



REPUBLICA DEMOCRATICA DE TIMOR LESTE

PRESS RELEASE  
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The Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor is pleased to announce that it has today deposited an instrument of accession to the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court with the Secretary General of the United Nations. East Timor will become the seventy ninth State Party to the Statute.

The East Timorese Foreign Ministry has initiated the process for a bilateral agreement with the United States regarding the surrender of persons to the International Criminal Court. This process has not reached a conclusion. Under the Constitution of East Timor, this agreement requires both Parliamentary approval and Presidential promulgation before it can come into force. It is therefore still under active consideration.

Representatives of East Timor have participated in the last three meetings of the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Nobel Laureate Dr Jose Ramos Horta, has repeatedly expressed East Timor's strong commitment to the International Criminal Court.

He said: "East Timor is a country which is recovering from its own experiences of human rights abuses... Justice is an essential part of the healing process, both for East Timor, and for all countries which have the misfortune to suffer atrocities. [By acceding to the Rome Statute] East Timor joins the international community in its resolution to guarantee lasting respect for international justice, in the belief that this is a great step towards a world in which such crimes no longer occur."