

DECREE-LAW N° 20/2009

of 6th May

ORDER OF TIMOR-LESTE

The bestowal of decorations finds its origins in ancient customs, existing in most countries in the World, and represents the Nation's and State's acknowledgement towards citizens and members who deserve reward for actions performed on behalf of the community, the country or even Mankind.

In our country, which only a few years ago became a State recognised by the international community and international organisations, a number of decorations have been created, but only to distinguish very occasional and specific situations, such as the recognition of those who fought for independence.

A decoration shall now be created and shall be of a more general and broader nature, with prestige and dignity, which shall serve as a means to illustrate Timor-Leste's recognition of those, nationals or foreigners, who in their professional or social lives, or even through any act of heroism or altruism, have made a significant contribution to Timor-Leste, the Timorese or Mankind.

The “Order of Timor-Leste” intends to serve as this dignified decoration, which will give prestige to those who have it bestowed on them, and shall serve as a way for the Timorese to reward those who deserve such an award, due to their merit or to exceptionally relevant acts performed on behalf of the Timorese, the Nation or Mankind.

Therefore,

Under the terms of sub-paragraph d) of article 116 set out in the Constitution of the Republic, the Government hereby decrees that the following becomes law:

Article 1

Object

This diploma hereby creates “The Order of Timor-Leste”, as well as the conditions under which it shall be bestowed.

Article 2

Granting of the “Order of Timor-Leste”

1. The purpose of the “Order of Timor-Leste” is to recognise and thank those nationals or foreigners, who, by way of their conduct or acts, have made a significant contribution to benefiting the country, the Timorese or Mankind.

2. For the effects set out in paragraph 1 above, the “Order of Timor-Leste” is aimed at rewarding, notably:

a) Exceptional merit demonstrated in the performance of duties when holding sovereign positions or in the command of the armed forces on campaign;

b) Military or civil acts of heroism;

c) Exceptional acts of self-denial or sacrifice for the country or Mankind;

d) Services which deserve to be especially distinguished provided in the performance of duties in public administration in general and in the magistracy and diplomacy in particular;

e) Military services of a high nature;

f) Cultural merit, especially in the fields of literature, science, art and education;

g) Relevant services provided in defence of civilisation values, to help render Man more dignified and to defend the cause of freedom;

h) Any public or private duties which reveal selflessness and self-denial on behalf of the community;

i) Relevant services provided within the field of sports

Article 3

Grades

1. The “Order of Timor-Leste” is divided into the following categories:

a) Great-collar;

b) Collar;

c) Medal;

d) Insignia.

2. Each grade can only be bestowed once on the same individual.

3. The Great-collar is bestowed exclusively on Heads of sovereign States.

4. Whoever has performed the duty of President of the Republic is entitled, upon conclusion of his term of office, except when dismissed, to be awarded with the Great-collar of the “Order of Timor-Leste” to be granted on the date the following President of the Republic takes office.

Article 4

Charter

1. The granting of the grades of the “Order of Timor-Leste” is of the exclusive area of competence of the President of the Republic and takes the form of a charter to be published in the 2nd series of the Official Journal.

2. A diploma will be issued by the General Secretary of the President of the Republic and signed by such secretary general on the bestowal of the “Order of Timor-Leste”.

3. The diplomas bestowing the Great-collar shall be signed by the President of the Republic.

Article 5

Proposals

The President of the Republic may bestow the “Order of Timor-Leste”:

a) On his own initiative;

b) On the proposal of National Parliament;

c) On the proposal of Council of Ministers.

Article 6

Consultations

1. The Minister of Defence and Security and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces shall always be consulted whenever any grade is to be bestowed on national or foreign servicemen.
2. The Minister of Defence and Security and the General Commander of Timor-Leste's National Police Force shall always be consulted whenever any grade is to be bestowed on national or foreign members of the police force.
3. The Foreign Minister shall always be heard whenever any grade is to be bestowed on foreigners.

Article 7

Other Entities

1. National and foreign locations, communities, institutions, police forces and units and military establishments may be granted the Medal of the “Order of Timor-Leste”.
2. The granting of the Medal under the terms of paragraph 1 above, when it does not concern police forces and units and military establishments, depends on the following requirements:
 - a) The entity proposed must have existed for at least fifteen years and offers guarantees of continuation;
 - b) The entity must be deemed worthy of distinction by way of an official report issued by the Council of Ministers.

Article 8

Investiture

1. The investiture of the person or entity to be decorated with the “Order of Timor-Leste” shall be performed by the President of the Republic.
2. The investiture of those to be decorated with the Great-collar can only be performed by the President of the Republic and may not be delegated to a third party.

3. The investiture of those to be decorated with the Collar may be delegated to the President of the National Parliament or the Prime Minister.

4. The investiture of those to be decorated with the Medal or Insignia may be delegated to the entities referred to in the number above, as well as to the Deputy Presidents of the National Parliament, to the Deputy Prime-Ministers, Ministers and Ambassadors.

5. The investiture of those to be decorated and are part of the armed or police forces may be delegated to the entities referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4 above and to the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and the General Commander of Timor-Leste's National Police Force, respectively.

Article 9

Bestowal of Medals

1. The formal ceremonies in which the medals shall be bestowed shall take place in Timor-Leste and shall be bestowed upon those persons who are working in the country at such time.

2. In relation to those persons who are not in the country, the decorations may be delivered to them by the President of the Republic or his representative during official visits to those countries, pursuant to the terms set out in paragraph 1 above.

3. The “Order of Timor-Leste” may be granted posthumously and delivered to the spouse, children in order of age and ascending line.

Article 10

Duties

The duties of those decorated with the “Order of Timor-Leste” are:

- a) To defend and honour Timor-Leste;
- b) To govern their public and private conduct by the dictates of virtue and honour.

Article 11

Design of the Medals

The designs and sizes of the Great-collar, the Collar, the Medal and Insignia of the “Order of Timor-Leste” shall be approved by President of the Republic Decree.

Article 12

Records

The President of the Republic's Office shall keep records of all decorations granted under the terms of a regulation to be approved by the President of the Republic.

Article 13

Entry into Force

This legal diploma shall enter into force on the day immediately following its publication.

Approved by Council of Ministers on 23rd April, 2009

The Prime Minister

Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão

Promulgated on 24/4/09

To be published.

The President of the Republic

José Ramos-Horta