



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON HIS EXCELLENCY KAY RALA XANANA GUSMÃO

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão led the Timorese resistance which achieved independence for the people of Timor-Leste. He was the first elected President of the Republic and later served as Prime Minister.



Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão was born on 20 June 1946 in Manatuto. He attended Primary School at Santa Teresa, in Ossu, Viqueque and the Catholic Mission of “Nossa Senhora de Fátima”, in Dare and High School at Dr. Francisco Machado in Dili.

Xanana Gusmão entered public administration in 1966 and served in the Portuguese military from 1968 to 1970. In 1974 he joined the staff of the newspaper “A Voz de Timor” (the Voice of Timor) and the political party Associação Social Democrata – ASDT (Social Democrat Association), which soon transformed into the Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (FRETILIN), working as Deputy Director of the Department of Information.

Following the Indonesian military invasion of Timor-Leste in 1975 and the death of the President of FRETILIN in 1978, Xanana Gusmão was left with the task of reorganising the struggle. In 1981 he organised the first National Conference of FRETILIN, during which he was elected leader of the Resistance and Commander-in-Chief of the FALINTIL (National Liberation Armed Forces of Timor-Leste).

In March 1983, Xanana Gusmão initiated formal negotiations with the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI/TNI) leading to a cease-fire, which lasted until August the same year. He conceived and implemented the Policy of National Unity, developed the clandestine network, known in Portuguese as ‘Frente Clandestina’, and created the National Council of Maubere Resistance, which later became the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT).

A year after the Santa Cruz massacre (1991), Xanana Gusmão, after 17 years of guerrilla warfare, was captured by the Indonesian military. In 1993 he faced a kangaroo-court trial and was imprisoned in Semarang, Indonesian, and subsequently in Cipinang. In prison, Xanana Gusmão devoted his time to drafting strategies for the Resistance, while studying Indonesian, English and law. He also painted and wrote poetry. In 1998, while still imprisoned, Xanana Gusmão was reaffirmed by acclamation as leader of the Timorese Resistance and President of

CNRT at the East Timorese National Convention. He was placed under house arrest in February 1999 and released on 7 September 1999.

On 30 August 1999 the Timorese people voted in an UN-backed referendum, overwhelmingly rejecting the autonomy proposal put forward by Indonesia. This vote signalled the end of the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste and the beginning of the transitional process led by the UN.

In August 2000, the First National Congress of CNRT elected Xanana Gusmão President of the CNRT/National Congress. From November 2000 to April 2001, he was the Speaker of the National Council, an all-Timorese legislative body of the Transitional Administration of East Timor, comprised of civil society representatives. After the dissolution of CNRT (June 2001), he established the Association of Resistance Veterans, aiming to create conditions to enable veterans to participate in the country's development process.

On 14 April 2002, Xanana Gusmão was elected President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and was sworn-in on 20 May 2002. He served as President of the Republic until the end of his term of office in May 2007. In 2007 he was elected President of the newly established political party formed in April 2007, CNRT - 'National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste'. Legislative elections were held on 30 June, with CNRT receiving the second highest number of votes and immediately forming an alliance (Alliance with Parliamentary Majority – AMP) with three other parties, PD (Democratic Party) and the ASDT-PSD Coalition. This alliance held a parliamentary majority and was formally invited to form the Fourth Constitutional Government.

In August 2007, Xanana Gusmão was sworn-in as Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Security of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. He was re-elected as Prime Minister in the 2012 legislative elections. As Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmão consolidated peace and national unity, strengthened the democratic foundations of the State, invested in key sectors for economic growth and led the drafting and consultation for the national *Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030*.

In December 2014, Xanana Gusmão announced he would be stepping down as Prime Minister. The Sixth Constitutional Government came to office on 16 February 2015, signalling the arrival of a new generation of leaders. Xanana Gusmão was sworn-in as Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment, a position he occupied until September 2017, when the Seventh Constitutional Government came into office.

With the Seventh Constitutional Government lacking the parliamentary majority required for approving the Government Programme, early legislative elections were scheduled for May 2018. These elections were won by a 3-party coalition led by CNRT, of which Xanana Gusmão was President. Again, Xanana Gusmão chose not to be Prime Minister in this Eighth Constitutional Government. Instead the position was occupied by the leader of another coalition party, so that Xanana Gusmão could focus on finalising permanent maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea and on developing Greater Sunrise.

Since 2010, Xanana Gusmão has also held the position of Eminent Person of the g7+, an international group of around 20 developing countries that are either facing conflict or have recent experience of conflict and fragility or are undergoing democratisation. The g7+'s main goal is to share experience and expertise, seeking not only to transform developing countries

but change the way in which the international community engages with fragile and conflict-affected States.

In 2016 the Government appointed Xanana Gusmão as Chief Negotiator for the Council for the Final Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries. In this role he led negotiations with Australia, including the Compulsory Conciliation under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), leading to the Maritime Boundary Treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia, which was ratified on 30 August 2019. Xanana Gusmão is now currently working to establish final maritime boundaries with Indonesia.

In 2018, recognising his expertise, experience and success in delimitating maritime boundaries, the Government appointed Xanana Gusmão as the Government's Special Representative to negotiate land borders with the Republic of Indonesia. In 2018 he was also appointed the Government's Special Representative in concluding the necessary procedures for ratifying the Treaty between the Timor-Leste and Australia establishing their respective maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea; purchasing interests in Timor Sea petroleum fields; and signing agreements for the exploitation of the Greater Sunrise field. He resigned from this last position in July 2020.

Xanana Gusmão has also been the Government's Special Representative for the Blue Economy since December 2019. This role includes national and international advocacy of the Blue Economy of Timor-Leste, as well as to leading efforts towards its promotion and development.

On July 1, 2023, Xanana Gusmão took office as Prime Minister of the IX Constitutional Government, as a result of the legislative elections on May 21, where the National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste (CNRT) won with a majority, having formed a coalition with the PD, the third political force in the country.

Prizes:

- 1975: East Timor Poetry Prize
- 1999: European Parliament Sakharov Prize
- 2000: Kwangju (South Korea) Peace Prize
- 2000: Sydney Peace Prize
- 2002: North-South Prize, North-South Observatory (European Union)
- 2002: UNESCO Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize
- 2002: 'Honorary Adult Friend', Children's Award, Sweden
- 2003: 2003 Path to Peace Award, Path to Peace Foundation
- 2003: International Herald Tribune "Leadership with Integrity" Award
- 2003: BusinessWeek "Stars of Asia" Award
- 2021: Guerra Junqueiro Lusophony Literary Prize 2021

Awards:

- 1995: BusinessWeek "Stars of Asia" Award
- 1998: Order of Freedom, Portugal
- 1998: Honorary Citizen of São Paulo, Brazil
- 1999: Honorary Doctorate, Lusíada University, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2000: Order of Merit, New Zealand
- 2000: Honorary Citizen of Lisbon, Portugal (awarded the Gold Key of Lisbon City)
- 2000: Medal of the Vice-Presidency of the Federative Republic of Brazil
- 2000: Grand Officer of the Order of Merit José Bonifácio, University of the State of Rio Janeiro
- 2000: Honorary Doctorate, University of Oporto, Portugal

2002: Grand Collar of the National Order of the Southern Cross, Brazil
2003: Honorary Degree of Doctorate of Laws, Victoria University
2003: Honorary Knighthood of the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael & St. George, UK, awarded by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
2004: Honorary Degree of Doctorate of Laws, Suncheon National University, Korea
2006: Grand Collar of the Order of Prince Henry, Portugal
2006: Honorary Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy, University of Takushoku, Japan
2011: First Class Medal for Contribution to Humanity, Presidency of the Republic of Vanuatu
2011: Honorary Doctorate, Coimbra University, Portugal
2012: Honorary Doctorate, Charles Darwin University, Australia
2014: Honorary Doctorate, Superior Institute of Political and Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, Portugal
2014: Honorary Doctorate in International Relations, Universiti Malaysia Sabah
2014: Highest Indonesia Medal of Honour "Bintang Republik Indonesia Adipurna" (awarded by H.E. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia)
2015: Doctor of Letters, Honoris Causa, University of Melbourne, Australia
2016: Honorary Doctorate, Waseda University, Japan
2017: Honorary Doctorate, Funchal University, Portugal
2017: Honorary Doctorate, Hunan University, China
2019: Honorary Doctorate, Cambodia University, Cambodia
2021: Honorary Doctorate, Kyoto University of Arts, Japan
2021: Honorary Doctorate, Sophia University, Japan
2023: Honorary Doctorate, American University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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