

Video transcript for UPR

This statement is delivered on behalf of Amnesty International. We are a global independent non-governmental organisation who campaign for a world where human rights can be enjoyed by all. Amnesty International has submitted recommendations to the United Nations as part of the UPR process in Timor-Leste since 2011.

Amnesty International has consulted with many local organisations and individuals including CODIVA, JSMP, La'o Hamutuk and local media workers. Further consultation was conducted with other experts on the region including, University of New South Wales's Diplomacy Training Program, Hawaii's Institute for Human Rights, Civicus, the Pacific Media Association and International Federation of Journalists.

This statement will address issues of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, LGBTQI+ rights and also the ongoing climate crisis.

Amnesty International welcomes the positive steps taken by the government of Timor-Leste to implement the 146 out of 154 recommendations it committed to at the last UPR session including in relation to the Media Law. However, Amnesty International remains concerned by attempts to further restrict or limit the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Timor-Leste's media freedom ratings improved in 2020. However, concerns have been raised about recent laws, including the Media Law passed in 2014, and a draft criminal defamation law in 2020 and its impact on freedom of expression. Pandemic responses have also unduly restricted rights to peaceful assembly.

Timor-Leste is yet to fulfil its commitments to ratify additional human rights treaties.

Despite Timorese support for pride marches, Timor-Leste's government has failed to comprehensively implement laws, policies, and practices, to improve non-discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and sex characteristics. For example, same sex relationships are not considered a household unit and have been left out of food and monetary relief provided as part of the state's pandemic response.

Timor-Leste accounts for a small amount of global carbon emissions but is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The state has committed to address climate change but failed to provide clear and measurable targets consistent with the IPCC's 1.5°C target.

Amnesty International proposes three recommendations for Timor-Leste to address these issues:

Firstly, we recommend Timor-Leste refrain from passing any new laws that criminalize the right to freedom of expression and ensure that any new laws including pandemic responses are consistent with international human rights law and Article 40 and 41 of Timor-Leste's Constitution.

Secondly Timor-Leste must formally recognise same sex sexual relationships as a matter of government policy so that no person is left behind or discriminated against because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics. This should include economic and social welfare support in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and other disasters.

Finally, Timor-Leste needs to develop ambitious, clear, and measurable renewable energy targets to reduce their emissions by levels consistent with the 1.5°C target as soon as possible whilst ensuring a just transition that enhances human rights.

Thank you for your attention.