

# Remembering one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's worst massacres, the unpunished crimes of 1965

Saturday 3 December 2005, by [Tapol](#) (Date first published: 30 September 2005).

Forty years ago this weekend, Indonesia was plunged into the darkest period in its history when Major-General Suharto unleashed a wave of mass killings regarded among the worst of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On 1 October 1965, a group of Indonesian army officers staged a coup attempt, killing six generals [see note]. Suharto, not a target of the attack, struck back against the perpetrators. His troops fanned out across the country slaughtering members of the Indonesian Communist Party, which was wrongly blamed for the coup attempt. Estimates of the death toll range from half a million to three million. No-one has ever been held to account for this appalling crime.

Mass arrests landed hundreds of thousands of people in prison. By the early 1970s, around 70,000 were still in detention, of whom not more than two hundred were ever tried. The innocent victims of this purge still suffer deplorable discrimination to this day.

After reducing the incumbent President Sukarno to nothing more than a figurehead, Suharto took over as President in March 1966. From then until May 1998, when he was forced to step down, Indonesia was ruled by a military dictatorship responsible for massive and widespread violations of human rights throughout the country, especially in Aceh and West Papua, and in East Timor, which the armed forces brutally occupied in 1975.

Carmel Budiardjo of TAPOL, herself one of those jailed without trial, says:

*"While millions of his victims still endure continued discrimination, Suharto the architect of their suffering lives in secluded luxury with his children who enriched themselves during his years in power. He must not be allowed to go unpunished."*

TAPOL is calling for full rehabilitation and restitution for the victims of the 1965 tragedy and for Suharto to be brought to trial for the crimes against humanity committed by his regime.

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For more information see 'Forty years on, justice and comprehensive rehabilitation for the 1965 victims' at:

<http://tapol.gn.apc.org/news/files/1965ann.htm>

[Also posted on ESSF website, article 970, written by Carmel Budiardjo]

Note: The events of October 1965 are known in Indonesia as the '30 September Movement' because the coup attempt was planned for that day, although it occurred very early in the morning of 1 October.

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