

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

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PRESS RELEASE

MKOTT Petitions the Australian Federal Attorney General to Discontinue Prosecution Against Lawyer Bernard Collaery and Witness K

Movimentu Kontra Okupasaun Tasi Timor - the Movement Against the Occupation of the Timor Sea (MKOTT) - today launches a public petition to the Australian Federal Attorney General, Christian Porter, to stop the prosecutions of Australian Lawyer Bernard Collaery and Witness K.

MKOTT has previously expressed its shock with the prosecution, which it argued only the dictator Soeharto, the former President of Indonesia who invaded and occupied Timor-Leste, was capable of doing, and condemned it as an attack on freedom of expression and democracy.

Timor-Leste is preparing to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Referendum when on 30 August 1999 the Timorese voted overwhelmingly to be independent of Indonesia's occupation. On this occasion, Timor-Leste and Australia will also ratify the two country's maritime boundary treaty.

"30 August 2019 will also mark an important instance in the bilateral relations of Timor-Leste and Australia with the ratification of the maritime boundary treaty of the two states. An issue that has since 1999 been a point of tension in our relations," the petition of MKOTT states.

"While Timor-Leste and Australia are about to celebrate this important occasion, we the undersigned note with great regret that the Australian government has continued with its prosecutions of Lawyer Bernard Collaery and Witness K. These two are heroes of the maritime boundary agreement and thus their prosecution will pollute the celebration and the bilateral relations," the petition continues.

It is for the sake of an unspoiled celebration of this year's 30th of August that MKOTT petitions the Australian Attorney General to stop the ongoing prosecution.

"We, therefore, petition that you invoke your authority as given by the Australian Judiciary Act 1903 Section 71 to put a stop to the prosecution of Bernard Collaery and Witness K immediately," the petition concludes.

MKOTT hopes the petition to be signed by at least a thousand Timorese by the end of August.

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