



ISHR



Office of the President of the International Council International Society for Human Rights (ISHR)

Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (IGFM) · Société Internationale pour les Droits de l'Homme (SIDH)
Sociedad Internacional para los Derechos Humanos (SIDH) · Международное Общество Прав Человека (МОПЧ)

[ISHR – Reuterstrasse 116 – 53129 Bonn/Germany](#)

To His Excellency Dr. José Manuel Ramos-Horta
President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
Office of the President of the Republic
Palácio Presidencial Nicolau Lobato
Avenida Nicolau Lobato
Dili
Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Bonn, 16 May 2026

Laudate for His Excellency President José Ramos-Horta

Your Excellency President José Ramos-Horta,

It is a great privilege to address one of the world's most respected statesmen, a tireless advocate for human dignity, and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate whose life has become synonymous with the struggle for freedom, justice, and reconciliation.

For decades, you devoted yourself to the cause of the people of Timor-Leste during one of the darkest chapters of modern history. While your country suffered occupation, violence, and immense hardship, you carried the voice of your people to governments, international organizations, churches, and civil society across the world. Your unwavering commitment to peaceful advocacy helped ensure that the plight of Timor-Leste would never be forgotten.

Together with many courageous compatriots, you helped lead your nation to independence. Yet what has distinguished you even more has been what followed.

You did not merely help achieve peace—you helped preserve it. Rather than allowing decades of suffering to become a source of hatred or revenge, you chose the far more difficult path of reconciliation, dialogue, and forgiveness.

During Indonesia's occupation of Timor-Leste between 1975 and 1999, scholarly and official estimates indicate that between approximately 90,000 and more than 200,000 Timorese lost their lives through violence, famine, disease, and forced displacement associated with the occupation. In proportion to its population, this represents one of the gravest human tragedies of the late twentieth century.

Against this background, your commitment to reconciliation is nothing short of extraordinary. Even though the current President of Indonesia was among the

Reuterstrasse 116
53129 Bonn / Germany
+49 228 3042 6360 (Landline)
+49 173 738 02 11 (WhatsApp)
secretariat@ishr.org

President
Prof. Dr. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher

Secretary General
Matthias K. Boehning

Public Register
Frankfurt am Main VR 8319

Represented in

Albania	Mali
Armenia	Moldova
Australia	Mongolia
Azerbaijan	Montenegro
Bangladesh	Morocco
Belarus	Nepal
Cameroon	Nicaragua
Cabo Verde	North Macedonia
Colombia	Pakistan
Croatia	Russia
Cuba	Senegal
France	Serbia
Georgia	Sierra Leone
Germany	Somalia
Great Britain	South Sudan
Guatemala	Spain
Haiti	Sweden
Iraq	Switzerland
Kenya	Uganda
Kosovo	Ukraine
Latvia	USA
Lithuania	Uzbekistan

The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) is an independent non-profit and non-governmental organization that advocates for people who are non-violently engaged in the realization of human rights in their countries or who are persecuted for claiming their rights. ISHR is represented through national sections, groups and associates in over 40 countries worldwide and has Consultative Status (Roster) with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), as well as Associated Status with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI).

Legal domicile of the association:
Edisonstrasse 5
60388 Frankfurt am Main / Germany

Board of the International Council:

President: Prof. Dr. Dr. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher (Germany)
Vice-President for Eastern Europe: Dr. Liubov Nemcinova (Moldova)
Vice-President for Americas: Dr. Haydee Marin (USA)
Vice-President for East Africa: Wanjeri Nderu (Kenya)

Vice-President for Europe: Dr. Margarita Kola (Albania)
Vice-President for West Africa: Dr. Moumouni Guindo (Mali)
Vice-President for Asia-Pacific: Dr. Krmanji Othman (Iraq)
Treasurer: Dr. Carmen Krusch-Gruen
Secretary General: Matthias K. Boehning



ISHR



Office of the President of the International Council International Society for Human Rights (ISHR)

Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte (IGFM) · Société Internationale pour les Droits de l'Homme (SIDH)
Sociedad Internacional para los Derechos Humanos (SIDH) · Международное Общество Прав Человека (МОПЧ)

officers serving with Indonesia's special forces in East Timor during the occupation and has long been associated with allegations by human rights organizations concerning that period, you have consistently extended the hand of friendship to Indonesia. You have demonstrated that genuine reconciliation does not require forgetting history; rather, it requires remembering it while refusing to be imprisoned by it. In doing so, you have shown the world that lasting peace is built not through revenge, but through moral courage, justice, and reconciliation.

Your moral leadership has become an example not only for Southeast Asia but for the entire world. You have shown that peace is not simply the absence of war. It is the presence of justice, respect for human dignity, and the willingness to build a common future even after profound suffering.

Beyond Timor-Leste, you have been an international voice for democracy, human rights, religious freedom, and peaceful coexistence. Your moral authority reaches far beyond the borders of your own nation.

It has been my privilege to know you over many years and to meet you on numerous occasions in Germany. Each encounter has confirmed what the world already knows: behind the Nobel Peace Prize, behind the President, and behind the statesman stands a man of remarkable humility, wisdom, kindness, and unwavering integrity.

Your Excellency, your life reminds us that courage can overcome oppression, that forgiveness can overcome hatred, and that hope can triumph over despair.

Your example reminds us that true leadership is measured not by power, but by the ability to transform suffering into reconciliation and former enemies into partners in peace. It is a lesson that our world needs today more than ever.

Thank you for your extraordinary service to your nation, to peace, and to humanity. It is an honour to pay tribute to your remarkable life and legacy.

With the highest regard

Archbishop Prof. Dr. theol. Dr. phil. Thomas Schirmmacher
ISHR President

Photo gallery: <https://thomasschirmmacher.net/travels/timor-leste-president-minister-of-the-interior-people/>

Reuterstrasse 116
53129 Bonn / Germany
+49 228 3042 6360 (Landline)
+49 173 738 02 11 (WhatsApp)
secretariat@ishr.org

President
Prof. Dr. Dr. Dr. Thomas
Schirmmacher

Secretary General
Matthias K. Boehning

Public Register
Frankfurt am Main VR 8319

Represented in

Albania	Mali
Armenia	Moldova
Australia	Mongolia
Azerbaijan	Montenegro
Bangladesh	Morocco
Belarus	Nepal
Cameroon	Nicaragua
Cabo Verde	North Macedonia
Colombia	Pakistan
Croatia	Russia
Cuba	Senegal
France	Serbia
Georgia	Sierra Leone
Germany	Somalia
Great Britain	South Sudan
Guatemala	Spain
Haiti	Sweden
Iraq	Switzerland
Kenya	Uganda
Kosovo	Ukraine
Latvia	USA
Lithuania	Uzbekistan

The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) is an independent non-profit and non-governmental organization that advocates for people who are non-violently engaged in the realization of human rights in their countries or who are persecuted for claiming their rights. ISHR is represented through national sections, groups and associates in over 40 countries worldwide and has Consultative Status (Roster) with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, Observer Status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), as well as Associated Status with the UN Department of Public Information (DPI).

Legal domicile of the association:
Edisonstrasse 5
60388 Frankfurt am Main / Germany

Board of the International Council:

President: Prof. Dr. Dr. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher (Germany)
Vice-President for Eastern Europe: Dr. Liubov Nemcinova (Moldova)
Vice-President for Americas: Dr. Haydee Marin (USA)
Vice-President for East Africa: Wanjeri Nderu (Kenya)

Vice-President for Europe: Dr. Margarita Kola (Albania)
Vice-President for West Africa: Dr. Moumouni Guindo (Mali)
Vice-President for Asia-Pacific: Dr. Krmanji Othman (Iraq)
Treasurer: Dr. Carmen Krusch-Gruen
Secretary General: Matthias K. Boehning