



Maritime Boundary Office

Council for the
Final Delimitation
of Maritime
Boundaries
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The Maritime Boundary Office is the Secretariat for the Council for the Final Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries, which is responsible for the negotiation of permanent maritime boundaries with Indonesia and Australia.

United Nations Compulsory Conciliation

The maritime boundary dispute between Timor-Leste and Australia has been in conciliation, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) since April 2016. Since then, there have been multiple meetings in The Hague, Singapore, Washington, D.C and Copenhagen. Over the course of the conciliation, various outcomes have been achieved including Timor-Leste's notification to terminate CMATS and its subsequent termination on 10 April, 2017. The negotiations will continue throughout the year, on a confidential basis, before the conciliation concludes in September 2017. Timor-Leste and Australia have confirmed they will engage with the process in good faith with a view to reaching an agreement on maritime boundaries by that time. For more details about the progress of the conciliation, please visit www.gfm.tl.

Visit to the United States of America

Following the conciliation meetings in Washington, D.C in March 2017, H.E. Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator, visited New York to meet with United Nations Secretary General António Guterres. Minister Gusmão updated the Secretary General on the conciliation on maritime boundaries and expressed his support for the Secretary General's proposed reforms to the United Nations.

In New York, Minister Gusmão also featured as a key note speaker at a panel discussion at The Asia Society about the journey of Timor-Leste's independence, including the nation's pursuit of maritime boundaries. The discussion was moderated by former Australian Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd. Other participants included the CEO of MBO Ms. Elizabeth Exposto, the Asia Society's Diplomat in Residence and former Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Danny Russell, State Representative Tony Cabral, respected American jurist with a long history in Timor-Leste Judge Phillip Rapoza and former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Chief of Staff David Muir. Mr. Rudd said he hopes to see Australia find a way to resolve the maritime boundary issue.



H.E. Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator meets with United Nations Secretary General António Guterres on 3 April 2017

(L-R) The Honorable Kevin Rudd, Former Australian Prime Minister; H.E. Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator; H.E. Judge Phillip Rapoza; and The Honorable Tony Cabral, Representative of Massachusetts House of Representatives





(L-R) H.E. Domingos Sarmiento Alves, Timor-Leste Ambassador to the USA; The Honorable James Diossa, Mayor of Central Falls, Rhode Island; The Honorable Jack Reed, Senator of Rhode Island; and H.E. Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator

Bestowal of the Order of Timor-Leste

The Order of Timor-Leste is one of the highest awards given by Timor-Leste, reflecting the gratitude and recognition of Timor-Leste towards those whose initiatives and deeds have benefited the Timorese people. The Order of Timor has been bestowed to two eminent supporters of Timor-Leste so far in 2017. During his visit to Washington D.C. on 23 March, 2017, H.E. Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Chief Negotiator, bestowed the Order of Timor medal to Senator Jack Reed. Senator Reed is a long-time supporter of Timor-Leste’s independence, helping to raise awareness and draw international attention to the Timorese sovereign fight in the 1990s.

Representative Tony Cabral visited Timor-Leste from Massachusetts in the United States to receive the Order of Timor medal on 23 May, 2017. Representative Cabral was a tireless advocate for the rights and freedoms of the Timorese people at the highest levels within the United States. He led the submission of legislation to the Massachusetts Legislature sanctioning companies and businesses in or with Indonesia in the late 1990s. Representative Cabral is still a good friend to Timor-Leste and a strong advocate for Timor-Leste’s pursuit of maritime boundaries.

The Honorable Tony Cabral with the CEO of MBO Ms. Elizabeth Exposto, MBO staff and guests



(L-R) H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo, Prime Minister; The Honorable Tony Cabral, Representative of Massachusetts House of Representatives; and H.E. Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Prize, former President of the Republic and former Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, on 23 May 2017

American Council of Young Political Leaders Exchange Program



The American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) is a non-profit organisation that promotes global understanding and fosters relationships among the next generation of political leaders from around the world. The Timor-Leste Government and ACYPL established a partnership in order to expose young political leaders to different political environments and perspectives to improve their capacity. The ACYPL Exchange program is offered to international participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand, and now Timor-Leste. A delegation of five senior representatives from ACYPL visited Timor-Leste in March 2017 to learn more about the country. In October, a delegation of young Timorese political leaders will spend 6 weeks in the United States as part of the exchange program.

(L-R) The Honorable Aaron Lawlor, Chairman of Lake County Board, Illinois; Ms. Stacey Walter Fujii, Chairman of ACYPL Board; Ms. Ellie Casson, Office of Government Affairs Strategic Partnerships, Airbnb; Ms. Libby Rosenbaum, Interim CEO of ACYPL; H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo, Prime Minister; and The Honorable James Diossa, Mayor of Central Falls, Rhode Island

Singapore's Workshop on Maritime Boundary

The Meridian International Centre in Washington D.C. partnered with the U.S. Department of State to fund two officers from the MBO to participate in a Maritime Boundaries Workshop from 6-8 June at the National University of Singapore. The workshop was organised by the Centre for International Law (CIL) and the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS).

The sessions covered the important aspects of maritime boundary negotiations and delimitation including the application of the United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), baselines and charts. The sessions referenced real examples from all over the world and the varying factors that may affect maritime boundary negotiations and delimitation.

Workshop Participants were from government agencies of Australia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Palau, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam and USA

The participants with the trainers, facilitators and observers, on 6 June 2017. Photo Source: NUS Centre for International Law



Fireside discussion on UNCLOS Compulsory Conciliation: Timor-Leste versus Australia, Singapore

MBO attended a fireside discussion at the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore, hosted by Professor S Jayakumar and Professor Tommy Koh with experts Professor Robert Beckman and Dr Hao Duy Phan as panellists. The discussion focused on the conciliation between Timor-Leste and Australia, touching on the specifics of UNCLOS and the law of the sea. The panellists agreed that whilst conciliation could not serve every dispute, the very first conciliation proceedings, initiated by Timor-Leste under UNCLOS, appeared to be progressing successfully and could have a significant impact on dispute resolutions in the future.

MBO briefings

MBO continued to brief organisations, community and religious groups and civil society on Timor-Leste's pursuit of maritime boundaries. Briefings have been presented to La'o Hamutuk, English Club at Universidade Nasional Timor Lorosa'e and Protestant Church in Timor-Leste, Sinodo.



MBO team with briefing participants



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For more information contact:

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