



SPOKESPERSON SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
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Timor-Leste launches United Nations Compulsory Conciliation Proceedings on Maritime Boundaries with Australia

Timor-Leste today launched compulsory conciliation proceedings under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (**UNCLOS**), with the aim of concluding an agreement with Australia on permanent maritime boundaries.

The conciliation procedure engages Australia in a formal process conducted by an independent panel of experts, known as the conciliation commission.

While there are temporary resource-sharing arrangements in the Timor Sea, there are currently no permanent maritime boundaries between the two countries. The Australian Government withdrew from the binding dispute settlement procedures under UNCLOS and the International Court of Justice in 2002, two months before Timor-Leste's restoration of independence, limiting Timor-Leste's means to enforce its rights under international law.

Successive Australian Governments have also repeatedly refused to negotiate permanent maritime boundaries and therefore compulsory conciliation is the only avenue available to bring Australia to the negotiating table.

Timor-Leste's Prime Minister, Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo said "establishing permanent maritime boundaries is a matter of national priority for Timor-Leste, as the final step in realising our sovereignty as an independent State."

"Under international law, Australia is obliged to negotiate permanent maritime boundaries with Timor-Leste but it has refused to do so, despite all our invitations. This has left us with only one option," he said. "This process allows for a commission to assist our two countries to reach an amicable solution on permanent maritime boundaries."

"All Timor-Leste is seeking is a fair and equitable solution and importantly, what we are entitled to under international law," he said.



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During his recent visit to Timor-Leste, the Indonesian President, His Excellency, Joko Widodo together with Timor-Leste's Prime Minister reaffirmed their commitment to sit down as neighbours and negotiate permanent maritime boundaries in accordance with international law. **ENDS**



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