

breaking news

Timor praises Indon over sea border talks

🕒 SEPTEMBER 2, 2016 3:53PM

Lisa Martin, Australian Associated Press



East Timor has reflected on the goodwill of its former invader as it seeks to settle sea borders with both Indonesia and Australia.

A conciliation hearing in The Hague this week between Australia and East Timor has wrapped up.

The United Nations commission is expected to announce whether it has the power to proceed with the process in a fortnight.

Australian officials made the case to shut the process down arguing the commission didn't have jurisdiction.

East Timor Prime Minister Rui Maria de Araujo has compared Indonesia's willingness to bilaterally negotiate a permanent sea boundary according to international law with Australia's refusal to do likewise.

"Timor-Leste and Indonesia have become close friends and remain a global model of reconciliation," he said in a speech.

"Australia, however, has refused to negotiate with us, despite our invitations."

The developing nation's "struggle for sovereignty is not over".

At the heart of the boundary dispute are oil and gas reserves worth an estimated \$53 million.

Foreign Minister Julie Bishop insists Dili got a fair deal with sea border treaties of 2002 and 2006 and they are consistent with international law.

But East Timor is unhappy with the temporary sharing arrangements for the reserves because Australian spies allegedly bugged the East Timor negotiators in 2004.