

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2017
Avenida da Liberdade de Imprensa / Avenue of the Freedom of the Press
Dili, Timor-Leste

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To: Saorla McCabe
UNESCO HQ
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Ming Kuok Lim
UNESCO Jakarta Office
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Date: Dili, 30 April 2017

Dear Sir, Madam

From 1 to 4 May 2017, UNESCO will hold its principal celebration of World Press Freedom Day in Jakarta, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Indonesian Press Council.

We, members of Timor-Leste independent media, human rights defenders and members of the Timor Papua Connection (TiPaCo) hereby appeal to you, hoping for our consideration.

As the World Press Freedom Day International Conference discusses how free and quality media are needed, **we encourage you to emphasize free access and safety for journalists all around INDONESIA, specifically in West Papua.**

As Timorese people, we deeply understand the necessity of quality, independent media to advance public awareness and address social or political injustice. Sadly, we are also too familiar with the consequences when freedom of the press is restricted.

Please do not forget that we in Timor-Leste are still waiting for Indonesia's accountability for the killings of the Balibo 5 and Roger East in 1975, as well as of Agus Muliawan and Sander Thoenes in 1999. Despite witness reports and factual evidence, no perpetrators have yet been brought to trial for murdering these journalists.

Indonesia's 1945 Constitution and 1982 Press Law provide for freedom of the press. However, despite improvements following the departure of President Suharto in May 1998, the Indonesian government still maintains serious restrictions on journalists.

Independent journalists in Indonesia risk their lives to report. Press photographers around the country face destruction of equipment, intimidation and assault when they report from the scene. Furthermore, Indonesian authorities regulate access to certain areas of the country.

A major concern is that national and foreign correspondents must apply for special permission to visit West Papua, which is usually denied and seldom granted. Even those who get permission are surveilled, intimidated, harassed and sometimes arrested arbitrarily by security forces.

To underscore our plea, we enclose our visual statement from 29 April at the Avenida da Liberdade de Imprensa (Avenue of the Freedom of the Press) in Dili, Timor-Leste.

Sincerely,

On behalf of all those involved in this statement (see appendix)

Celestino Gusmão Pereira,
Dili, Timor-Leste

APPENDIX - WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2017
Avenida da Liberdade de Imprensa / Avenue of the Freedom of the Press
Dili, Timor-Leste

Geraldo Belo da Costa	Klibur Estudante Progressive/KUP
Cosme da Silva Soares	Klibur Estudante Manatuto
Luis Garcia dos Santos	Klibur foin Sa'e Tane Timor
Isaias A. Freitas	Klibur foin Sa'e Tane Timor
Salvador Araujo Marcal	Klibur foin Sa'e Tane Timor
Aida Guterres Castro Pereira	Klibur foin Sa'e Tane Timor
Inocência Gonçalves	Klibur foin Sa'e Tane Timor
Jachsfin Vivir	CLSL
Juvinal Magno	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste
Miguel da Silva Ornai	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste
Fivania da C. M	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste
Candido A. Silva	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste
Manuel D.C. Mesquita	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste
Odino Ximenes	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste
Leticia Alves	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste
Marta da Silva	Front Mahasiswa Timor-Leste/La'o Hamutuk
Charles Scheiner	ETAN/La'o Hamutuk
Pamela Sexton	ETAN
Endie van Binsbergen	Free East Timor Foundation
Adrovaldo L. Nahak	Klibur Foinsae Humanitarian
Joel Fernandes Correia	Klibur Foinsae Humanitarian
Quim Ribeiro Brites	Independent Media
Manuela Pereira	Diretora ACbit
Bernardo Beja	West Papua Solidarity Portugal
Francisco Carvalho	West Papua Solidarity Portugal
Merita Coreia	Diretora Alfela
Laura de Jesus	Alfela
Faustinho Soares	Uniaun Universidatariu Municipiu Baucau
Nelson Miranda	Human Rights Activist
Inicencio Xavies	AJAT Timor-Leste
Manuel Montero	Asosiasaun Hak
José Moniz	Aliansi Nasional Timor-Leste untuk Pengadilan Internasional
Luis de Oliveira Sampaio	Executive Director Judicial System Monitoring Programme