Balibo Five Overview

Australian and New Zealand Points of View

Should Australia pursue justice for the Balibo Five regardless of the ramifications for bilateral relations between Indonesia?

The Balibo Five; a phrase that Australians know well, though one that is perhaps not so well known outside of Australia.

The Balibo Five were a group of journalists for channel 7 and 9 in Melbourne and Sydney respectively. They died sometime around October 16 1975 with the contention always being were they innocent victims caught in the cross-fire between Indonesian and Fretlin forces; or were they deliberately executed by Kopassus (Indonesian Special Forces) to prevent knowledge of the I ndonesian invasion of what was then known as Portuguese Timor.

While for many years political figures in Australia, Briton, New Zealand, America and Indonesia have, despite what is now widely known to be contrary evidence

The Balibo Five: Australian Journalist, Gregory John Shackleton, Australian sound recordist, Anthony John Stewart, New Zealand cameraman, Gary James Cunningham, British cameraman, Brian Raymond Peters, and British reporter Malcolm Rennie.

Though not receiving as much attention as the “Balibo Five” Roger East an Australian AAP- Reuters journalist who along with two other journalists Michael Richardson and Jill Jolliffe were the only foreigners representing international interests. East, working with a young Jose Ramos Horta (now Timor’s President) were reporting on the then disappearance of the five journalists

As a result of the Pinch Coronial findings into the death of Brian Raymond Peters, delivered November 16th 2007, with the matter being referred to the Australian Federal Police on 17th January 2008 a War Crimes investigation was initiated by the AFP on August 20th 2009 (Australian Federal Police, 2009)

Bibliography:

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE. 2009. *Balibo Five Investigation* [Online]. Available: <http://www.afp.gov.au/media-centre/news/afp/2009/september/balibo-five-investigation.aspx> [Accessed June 2nd 2010].