**Minister Emilia Pires**

Emilia Pires is currently the Minister of Finance for the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Born and raised until her teenage years in Timor, Pires evacuated to Australia in 1975, when Indonesia invaded and occupied the small country. Before Timor-Leste officially regained its independence in 2002, Pires lived and worked in Australia, commissioning tirelessly for human rights and independence on behalf of the people of Timor. She spoke at the Congressional Hearing on the Humanitarian Crisis in East Timor in Washington, D.C., in September of 1999.

With over 20 years of management experience and 25 years of community planning and development work, Pires has enhanced her professional career with senior posts with both the United Nations and the World Bank. She returned to Timor-Leste in 1999, offering her civil service experience to the National Council of Timorese Resistance and serving as director of the Department of Regional Services. She took the position of Secretary of the Commission on Planning in 2001, and in 2007, Pires became Timor’sfinanceminister.

She was named one of the [world's most powerful women](http://www.forbes.com/global/2009/0907/power-women-09-east-timor-finance-emilia-pires.html) by Forbes Magazine in September 2009, and she also recently spoke at a World Bank forum on developing nations and internal conflict. During her residency as a Pacific Leadership Fellow, Pires will talk about her firsthand experience with peacebuilding in a fragile state.