



MEDIA RELEASE

For release: 12 September 2018

**Australia Rorts a Poor Neighbour -
then Shoots the Messenger who Exposed it!**

**PROTEST 8.30am and 4pm, ACT MAGISTRATES COURT,
WED 12 September**

“The Australian government’s prosecution of ‘witness K’, a former Australian Secret Intelligence Service employee who exposed ASIS’ bugging of the Timor Leste cabinet room during negotiations over a gas and oil treaty in 2004 is clearly undemocratic. The bugging helped Australia to impose a division of resources which highly-disadvantaged recently-independent Timor Leste, one of the poorest countries in our region,” said Stephen Darley, spokesperson for the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN).

“Australia’s shameful treatment of Timor Leste is further extended by this prosecution. The Australian government accuses China of high-handedness and mistreatment of their neighbours in the South China Sea. But this whole saga exposes their own criminal behaviour and hypocrisy,” said Mr Darley.

“IPAN members and others will be protesting this flagrant abuse of executive power,” he said.

“The prosecution of Witness K’s lawyer, Bernard Collaery, who has also acted for Timor Leste in international forums, is a further use/abuse of repressive legislation against critics and whistle-blowers. Collaery and Witness K face charges of conspiracy to breach [Section 39](#) of the Intelligence Services Act.

“The prosecution is also a warning to Timor Leste: although a more equitable division of resources was negotiated last year, at least \$5 billion dollars was obtained by multinational resource company Woodside Petroleum from fields since acknowledged as East Timorese. No refunding of this ‘theft’ has been mooted by Australia or Woodside.

“East Timorese are understandably angry at this rort: the nation desperately needs to build up infrastructure and provide for the needs of a population neglected by former colonial power Portugal and violently repressed and latterly devastated by Indonesia between their invasion in 1975 (tacitly supported by Australia) and their ousting in 2000.

“Former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop faced protests during her recent visit to Timor Leste. The Australian government should immediately reverse this ‘bad neighbour’ policy, stop the prosecutions and provide redress to East Timor, sourced from Woodside Petroleum,” Mr Darley concluded.

CONTACT: Stephen Darley 08-7329 8542

Annette Brownlie 0431 597256

Media liaison: Kathryn Kelly 0417 269 984

<http://www.ipan.org.au/>