

In memory of East Timor's victims

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Alliance



NICK BAUCH/Herald photos

On Friday November 12, graves were erected on Bascom hill to commemorate the 271 East Timorese massacred by Indonesian military at a cemetery.



"Our money is going to the Indonesian government to buy guns to kill people."

BY LISA KALSCHUR
NEWS REPORTER

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Maddy Brigell
UW Greens member

Students trudging up Bascom Hill Friday afternoon said they were agitated by the hundreds of gravestones marking the lawn, which evoked a scene of a mass grave.

"I have no idea what this is about, but it's very disturbing," said UW-Madison senior Emily Bateman.

The gravestones commemorated 271 East Timorese who perished on Nov. 12, 1991 when Indonesian soldiers opened fire on a crowd of 1,500 peaceful demonstrators in a cemetery, according to Tom Foley, a member of the East Timor Action Network.

"The numbers seem more real when you

have symbols — 271 is such an abstract number," Foley said. "It was a wholesale massacre, unprovoked."

The bloodshed, known as the Santa Cruz massacre, occurred at a cemetery in Dili, East Timor. The East Timorese had gathered at the cemetery to memorialize the death of a Timorese youth shot by the army. The slaughter was witnessed by two American journalists, Allan Nairn and Amy Goodman, whose reports galvanized a grassroots movement in America to oppose the Indonesia occupation of East

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Timor, Foley said.

Foley said UW has strong ties with companies that do business with the Indonesian military including arms manufacturers Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Rockwell International, as well as oil companies Chevron and General Electric.

"The University recently had its trust fund forum and looking through the portfolio we discovered \$13 million in investments with these companies - they are complicit in the theft and murder in East Timor," he said.

Sophomore and UW Greens member Maddy Brigell said many are unaware of the violence in East Timor and UW's involvement.

"Our money is going to the Indonesian government to buy guns to kill people," she said.

Foley said ETAN formed eight years ago in the wake of the massacre and has been working since to get legislation passed by Congress to end the carnage.

"A lot has changed since then, many arms deals have been cut," he said.

Elliot Stokes, a member of Medical Aid for East Timor, said the goal of the rally and graveyard reconstruction was to increase student awareness.

The Indonesian military invaded East Timor in 1975, killing an estimated one-third of the population during the first four years of occupation.

In response to the international condemnation of the occupation, Indonesia agreed to a United Nations administered ballot in East Timor.

The ballot, held on Aug. 30 of this year, allowed the East

Timorese to vote for either remaining a province of Indonesia or becoming an independent nation. Following the Sept. 4 announcement that nearly 80 percent of the East Timorese had voted for independence, the nation was engulfed in violence, Stokes said.

UW sophomore Kurt Ellison, a member of the Alliance for Democracy, said it is important students realize decisions the university has been making.

"If more people knew, they would be outraged," Ellison said. "Think about this the next time you go to class, something there has been paid for through abuse."

A candlelight vigil will be held Tues. Dec. 7, 6 p.m. at the 100 block of State Street in remembrance of the 1975 Indonesian military invasion. For more information, the East Timor Action Network online is at www.etan.org.