

Onderwerp: ETAN Urges Accountability for Those Responsible for Santa Cruz Massacre in Timor-Leste

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30 Years On Justice for Timorese Remains Elusive

ETAN Says That It Is Never Too Late to Hold Accountable Those Responsible for Santa Cruz Massacre

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Photo by Steve Cox, [Generations of
Resistance: East Timor](#)

November 12, 2021- On the 30th anniversary of the Santa Cruz massacre, the East Timor and Indonesia *Action* Network (ETAN) urges the international community to end impunity for the human rights crimes committed during the occupation of Timor-Leste.

"The Santa Cruz massacre is among the most notorious crimes committed by Indonesia during the illegal occupation of Timor-Leste and has waited long for justice," said John M. Miller, National Coordinator of ETAN.

"Those responsible for the massacre and for the many other crimes against humanity during Indonesia's illegal occupation need to be held accountable for their crimes."

On November 12, 1991, U.S.-armed Indonesian troops shot hundreds of peaceful demonstrators calling for self-determination and protesting atrocities committed by the Indonesian military. More

***"The U.S and other
governments that armed
and trained Indonesia's***

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than 271 East Timorese were killed on the spot or died soon after and an equal number disappeared and are believed to be dead.

The 1991 massacre was a major turning point in Timor-Leste's struggle for liberation. Indonesia's assault was witnessed and filmed by foreign journalists. The eyewitness accounts of U.S.-based Allan Nairn and Amy Goodman, photographer Steve Cox, and filmmaker Max Stahl (who died recently, [see below](#)) countered Indonesia propaganda and inspired the formation of dozens of grassroots groups worldwide - [including ETAN](#) - to support Timor's self-determination.

security forces during the Suharto dictatorship, now actively pursue business-as-usual with Indonesia leaving no room for genuine accountability for their collusion with Timor's oppression."

During more than two decades of U.S.-backed occupation, Indonesian soldiers committed serious crimes with impunity, taking as many as 184,000 Timorese lives and torturing, raping, and displacing countless others. Timor-Leste became independent in 2002.

"The East Timorese people still need to know where the bodies of their relatives and friends are," said Miller. "Impunity for decades of systematic Indonesian military and police atrocities prevents both Timor-Leste and Indonesia from respecting human rights and consolidating the rule of law.

In recent years, Indonesia has increasingly violated human rights including stepped up military action in West Papua and the harassment of human rights defenders and environmental and anti-corruption activists.

"The U.S and other governments that armed and trained Indonesia's security forces during the Suharto dictatorship, now actively pursue business-as-usual with Indonesia leaving no room for genuine accountability for their collusion with Timor's oppression," Miller added.

Perpetrators from countries such as the United States, Britain, and Australia that actively aided in these crimes by providing weapons, training, and political support have yet to be held accountable.

For more on the Santa Cruz massacre see ETAN's backgrounder here: http://etan.org/factsheets/santa_cruz.htm

The East Timor and Indonesia *Action* Network (ETAN) was founded in December 1991 following the Santa Cruz massacre. ETAN supports democracy, human rights and justice in Timor-Leste, West Papua and Indonesia. Website: www.etan.org Twitter/Instagram @etan009.

**Journalist Max Stahl died October 28 after a long battle with cancer
Filmed Santa Cruz massacre**

"ETAN joins the Timorese nation in mourning the death of Max Stahl. His footage of Santa Cruz was important in our organizing, stimulating both outrage and activism that led to changes in U.S. policy. His courage was an inspiration to all of us that knew him," said John M. Miller. "Our condolences to his family, friends and colleagues."

In 1991, [Stahl said](#) that he kept filming in the Santa Cruz cemetery as "The soldiers who arrived fired point blank into a crowd of a couple of thousand young people." Burying tapes in a fresh grave. He returned late at night to retrieve the tapes and had them smuggled out of the country. He made the documentary Cold Blood: The Massacre of East Timor. In 1999, he filmed Indonesia's punitive destruction of the country after its people overwhelmingly voted for independence. He later he moved to Timor-Leste where he started a new family, continued to make films and share his skills, and was made an honorary citizen. The film archive he founded in Dili - The Max Stahl Audiovisual Centre for Timor-Leste - stands as a lasting legacy.

see also [TAPOL mourns loss of Max Stahl, legendary filmmaker who committed his life to East Timor](#)

The Guardian: [Max Stahl Obituary](#)

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