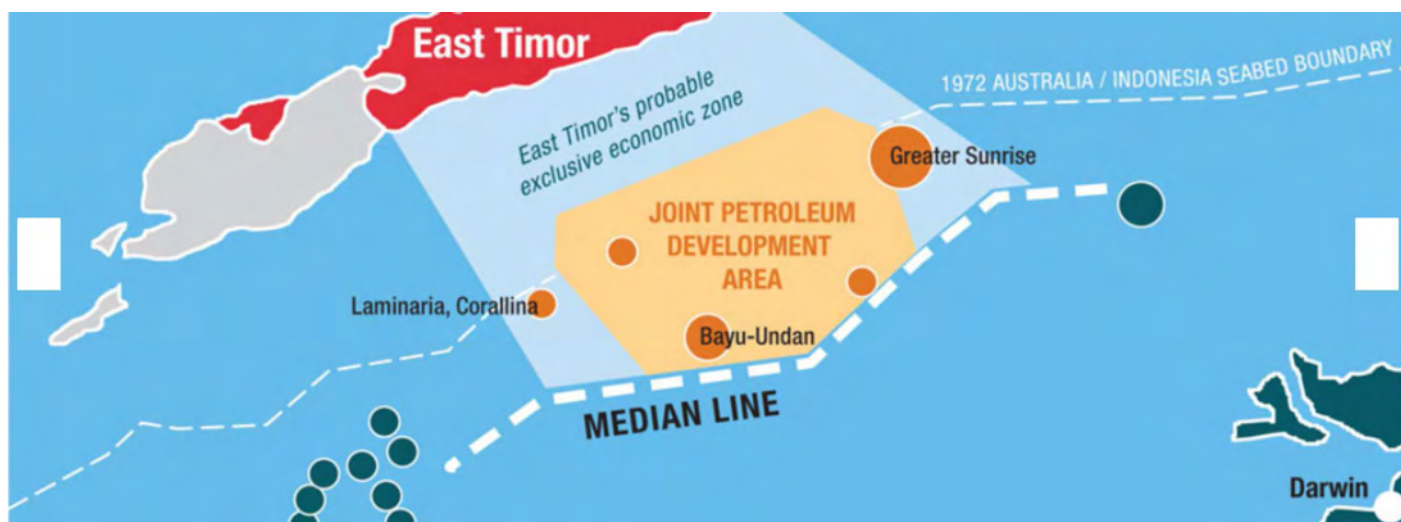


TIMOR SEA JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

A FAIR GO FOR EAST TIMOR



Timor Sea Justice Campaign News

Xanana Gusmao calls on Australians to get vocal and support a fair go in the Timor Sea

Wednesday, November 18, 2015

Former President of East Timor Xanana Gusmao has called on Australians to try to persuade the their Government to give East Timor a fair go in the Timor Sea.

Mr Gusmao, now Timor's Minister of Planning and Strategic Investment, has **expressed his frustrations** about the Australian Government's refusal to enter negotiations about establishing permanent maritime boundaries between the two nations.

"From the beginning we asked Canberra to talk... We are neighbours, we have problems, we sit down, we talk — but nothing," said Mr Gusmao.

So now he's appealing to the Australian public's sense of fair play and urging Australians to push their government into meaningful talks.

"It is not because we want people to be against Australia but just to say 'oh yes, it is unfair'," said Mr Gusmao.

It's a call that the Timor Sea Justice Campaign is ready to answer.

TSJC spokesperson, Tom Clarke, said it was time for fair-minded Australians to get active again on this issue.

"The friendship between the people of Australia and the people of East Timor goes back a long way. There are so many Australians working on so many wonderful aid and development projects for East Timor, but people are rightfully horrified when they learn that while we give

millions of dollars of humanitarian aid to Timor, our Government is taking billions of dollars out of East Timor in the form of contested oil and gas revenues," said Mr Clarke.

Members of the Timor Sea Justice Campaign have begun holding public meetings with various friendship groups and local councils to encourage people to write to their local members of parliament.

Mr Clarke said history has demonstrated that when enough Australians get vocal and organised, Australian Government policy towards East Timor can be changed.

"Essentially, I think Xanana Gusmao's comments are him saying to all the people in the Australian solidarity movement who stood by East Timor during the dark days of the 70s, 80s and 90s, that East Timor needs their support once again. Once again our Government is doing the wrong thing in East Timor and once again Australians that believe in a fair go need to step up and be heard," said Mr Clarke.

The Timor Sea Justice Campaign is focused on encouraging the Australian Government to establish permanent and equitable maritime boundaries with East Timor - something East Timor has never had.

"At the end of the day, the Timorese are not asking for our charity - they're just asking for what is theirs under international law. As a sovereign nation, East Timor has a right to establish permanent maritime boundaries and the only thing preventing that is the greed of the Australian Government," said Mr Clarke.

In March 2002 - just two months before East Timor became Independent, Australia withdrew its recognition of the maritime boundary jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal of the Laws of the Sea.

"Turning its back on the independent umpire isn't a sign of a Government confident of it's legal position," said Mr Clarke.

Note: SBS News ran a piece on this topic on 18 November which you can [view here](#) at the 9:54 mark.

For further comments, please contact Tom Clarke on 0422 545 763.
