



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 the Municipality of Manatuto, in Timor-Leste. He attended primary school at Santa Teresa, in Ossu, in the Municipality of Viqueque, the Catholic Mission “Nossa Senhora de Fátima”, in Dare, and high school Dr. Francisco Machado, in Díli.

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 joined the political party “Associação Social Democrata” ASDT (Social Democrat Association), which later became the Revolutionary Front for an Independent Timor-Leste (FRETILIN). He worked as the Deputy Director of the Department of Information for FRETILIN.

Following the Indonesian military invasion of Timor-Leste in 1975, and the death of the President of FRETILIN in 1978, Xanana Gusmão assumed leadership of the resistance campaign. In 1981, he organised the first National Conference of FRETILIN. 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), which led to a cease-fire lasting until August of the same year. He devised 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 in 1991, Xanana Gusmão, after 17 years fighting guerrilla warfare, was captured by the Indonesian military. In 1993, he faced a kangaroo-court trial and was imprisoned in Semarang, and subsequently in Cipinang, in Indonesia. While 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 in prison, Xanana Gusmão was reaffirmed by acclamation as the leader of the Timorese Resistance and

President of CNRT at the Timor-Leste 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 a United Nations (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 to independence led by the UN.

In August 2000, the First National Congress of CNRT elected Xanana Gusmão as the 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 during the Transitional Administration of Timor-Leste, comprised of civil society representatives. After the dissolution of CNRT in June 2001, he established the Association of Veterans of the Resistance, with the aim of creating the conditions that would 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. He 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, the National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste (CNRT). Legislative elections were held on 30 June 2007, with CNRT receiving the second highest number of votes and immediately forming the Alliance of Parliamentary Majority (AMP) with the Democratic Party (PD), and the ASDT-PSD Coalition. The 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 consultation and drafting of the *Timor-Leste Strategic Development Plan 2011-2030*.

In December 2014, Xanana Gusmão announced he was 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 to office.

With the Seventh Constitutional Government lacking the parliamentary majority required to approve 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 the 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 the Greater Sunrise oil and gas field.

Since 2010, Xanana Gusmão has also held the position of Eminent Person of the g7+, an international group of 20 developing nations that are facing conflict, have recent experience of conflict and fragility, or are undergoing democratisation. The g7+'s main goal is to share experience and expertise, seeking to transform developing nations and change the way 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, that resulted in the first ever Compulsory Conciliation process under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. This led to a Maritime Boundary Treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia, which was ratified on 30 August 2019. Xanana Gusmão is now working to establish final maritime boundaries with the Republic of 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 to conclude the ratification of the Treaty between Timor-Leste and Australia, establish respective maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea, purchase interests in Timor Sea petroleum fields, and sign agreements for the exploration of the Greater Sunrise field. He resigned from this last position in July 2020.

In December 2019, Xanana Gusmão was appointed Timor-Leste's Special Representative for the Blue Economy. In this role he coordinates blue economy initiatives across government through the Timor-Leste Land and Maritime Boundary Office.

On 1 July 2023, Xanana Gusmão took office as Prime Minister of the IX Constitutional Government, following legislative elections held on May 21, which the CNRT party won with a majority after forming a coalition with the PD party, the third political force in the country.

As Prime Minister, he continues to lead negotiations on land borders and a maritime boundary with the Republic of Indonesia, and to promote Timor-Leste's blue economy initiatives.

Prizes:

- 1975: Timor-Leste Poetry Prize
- 1999: European Parliament Sakharov Prize
- 2000: Kwangju (South Korea) Peace Prize
- 2000: Sydney Peace Prize
- 2002: North-South Prize, North-South Observatory (Council of Europe)
- 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
- 2024: Lusophony Career Award, Lusophony Awards 2024

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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