

| IN MEMORIAM
Mário Soares
1924 - 2017



The Socialist International deeply mourns the loss of Mário Soares. Often referred to as the father of Portuguese democracy, he bravely fought dictatorship and went on to become Head of State, having also served his country as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. He was a major contributor to the work and activities of the Socialist International, and was elected a Vice-President and then Honorary President, a post he held until his death.

Born in Lisbon in 1924, Mário Alberto Nobre Lopes Soares, worked as a university lecturer and lawyer after graduating. He became fully involved in the struggle against the regimes of António de Oliveira Salazar, and later of Marcello Caetano, defending political prisoners and suffering incarceration and torture for leading opposition groups. Soares was a founding member of Portuguese Socialist Action, Acção Socialista, in 1964 in Geneva, Switzerland, and campaigned tirelessly for democracy and freedom for the Portuguese people, as well as searching for political alternatives to the conflict in Portugal's African colonies. He was exiled several times and spent time in São Tomé and Príncipe, then a Portuguese colony, and in 1970, in Rome and France.

The Acção Socialista became the Socialist Party in 1973 and Mário Soares was elected Secretary General. A year later, the so-called Carnation Revolution of 25 April took place and Soares returned home to crowds of supporters. In the years following, he was instrumental in building a new democracy for the country and facilitating the path to independence for the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe. It was not until 1976 that the democratic constitution was finally realised and Soares was elected Prime Minister, a role he then held for two years. In 1983 he was re-elected Prime Minister for a further two years, and in 1986 he was elected President. Mário Soares retained the Portuguese presidency for two terms, until 1996.

During his lifetime Mário Soares received numerous awards and honours, and was recognised time and again both nationally and internationally. He continued to sit on the presidential advisory council after stepping down, and worked for better governance and democracy throughout his many later projects.

Long after his retirement he remained politically involved, speaking out on issues that mattered to him. A staunch supporter of the original European project, he became, since 2011, an outspoken critic of EU policy, including austerity, arguing that 'Europe was meant to be a space for dialogue, social wellbeing and respect for others'.

The Socialist International conveys its sincerest sympathy to the Soares family, to his friends and comrades of the Socialist Party, and to all the Portuguese people at this sad time.

He will be deeply missed by every member of the SI global family.

Copyright © 2017 Socialist International, All rights reserved.

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, PO BOX 67973, LONDON SW4 4DU
UNITED KINGDOM
T: (44 20) 7627 4449 | E: Socialist International