

HON RON MARK, MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Ministerial Overseas Travel 18-09-2019 to 22-09-2019

December 2019

This publication provides Cabinet documents regarding the proposal, and the report for Hon Ron Mark on his travel, from 18 to 22 September 2019, to Timor-Leste for the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) peacekeeping missions.

The pack comprises the following documents:

- the July 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0351]
- the associated Cabinet paper: *Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark: Timor-Leste – 18 to 22 September 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0351]
- the October 2019 Cabinet minute of decision: *Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark* [CAB-19-MIN-0543]
- the associated Cabinet paper: *Travel Report: Hon Ron Mark; Timor-Leste 18 - 23 Sep 2019* [CAB-19-SUB-0543]

This pack has been released on the Ministry of Defence website, available at:

www.defence.govt.nz/publications.

It has been necessary to withhold certain information in accordance with the following provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. Where information is withheld, the relevant sections of the Act are indicated in the body of the document.

Information is withheld where making it available would be likely to prejudice:

- the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand [section 6(a)]



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Proposed Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

Portfolio **Defence**

On 22 July 2019, Cabinet:

- 1 **authorised** the absence of Hon Ron Mark from New Zealand, subject to leave from Parliament being secured, from 18 to 22 September 2019 to travel to Timor-Leste for the 20th anniversary of peacekeeping operations;
- 2 **agreed** that he be accompanied by one member of staff;
- 3 **approved** the estimated expenditure of up to \$7,211 for the travel expenses of the Ministerial party as a charge to Vote: Internal Affairs (Members of the Executive – Travel);
- 4 **agreed** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters act as Minister of Defence and Minister for Veterans.

Martin Bell
for Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Chair
Cabinet

**PROPOSED OVERSEAS TRAVEL: HON RON MARK: Timor-Leste – 18 to 22
September 2019**

Proposal

1. I seek Cabinet approval to travel to Timor-Leste as the government representative for the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and International Force East Timor (INTERFET) peacekeeping missions. A number of activities will mark the anniversary, including a commemoration, unveiling of memorial and exhibitions, veterans' parade, inauguration of monuments, and a community concert.
2. Ministerial representation at this significant event will acknowledge the historic and ongoing relationship between New Zealand and Timor-Leste. Electoral Observers, Foreign Affairs staff, and Military, Police, Customs and Corrections personnel served in Timor-Leste during the independence period. Timor-Leste remains an important regional security relationship. Australian representation will be at the Governor General and potentially Ministerial level.
3. I will be away from New Zealand from Wednesday 18 until Sunday 22 September 2019.
4. The Prime Minister has approved the travel in principle. The travel will occur over a sitting week, and the NZ first Caucus has approved my leave from the house.
5. Travel will be via commercial transport.

Delegation Details

6. I propose to travel with one staff member from my office, and will be accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force.

Estimated Costs

7. Indicative costs for this travel are:

<u>Minister of Defence and one staff</u>	
Airfares and Taxes	\$ 3,668
Accommodation, meals, transport	\$ 3,200

Receptions/hospitality, gifts	\$ 150
Contingency (@2%)	\$ 193.40
Total	\$7,211.40

Acting Ministers

8. The Rt Hon Winston Peters has agreed to act in the Defence and Veterans' portfolios.

Proactive Release

9. This paper will be proactively released following my travel.

Recommendations

10. The Minister of Defence recommends that Cabinet:
- authorise** his absence from New Zealand from 18 to 22 September 2019 to travel to Timor-Leste for the 20th anniversary of peacekeeping operations;
 - agree** that the Minister be accompanied by one member of his office staff;
 - approve** the expenditure of \$7,211.40 for the travel expenses of the Minister and one staff member as a charge to Vote Internal Affairs: Members of the Executive – Travel; and
 - agree** that in his absence the Rt Hon Winston Peters will act in the Defence and Veterans' portfolios.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Ron Mark
Minister of Defence



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Report on Overseas Travel: Hon Ron Mark

Portfolio **Defence**

On 21 October 2019, Cabinet **noted** the report from Hon Ron Mark under CAB-19-SUB-0543 on his travel, from 18 to 23 September 2019, to Timor-Leste for the 20th anniversary of peacekeeping operations.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet

Hard-copy distribution:

Prime Minister
Deputy Prime Minister
Hon Ron Mark

Released by the Minister of Defence

Chair, Cabinet

**TRAVEL REPORT:
HON RON MARK; TIMOR-LESTE 18 – 23 SEP 2019**

Executive Summary

1. From 18 – 23 September I travelled to Timor-Leste as the government representative for the 20th anniversary of the International Forces East Timor (INTERFET) deployment, and to conduct bilateral engagement with my Timorese counterpart. I was accompanied by officials from the New Zealand Defence Force, and NZDF INTERFET veterans. Further detail of activities and engagements is available in formal messaging.

Report

2. On my first day in country (19 Sep) I conducted a bilateral call with the Timorese Minister of Defence, Filomeno Paixão. I had previously met Minister Paixão at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June of this year. This meeting provided us with an opportunity to deepen our engagement on areas of mutual security interest, and for me to share with Minister Paixão and his team some of the lessons that NZ Defence has learned about sustainable and effective military procurement.
3. [REDACTED] s6(a)
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
4. During my visit the NZ Embassy unveiled a plaque on their grounds, commemorating the seven New Zealanders (one journalist, one activist, and five soldiers) that died in Timor between 1975 and 2002. This was a moving ceremony, and the families of those who died are appreciative of the opportunity to acknowledge their sacrifice, and the contribution that it made to Timor-Leste's journey to peace and independence.

5. The main focus of the trip were the commemorations of the INTERFET deployment. This included: visits to museums and historic sites related to the resistance struggle; a banquet dinner at the Historic Palácio de Lahane; a military parade and dedication of the INTERFET memorial plaque; an official parade through the city (with the public joining in); a friendship lunch hosted by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate José Ramos-Horta; and commemorative football matches between the Falintil and INTERFET veterans, and then the current F-FDTL and Australian Defence Force teams. In acknowledgement of NZ's role as the second largest contributing nation to INTERFET, I laid a wreath at the dedication of the plaque, and there was a special acknowledgement of Major General (retired) Martyn Dunne.
6.

s6(a)

 The participation of cultural groups, including children's groups, in the events was especially touching.
7. During my visit I was able to engage with senior Timorese leaders President Dr Fransisco Guterres (popularly known by his nom de guerre Lu Olo) Prime Minister José Maria Vasconcelos (Taur Matan Ruak), former Prime Minister and President Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao (who made a star turn as the goal keeper in the commemorative football match), and José Ramos-Horta. General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove, Commander of the multi-national INTERFET deployment was an honoured guest throughout.
8. During my visit I also had the opportunity to meet again with my Australian counterparts, Minister of Defence Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds, and Minister for Veterans and Defence Personnel the Hon Darren Chester. Minister Reynolds hosted an INTERFET Reception on board HMAS Choules, a Royal Australian Navy landing ship which was part way through a Pacific tour.

Summary

9. This visit was very effective in establishing furthering our bilateral relationship with Timor-Leste, and demonstrating support in her ambitions for security and economic independence. The presence of the NZ delegation was greatly appreciated by our hosts, and the veterans who attended valued the opportunity to visit an increasingly confident and flourishing Timor, and reflect on their experiences during the INTERFET deployment.

Proactive Release

10. I propose to proactively release this paper within 30 business days. This release will be subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

11. I recommend that Cabinet:

Note this report

Hon Ron Mark
Minister of Defence

Released by the Minister of Defence