of independent nations and to shape our own future, politically, socially, economically and culturally. It was an epic achievement.

I had to cast my vote in Australia and was not able to share that momentous day with my compatriots in Timor-Leste. Nevertheless, as an East Timorese who had spent most of my adult life working for our right to self-determination, particularly in the UN but also all over the world, 30 August 1999 was also a deeply personal moment I shall never forget.

The Timor-Leste truth commission, CAVR, documented this historic day and the long struggle that preceded it, in its excellent report *Chega!* On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Popular Consultation, I am delighted to support the stand-alone publication of this part of *Chega!* and wish to congratulate the Post-CAVR Technical Secretariat and UNMIT for this initiative. I hope it will be widely read and discussed.

Many colonial peoples enjoyed a non-violent and relatively easy passage to independence years before Timor-Leste. This was not Timor-Leste's experience. *Chega!* records the extraordinary challenges and forces that worked against Timor-Leste's interests and that have left us such a difficult legacy.

This publication is therefore also an opportunity to acknowledge our nation's profound debt and

gratitude to all those who were not deterred by these challenges and who, faithful to internationally-agreed principles, contributed their blood, sweat and tears to our struggle. They include Timorese, at home and in the diaspora, UNAMET, and institutions and civil society friends in many parts of the world, including Indonesia. The Popular Consultation was an achievement of global partnership against the odds. This should not be forgotten as we work together now to build our new nation.

Dili, 30 August 2009

For full chapter on Self-determination, go to:

<http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/chegaFiles/finalReportEng/07.1-Self-Determination.pdf>

For full CAVR publication, check the CAVR website:

<http://www.cavr-timorleste.org/en/index.htm>