



The Santa Cruz Massacre - 30 years on

November 12th 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the massacre at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, Timor-Leste.

This was the event which finally roused the world to what had been going on in East Timor since 1975. The Indonesian occupation had accounted for tens of thousands of Timorese lives, but the rest of the world had generally ignored the disaster.

A delegation from the Portuguese Parliament was expected to arrive in Dili in November 1991. There were rumours of a possible meeting between the delegation and Xanana Gusmão, the resistance leader. Young people prepared to bring their problems before those whom they thought would help. One group of young people painted banners and placards in the grounds of the Motael Church in Dili. An altercation with the Indonesian military took place there on 28 October and one of the group's members, Sebastião Gomes, was shot and killed.

For various reasons the visit of the Portuguese delegation was cancelled, but on 11 November the *UN Special Rapporteur on Torture* was in Dili.



The young people decided to proceed with a demonstration to commemorate the killing of their friend Sebastião. They attended Mass at the Motael Church on the morning of 12 November. This was two weeks after his murder, and for Timorese people it marks a particular commemoration for the dead known as "Bitter Flowers". After Mass they left the church and began to walk along the waterfront about two km to the Santa Cruz cemetery.

Indonesian military, police and intelligence agents watched the march from the Motael Church. Some more Timorese joined the group along the way and still others gathered at the cemetery itself. Banners were unfurled calling for the UN's intervention, supporting Xanana Gusmão and self-determination.

cont. p. 2



A good friend, **Betty Devlin**, died on 23 July 2021. Along with other war widows, Betty had attended every one of the *Timor Time* dinners that ATLAS has enjoyed with supporters in past years. Betty was the widow of Mickey Devlin, one of the 2/2 Independent Company commandos on Timor in 1942. Members and friends of ATLAS salute Betty and her husband and offer condolences to their family. May Betty and Mickey rest in peace. *The image shows Betty with Timorese friend Vitál de Jesus at "Timor Time" in 2016 at Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club.*

Santa Cruz *cont.*

Once the unarmed and peaceful group arrived at the cemetery soldiers opened fire with automatic weapons. Many young ones fled into the grounds of the cemetery or into nearby houses. Soldiers surrounded the area, killing previously unharmed or lightly injured people by bayonetting them. They also went house-to-house, searching for the protesters. A survivor of the massacre recalls:

Many were killed in the cemetery but many more were killed outside the cemetery while they were running away or were taken from their hiding places in homes and other places, and murdered.

Many of the youth were taken away in trucks, to the military hospital, to interrogation centres, or simply to be killed. Hundreds ran to Bishop Belo's residence seeking refuge.

There was a series of killings over the following days as Indonesian security forces hunted down those they suspected of involvement in the protest. Many were arrested in the days and weeks that followed. Some were brought to trial and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.



The image above was taken from Max Stahl's film. The young people are falling over each other as they escape the bullets.

The number of people killed on the day of the massacre is 271, with 250 others listed as missing and whose bodies have never been found. Indonesian authorities initially declared that 19 people were killed but in the face of international outcry increased the figure to 50.

Further evidence that senior members of the Indonesian military leadership condoned the massacre came on 14 November when the Indonesian Armed Forces Commander, Try Sutrisno, was quoted as telling graduates at the Indonesian military academy that

"Delinquents like these have to be shot, and we will shoot them".

News of the massacre at Santa Cruz circulated around the world quickly and led to a dramatic rise in solidarity action.

Some governments, notably Australia's, supported the Indonesian explanation that this was an uncharacteristic action by "rogue elements" within the military. Nevertheless, the massacre brought attention to the wider issue of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor.

In the years that followed, November 12th became a rallying day for East Timorese and human rights activists in countries throughout the world, with anniversaries being marked by demonstrations and vigils.

A British cameraman and film maker, Max Stahl, was at the cemetery that day. He filmed Indonesian troops shooting the young people, chasing and beating them. He buried the footage of the massacre in the cemetery and dug it up during the night, smuggling it out to the BBC the next day.

Seeing is believing. It was irrefutable proof of the brutal oppression of the Timorese people.

Their testimony and that of those who supported them was finally shown to be true.

The massacre and its recording ultimately contributed to the collapse of Indonesian control in Timor-Leste, which then became independent in 2002.

Thank You!

We extend sincere thanks to all those who helped with our Timor-Leste Flood Appeal earlier in the year.

ATLAS was able to assist with the refurbishing of parts of the orphanage at Bidau, particularly the kitchen which had been badly damaged.



Moringa - Drumstick Tree

There's a tree that grows all over Timor-Leste called *Marungi* or Moringa (*Moringa oleifera*). It also grows across Asia, Africa and South America, although it is native to India. It's called the *miracle tree* or the *tree of life*. Why? Because every part of this tree is packed with vitamins. The bark, seeds, flowers and leaves are super-rich in nutrients.

Its leaves, flowers, pods and roots are edible. And because the pod is shaped like a drumstick, it is often known by that name too. The leaves are high in nutrition. The flowers, available for a short time, taste a little like mushroom and can be cooked with egg. The bark is used for its medicinal qualities and the roots can also be eaten. The fruit is fleshy and is also cooked.

The drumstick tree is drought tolerant and grows in arid regions through to the tropics. It will tolerate some frosts and grows from both cuttings and seed. The tree is one of those that needs little maintenance. It needs protection from the cold, and water in summer.

Why is Moringa called "the miracle tree"? Here's why. It has:

7 times the Vitamin C of oranges

4 times the Vitamin A of carrots

4 times the calcium in milk

3 times the potassium in a banana

2 times the protein of yogurt

The Carmelite Sisters in Timor-Leste are manufacturing a range of foods by mixing various vegetables with Moringa—cooking, drying, then grinding the mixture into powder. This extremely rich supplement can be sprinkled on other foods, making meals more nutritious.

The project is underway in the kitchen that ATLAS donors built at the Maubara orphanage, and the children are taught the process. They will be able to use the readily available Moringa tree for the rest of their lives.

Thanks to all ATLAS donors for supporting this programme.



Moringa is used to great advantage by the sisters and their helpers in the kitchen at Maubara and elsewhere. It's a great nutritious meal-maker.



Here are some of the young women whose education ATLAS is supporting in association with the Carmelite Sisters.

Our December issue will detail exciting future plans for a scholarship programme.

COMING SOON.....

Remembering Carmel Budiardjo

Carmel Budiardjo died recently at the age of 96.

She was one of the world's greatest fighters for human rights in those countries whose human rights have been trampled on by the Indonesian military (TNI) with the support and acquiescence of the US and its allies, including Australia. She inspired many others to champion the human rights of those who suffered under that oppressive regime.



Carmel founded the [TAPOL](https://www.tapol.org/) magazine and the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign. <https://www.tapol.org/>

Doing it hard in COVID time

Recently, news reports warned that the health system in Timor-Leste was "in danger of collapsing" following increases in COVID-19 cases. The Delta variant of the virus caused a large upsurge in the number of new cases. The capital Dili and the regional city of Ermera had recorded the most cases.

The national hospital in Dili was severely affected when a large number of staff tested positive to the virus. Dili was locked down, prohibiting religious services of any kind, as well as ending public transport and restricting restaurants to takeaway services only. In August the Australian government provided 300,000 vaccine doses to Timor-Leste.

Once lockdown finished in the first part of September people began to go back to work. ATLAS friend and adviser Edna Ferreira said that that some businesses had closed and so more people were without jobs. Those from the districts who usually went into the towns to sell their produce now face major difficulties. As more people don't have jobs, they cannot buy as they used to, and so the farmers can't sell their goods. Also, there are restrictions on travel, making it difficult for people to get their produce to the markets.

Donation Form

PO Box 211 St Marys NSW 1790

www.atlaseasttimor.com.au

ABN 12 165 033205

TITLENAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....POSTCODE.....

Amount \$.....

Cheque / money order / cash (Please make out to Australia Timor-Leste Advancement Society)

Credit Card – MasterCard Visa

Name on Card:

Card No: CVN

Expiry Date:/.....

Signature: