

# **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF TIMOR-LESTE ABOUT THE DECLARATION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR THE FOURTH TIME - Presidência da República de Timor-Leste**



Presidencial Palace Nicolau Lobato, 6 august 2020

Brothers and sisters in Timor-Leste and abroad

Beloved People of Timor-Leste

The Covid -19 Pandemic continues to threaten our humanity. This pandemic is rapidly spreading among the countries, mainly from air passengers and also across borders. Although this pandemic has been controlled in several countries, it has emerged again. This has been the case, since 11 March 2020, the date on which the WHO – World Health Organization declared that the humanity is facing the Covid-19 pandemic.

In East Timor, after having registered a positive case, on March 21, the sovereign bodies immediately took action, and only after 6 days the President of the Republic endowed with his constitutional competence declared the state of emergency. First line personnel acted efficiently and with the support of national and international organizations they were able to execute efficiently the measures taken under the State of Emergency. Due to the maximum collaboration of the people of Timor-Leste, we were able to confine this disease in the mandatory quarantine and isolation places, thus preventing the spread to the community.

The number of positive cases confirmed was 25 but all were able to recover. From 15 May 2020 no new cases were detected.

As Timor-Leste is not isolated from the rest of the world we must stay alert. The Covid-19 disease is still active. Our neighboring countries, Indonesia and Australia still have many active cases and remain uncertain on when they will be free from Covid-19

Due to the current situation in the world, mainly in our two neighboring countries, on August 3, last Monday, the Government approved a proposal that was then sent to the President of the Republic to declare a state of emergency. The President of the Republic received the Government's request on 4 August 2020. On that same day, a new case of Covid-19 was detected on a citizen who entered Timor-Leste through the land border, on July 22. The citizen was taken into isolation in Vera Cruz and the Ministry of Health, immediately, extended the quarantine to all citizens who entered East Timor on the same day. Other preventive measures were also taken to avoid contagion in the community. Yesterday, after receiving support from the Superior Council for Defense and Security and the State Council and also after receiving authorization from the Permanent Commission of the National Parliament, the President of the Republic with his constitutional competence, declared the state of emergency, through a presidential decree published in the Jornal da República, August 5, 2020.

Thus, East Timor entered into a state of emergency for the fourth time, today, August 6, at zero hours, until September 4, 2020, at 23.59.

During the state of emergency, all the measures to be followed, on one hand, will allow the protection of public health, and on the other hand will suspend or limit the principal rights and freedoms of the citizens as defined by the Constitution.

While complying with the state of emergency measures due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sovereign Bodies will seek for other legal avenues to continue protecting our People. I believe that the Sovereign Bodies will soon find another legal solution.

The situation in our country at the moment does not require very strict measures. The measures taken are similar to the third state of emergency period.

During this period of state of emergency, the economic, social, cultural, school, work, family visits and other activities will continue taking place in the normal course. However we must not forget that the Covid-19 disease will not ask for permission to enter our country. This disease can appear at any time. It is therefore imperative that we continue protecting ourselves and everyone else. Each one of us must continue complying with these 3 important measures: wash our hands frequently, wear a mask and apply social distance. When performing any activity where it requires the presence of more than two persons, everyone must wear masks and at keep at least one meter distance from each other.

This new state of emergency, will limit some rights and freedom for international circulation, freedom of movement and choice of residence anywhere in the national territory as well as the right to resistance. Everyone must comply with and follow the measures required by the Government.

Regarding international movement, the President of the Republic asks the relevant authorities to pay more attention to entry points, such as foreigners' entry sites, across the land border, airports and ports to prevent the entry of corona virus in our country. Within this state of emergency, Timorese or foreign citizens, authorized to enter East Timor, must undergo compulsory isolation, without exception, for 14 days in the quarantine place or any other location approved by the Ministry of Health. If any positive case is detected, the citizen affected will be sent to the treatment location determined by the Ministry of Health.

The President of the Republic appeals to all the People to help the Government to implement the state of emergency. I ask the population living in the border and coastal areas to remain vigilant, to prevent that people can enter the country illegally. The President of the Republic asks you all to remain calm and follow the recommendations of the Ministry of Health and the World health Organization:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Wear masks
- Keep social distancing

For our own health!

Together we will overcome this new challenge!

Long live the people of Timor-Leste!