

## **MOVIMENTU KONTRA OKUPASAUN TASI TIMOR (MKOTT)**

Dili, 28 August 2019

### **Public Statement on the Prosecution Against Witness K and Bernard Collaery by the Australian Government**

MKOTT is greatly pleased to announce today that our petition calling on the Australian Federal Attorney General, Hon. Christian Porter MP to stop the prosecution of Bernard Collaery and Witness K has been signed by 4,058 Timorese people. Those who signed ranged from Timorese students, activists, journalists, NGO workers, government officials and ordinary citizens. This is a testament to the genuine wish of the people of Timor-Leste that their prosecution not stain the bilateral relations of Australia and Timor-Leste.

Our petition calls on the Federal Attorney General of Australia to invoke his authority as given by Section 71 of the Australian Judiciary Act of 1903 to immediately put a stop to the prosecution of Bernard Collaery and Witness K.

We understand that the Prime Minister of Australia, Hon. Scott Morrison, MP is travelling to Dili on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 30 August Referendum celebrations. We also understand that while in Dili, Mr. Morrison will oversee the exchange of letters between the governments of Timor-Leste and Australia formalizing the ratification of the maritime boundary treaty between the two nations signed on 6 March 2018.

MKOTT wishes to remind Prime Minister Scott Morrison once again, that if it was not for both Witness K and Bernard Collaery, this treaty would not have been negotiated, agreed and signed. We, therefore, urge Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his government to treat this petition as a matter of priority and urgency.

The celebrations of the 30 of August 2019, particularly the ratification of the maritime boundary treaty, will not be complete without the freedom of Bernard Collaery and Witness K, the heroes and great friends of the people of Timor-Leste.

Should their prosecution continue, this will only show that the government of Australia has entered into the maritime boundary treaty with Timor-Leste in bad faith, and this will continue to trouble our bilateral relations.

MKOTT also wishes Prime Minister Scott Morrison to spare a few minutes while in Dili to receive this signed petition with his own hands and to act on it when he returns to Australia.

THANK YOU.