

International Memory of the World Register

On the Birth of a Nation: Turning points

(Timor Leste)

2012-25

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

The collection proposed for inclusion in the registry of the “Memory of the World” is dedicated to the Max Stahl collection of audiovisual documents on the Birth of the Nation of Timor Leste. It consists of documents considered the key documents which transformed the fate of a community far from the centres of power and of normal interests in a common cause of communities across the world.

These are images and stories at once personal and at the same time significant at a world level of the power of human dignity in the face of force which dehumanizes those who employ it. These are the images and documentary stories of the story of a new nation born thanks to these images transmitted across millions of screens which changed the world and the nation which was author of these sufferings and made a new place in the family of nations which few could imagine possible before. These images and stories over 12 years, the voices of those who whispered in hidden redoubts, the young people unarmed in the face of bullets, old men and women and young children climbing the rocks in the middle of the night, sacrificing themselves to realize a dream based in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights inspired a movement of ordinary people who upturned the established order and gave birth to the first nation of the 21st century.

The new nation of Timor Leste did not win its opportunity for life by a victory in the field of battle, but in the field of values shared across the boundaries of culture and geography.

Timor Leste is the first nation to liberate itself through the power of Audiovisual images. In the last century Audiovisual media began to be able to pass frontiers of language and give a worldwide voice to those who never before had the education or the opportunity to communicate.

Today across the world Audiovisual communication is becoming the language of future politics. From tv to social media the power of the image and the spoken word is opening the way for peoples to make radical change by speaking directly to each other and to the world . Timor Leste was a land mark in this dramatic development in Human Affairs.

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

The proposal is submitted the Max Stahl Audiovisual Centre for Timor Leste (CAMSTL), of Dili supported by the President of Timor Leste, Dr. Jose Ramos Horta, and the UNESCO committee of Timor Leste.

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Max Stahl is the author and CAMSTL the depository and co owner of the audiovisual collection. The National Audiovisual Institute is the depository of a digital copy and responsible for physical preservation and access under the terms of a convention signed in April 2009 between the parties.

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

For CAMSTL: Max Stahl, founder and director of the Centre.

2.4 Contact details

<i>Address</i>	
The Max Stahl Audiovisual Centre for Timor Leste	Memorial Hall – Rua Portugal, Bairro do Farol, Dili – Timor Leste
<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Email</i>
Tél. : + 670 723 4910	Max.stahl@gn.apc.org

3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

From The Max Stahl Centre Audiovisual Centre for Timor Leste (CAMSTL) Collection ‘On the Birth of a Nation’:’ Turning points’

Timor Leste is the first nation in history to win its independence through the audiovisual image. These images are both a record and key means or authors of a transformative change in a nation victim of a genocide comparable with the worst of the 20th century, and in international action and reaction to issues at the heart of Human Rights and International law.

The mainly unedited materials nominated are the core of a body of work which both documented and transformed the situation and the prospects of a people isolated and facing annihilation ‘dying as a people” (Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, 1987), to a people at the centre of the world’s attention. Through these images and the story they conveyed to the world a Nobel Peace Prize, a UN sponsored referendum and International military intervention in 1999 and the independence of Timor Leste (2002) were made possible.

They were also a landmark in the development and audiovisual online engagement of a grass roots citizens’ movement which has continued to developed further into a major new kind of force in international affairs.

The collection being nominated begins by setting the context with the first images of life inside illegally occupied former Portuguese colony Timor Leste to be filmed for 16 years since the invasion and isolation by Indonesian forces in 1975. Despite UN resolutions demanding Indonesian withdrawal and an act of self determination under UN decolonization procedures, some 150,000 people, around 25% of the population are thought to have died from war starvation and disease in a brutal invasion and occupation assisted by leading Western nations through equipment and weapons provision. A lack of evidence allowed the world to ignore this killing, continuing business as usual with the strategic resource rich dictatorship of President Suharto.

Beginning September 1991 with images originally filmed for the film :”In Cold Blood: The massacre of East Timor” (YTV,UK) screened around the world, Winner of Amnesty International, Kagoshima and Barcelona Documentary Film prizes, documents are a unique insight into life under occupation, into a popular Resistance which continues in the face of overwhelming force. For the first time the guerrilla fighters living within meters of superior Armed forces, and an unarmed nonviolent civilian resistance made up of students and young

people operating in areas controlled by occupying authorities was filmed. These 23 hours of images are selected to provide the context and recount the build up to the key event in the first part of this collection : The Santa Cruz massacre, November 12 1991.

During the following years the consequences of this event and the shocking and undeniable images that were taken of it built up a momentum inside and outside the country which finally proved unstoppable. In 1996 Timor's only bishop and Resistance Representative abroad were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 'in recognition of the struggle for the rights of small nations' and in 1999 Indonesia finally accepted a UN staged referendum on the future of the territory. However 'Security' is in Indonesian hands. When the vote goes against them, Indonesian forces, army and local militia, drive international press out and put the last remaining UN base under siege and the country to the torch. Max Stahl flees with the refugees under cover of night as the UN personnel are removed and is the only man filming as tens of thousands sleep rough on the mountains and Dili burns. In this second key event in the collection a catastrophe is averted, with the nation devastated facing genocidal attack the unique images in this collection smuggled out played a key role in rousing and focusing international action from street protests to the highest levels of international political decision making, launching an international intervention force and an unprecedented UN interim government to bring the new nation to Independence.

The Collection concludes with images of the celebration of the Restoration of Independence a lavish multimedia celebration watched worldwide and choreographed by the man who staged the opening show for the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

3.4 History/provenance

The nominated materials other than the Independence day celebrations 2002 were filmed by Max Stahl.

The 1991 materials nominated were filmed under contract with UK's Yorkshire TV. BETA copies of the original Hi8 materials were made in 1991 at YTV and kept in good conditions there. Original small format Hi8 tapes have suffered some damage from drop outs with the passage of time and relatively poor storage conditions. Today the most faithful copy of the content is from copies of these BETA copies held at INA (France) and in the UK.

Nonexclusive Rights for access and sales are shared by YTV and Max Stahl/CAMSTL. Other materials nominated were filmed by Max Stahl under no exclusive contract.

Original tapes are kept at The Max Stahl Audiovisual Centre for Timor Leste (CAMSTL) in Dili Timor Leste. Copies, and in some cases now of a higher quality than the originals extant, are kept at INA (Institut National de L'Audiovisuel) in France, at Granada Television Archives, Manchester, UK and selectively at other audiovisual archives.

Independence day celebrations (6 hours) was filmed by a team from RTP (Portuguese TV) and handed under an open access agreement to World broadcasters (incl Max Stahl) and Timor Leste's television archives.

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name : Max Stahl Address : PO Box 136, Dili, Timor Leste

Telephone	Facsimile	Email
+670 723 4910		maxstahl@gn.apc.org

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name : CAMSTL Address : Arquivo e Museo da Resistencia Timorese, Besik Universidade National de Timor Leste, Dili, Timor Leste

Telephone	Facsimile	Email :
		gillanfilms@yahoo.co.uk

4.3 Legal status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage

CAMSTL (Centro Audiovisual Max Stahl Timor Leste) which is supported by the Government of Timor Leste through the AMRT (Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance) is custodian of the original materials and of viewing copies, transcriptions and documentation of this collection as well as other materials. CAMSTL has carriage and rights to non-commercial and educational uses of these materials, which are free of copyright charges from the owner inside of Timor Leste. A budget has been provided by the Government of Timor Leste to develop facilities in the Archive and Museum of Timorese Resistance to preserve these materials in Timor Leste. Current technical arrangements will be reviewed in consultation with INA and other international archival experts to achieve appropriate design and implementation.

INA (Institut National de L'Audiovisuel) under a contract signed with CAMSTL has undertaken to preserve these materials along with its own collection through regular copies and periodic changes of format into the future. These materials are held and managed by INA under the contract which specifies the provision of master quality copies to CAMSTL in the future as required, and access to viewing of these materials online or by other means.

4.4 Accessibility

These materials are accessible locally in Timor Leste by visiting CAMSTL. A budget has been provided by the Government of Timor Leste to develop facilities in the Archive and Museum of Timorese Resistance to give the public direct access to viewing copies of the materials in the collection. At present these materials are available at CAMSTL through VHS viewing tapes.

The materials nominated are accessible worldwide through INAMEDIAPRO.COM. INA (Institut National de L'Audiovisuel) has both full quality and viewing copies of the materials in the collection nominated. They are accessible on line.

All access restrictions should be explicitly stated below:

The only access restrictions are practical ones. In Timor Leste the availability of space, machine time and resources limits access. The development of a server with digital access to materials is planned for and budgeted in the first development stage of a cooperation planned with the Archive and Museum of the Timorese Resistance. Implementation is planned for this year and next. A copy of the 500 hours

digitised at INA, including all of those nominated in this proposal, will be accessible as soon as this is up and running. It is hoped that in due course there will be online access to viewing quality materials through this system too.

Full access to the digitized materials on line through INA (France) requires a password given to those with a professional interest which may include research, production or other legitimate professional use. Open access to the public is given to many but not all of these materials nominated through this site INAMEDIAPRO.COM.

4.5 Copyright status

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

Copyright to the materials nominated and filmed after 1991 lies with Max Stahl, the author and producer. 1991 copyright lies with Yorkshire (now Granada TV) who share this with Max Stahl/CAMSTL.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity.

Yes. These materials were filmed by Max Stahl who is himself the guarantor of their authenticity. The authenticity is further verified in each case by many witnesses present during these events and during the filming and by the unchallenged broadcast of these materials around the world. Other accounts of these events exist in print

5.2 World significance

The images of the key events documented in this collection are unique. No one else filmed the massacre of Santa Cruz or the refugees as they fled Dili during the night and hid in the hills in September 1999. Any video images from 1991 to have survived at all are fragmentary and do not document the context or the build up to this revolutionary event in the history of the conflict or even conflict itself. Fragments of images that may have existed -some images were filmed inside the 1999 besieged UN compound- were lost or destroyed at the time or have survived only in fragments which do not constitute a coherent account. Despite the international interest in these subjects which at times has been intense, despite searches by several film makers no other audiovisual accounts have surfaced beyond those filmed by Max Stahl and such fragments filmed of moments inside the UN compound by UN staff, or materials filmed by journalists before the siege which forms the beginning of this collection began.

The existence of these sequences in the context of events in their time and place is represents a rare or even unique treasure not only for Timor Leste whose history was dramatically shaped by them, but for Humanity as a whole. These sequences depict events of a nature rarely captured on film at all, and even more rarely depicted in a coherent context which gives insight into their meaning and importance for those who would otherwise not have access to such understanding. In these moments of extreme crisis qualities of courage and compassion shown by ordinary people, including teenagers and children, are iconic testimonies to human qualities to which all humanity can claim ownership.

Although the invasion and occupation of Timor Leste is a regional story, those present or not far 'off stage' behind these events are many international actors as well as local ones. The crisis of 1991 which culminated in the massacre of Santa Cruz, and all the suffering and killings in the previous 16 years, was the consequence not just of local or regional conflict, of an invasion and occupation by a large neighbour of a small nation, but of the failure of a UN process, and an international responsibility, which ultimately came to rest with the UN staff who were asked to abandon their posts to save their lives in 1999, and with the tens of thousands of refugees facing annihilation on the hills around Dili. These images serve as a vivid reminder of the human cost paid by the people of Timor of decades of instability and in excess of 150,000 dead, but also of the high cost paid by the International community which only in 2012 is considering withdrawing it's mission in Timor Leste.

But the achievement too is of iconic international importance. The end of 24 years of struggle and suffering and international indecision when the UN finally succeeded in implementing its mandate to ensure self determination in Timor Leste was an international intervention which established the first ever UN sovereign government, constituted for an interim period of 2 and half years to take the territory to independence on May 20th 2002.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

Does the heritage meet any of the following tests? (It must meet at least one of them.)

1 Time

The events documented in this collection can be seen to be evocative of their time. The images of the massacre of Santa Cruz arrived on world tv screens immediately following the end of the cold war and the bipolar world order which it supported. For the first time in this context international and UN initiatives and reactions were not automatically constrained by manoeuvring of client states of one side or the other (As had been the case in the original invasion in 1975). The 1996 award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Timor's Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and Diplomatic campaigner and Timorese Resistance Representative abroad Dr. Jose Ramos Horta was 'a recognition of the Rights of Small Nations' (Nobel Committee) and the staging of the referendum of 1999 itself were the high points in this climate where the concepts of Human Rights and International Law to some extent filled a vacuum left by the retreat of the Cold War and the clash of National Interests lined up on either side in it. They represent in some sense a high watermark reached in the implementation of international law. The intervention Forces "INTERFET" which arrive to implement the will of the Timorese people expressed in the UN staged vote of August 30 1999 were sent in part in response to popular demand expressed on the streets in Portugal, Australia and around the world reacting to the images –including in particular those in this collection- emerging from Timor Leste. This was the first UN mandated expeditionary force to be sent with such a mission based on international Decolonization law. It could be argued that it was a precedent for other successful and less successful interventions justified by the defence of Human Rights since. And for the reactions against such interventions from more traditional or conservative major National players in world and UN politics more recently.

2 Place

The character of East Timor as the most remote and often forgotten colony of a long declining and often forgotten empire, located in Asia long after the region had emancipated itself from colonial rule, was seen by many as a quaint or an oddity prior to 1975. However the strength of Timorese identity and the price that would be paid for it proved to be higher than anyone could then imagine. Those who chose to identify themselves as Catholics nearly tripled to 90% of the population under pressure of occupation and education by forces dominated by Islam. On gaining independence Portuguese language was chosen as the official language of education by Timorese legislators despite formidable challenges after the inculcation of Bahasa Indonesia over 24 years, and considerable pressure from UN and other managers in Timor to go for English. These facts testify to the surprising resilience of historical roots and ties in a region where cultural diversity with a high level of mutual tolerance between religious and cultural groups has not affected the sustainability of diverse cultural and religious identities.

3 People

Iconic images of the courage and generosity of ordinary people in situations of extreme stress and peril are to be found in this collection. Moments captured by the camera such as the image of young man cradling a stranger in the face of the bullets midst of the massacre are

testimony to the most profound Human qualities and values celebrated in literature across the ages and cultures. The story of Domingos Segurado, a quietly spoken teacher who says he has lost 19 members of his family in the struggle for his people's dignity and independence and that only by killing him too would Indonesia prevent him continuing his peaceful struggle for the same values. His smile to the camera in the midst of the crowd of young faces attending the mass which presaged the demonstration in which he was then killed on November 12 1991. Far from ending his struggle his death magnified it – over 2000 schools competed for The Domingos Segurado Human Rights Prize a world away in Ireland, which became one of the most active nations in supporting Timorese Independence during the 1990's.

Well known figures too emerge from this collection. The Bishop speaking out against the lies published on TV after a young activist taking sanctuary in a church was shot dead, is later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize along with the passionate campaigner for a people invaded, occupied forgotten denouncing the co responsibility of the United States , Great Britain, France and Australia Dr Ramos Horta who was later to become President of independent Timor Leste. The vision and courage in the defence of principles of Human Rights and Dignity enshrined in the UN declaration of Human Rights shown in this collection is graphic testimony as to why the Nobel Peace Committee recognized these two outstanding figures in 1996 with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, for their struggle for the rights of the people of Timor, and in recognition of the rights of all Small Nations .

4 Subject and theme

(Refer to 1.Time)

5 Form and style

The original carrier of this material was Hi8 and the consumer digital format Minidv. The small size flexibility and relative high quality of these formats enabled a revolution in frontline film making, with video journalists and film makers capable of passing as tourists or members of the public in a way that had not been possible before. It was the first wave of what has come to be known as 'citizen journalism' with many front line images nowadays coming from mobile phones or even smaller devices the possibility of denying or hiding absolutely massacres and similar blatant abuses of Human Rights which existed in the 1970s and 80s - for example in Timor, would never be the same again. Regimes seeking to cover up abuses now attempt to discredit images by denying independent witnesses access to verifying them. But in this collection not only was this access achieved, but the new technologies and relatively large resources available in the 1990s made it possible for determined film makers like Max Stahl to spend the necessary time 'under cover' with the story to allow for a more personal and intimate story telling aesthetic in dealing with a large journalistic subject. In this sense the transition from the large crews and budgets of the 1970s and 80s to the instant reporting and citizen journalism of years 2000 was a window of opportunity for a documentary story telling in the midst of great events.

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

The story of the struggle of the people of Timor is recognized and symbolized in this collection. What is seen by many as a notable success story for the UN continues to receive a broad level of support for multilateral initiatives stabilizing the new nation including through four UN missions pre and post independence. And it's continued impact is not merely historical. Timor continues to occupy a place in the hearts and minds of many peoples and in the international institutions who have been engaged with it over 35 years because it represents and illustrates ongoing key dilemmas on a number of major issues of broad international concern. The argument over key issues continues with an ongoing campaign for an international tribunal for crimes against humanity committed in Timor Leste during the Indonesian occupation supported by Amnesty International and many groups seeking to establish accountability under international law. Timor's case has very particular importance in

this debate in that more than 150 indictments prepared by UN investigators as a result of detailed investigations remain open, awaiting the arrest of the accused and a court able and willing to try them. The dilemma of the Timorese government is cause celebre of a fundamental problem. Timor Leste is a small nation whose stability and prosperity requires good relations with their main trading partner and largest neighbour which also shelters these and other accused who are almost all Indonesian citizens. In the view of its President and Prime Minister this is an irreconcilable contradiction and successive governments of Timor Leste have chosen their future prosperity and stability over seeking justice. This makes the search for accountability for past crimes very difficult if not impossible and represents a difficult precedent for the future development of international law generally.

The images from this collection continue to be used and sought out by film makers interested not only in Timor Leste and its recent history at the centre of international conflicts but in what follows from this difficult and dramatic birth of the nation, in areas such as social and economic development, nation building, democracy, Justice and Human Rights, and in the success or failure of the UN and the effects of international intervention.

Some of the recent international films with a historical perspective recounting the story of Timor Leste's struggle for self determination and Justice recently made or being made with archive from the nominated collection are: *Alias Ruby Wax* (USA,2012), *Turning Points in History* (Canada, 2009), *Bloodshot : The dreams and nightmares of East Timor* (UK ,2012), *The Search* (Timor/Australia,2011), *Breaking the News* (Australia, 2011). A continuing international journalistic interest in elections, news and development stories which far exceeds that given to other nations of similar size or power is given historical and contextual depth too through news reference to this collection- in recent weeks alone from the BBC, Australian media, and international satellite channels. The first international feature film set in Timor "Balibo Five", was released in 2010.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

The images in this collection are unique. They are also extremely rare in nature.

Images of the conflict in Timor Leste were extremely rare during the first 18 years of the conflict. Timor Timur (East Timor) which Indonesia claimed as its 27th province was closed to visitors from 1975 to 1989, and even internal travel required a military licence. In the first years after the Indonesian governor Mario Carrascalao officially opened the province the actual number of visitors was tiny and the level of suspicion and control exercised by the military, police, intelligence forces and large numbers of informers was such as to terrify any legitimate visitor. The images which begin this collection, filmed in September 1991 were the first audiovisual images to emerge from inside occupied Timor Timur since the invasion in 1975. Max Stahl's meeting with Commander David Alex 'Daitula' and his group of guerrilla fighters was the first encounter between a film journalist and the Resistance fighters in the bush which took place more than four years before a similar meeting with another foreign journalist / film maker was achieved. The images of the unarmed Resistance in preparation for the demonstration of 12 November, and then of the massacre itself are unique in Timor Leste, but also extremely rare in any comparable conflict at this time. The necessary time, skills, and determination, the deception necessary to gain access to such secret preparations under the noses of a ubiquitous occupation force which is following every move by any foreigner amongst the tiny number in the country are rare commodities. No one else filmed the Santa Cruz Massacre. But the professional sang froid necessary to film in any massacre and then find a way to hide and recover and extract the video materials is rare in nature, if not unprecedented. In 1999 some 600 journalists covered the referendum staged by the UN on the future of Timor Leste. By the time this collection begins the announcement of the results on September 4 1999, and after orchestrated intimidation by the Indonesian army and militia, there were no independent video journalists left filming. Max Stahl was the only cameraman or video journalist to accompany the refugees up the mountains as they fled the UN compound following Indonesian threats and UN decision to abandon the last UN base. The images that he was able to send out with the help of the Timorese clandestine network and individual UN staff who remained were the only ones merging from Timor at the time and remain the only audiovisual record of these critical days.

6.2 Integrity

The integrity of this collection from a technical point of view is unchallengeable. It was filmed by one person with equipment that survives today in the possession of Max Stahl and CAMSTL and can be examined. Testimony to the integrity of the content – the journalism and the film record of these critical days in this collection- are the many awards given by Max Stahl's peers to this work, and the continued use as the images of record of these materials between 12 and 20 years later (see above). Many witnesses survived but none have criticised the integrity of this record. On the contrary it is the witnesses- be they Timorese veterans, civilians or UN staff present at the time who today are the greatest defenders of this record, its importance and its need for preservation and recognition.
