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**COLLECTION TITLE** Papers of Michael Richardson

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**COLLECTION IDENTIFIER** MSS 190

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**INCLUSIVE DATE(S)** 1970 to 2009

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**EXTENT** 15 boxes

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**CREATOR** Michael Richardson [1945-

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**RELATED ENTITIES** Michael Richardson [1945-

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**RELATED COLLECTIONS** Papers of Michael Richardson

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**ACCESS POINTS** Journalists

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#### **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Michael Richardson was the Southeast Asia correspondent for The Age newspaper in the 1970's. He researched the political history and conflicts of East Timor for 30 years. He was a visiting senior research fellow at the Institute of South-East Asian Studies up until 2009.

#### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Michael Richardson was the Southeast Asia correspondent for The Age newspaper in the 1970's, specifically following the crisis, coup and invasion of Portugese (East) Timor by Indonesia after Portugal withdrew, which was of great interest to Australia. He researched the political history and conflicts of East Timor for 30 years. He was a visiting senior research fellow at the Institute of South-East Asian Studies up until 2009. He donated his collection of papers to UNSW Canberra in 2009.

The Richardson Collection includes 85 photographic prints (plus some duplicate prints) from 4 rolls of film that were taken by Michael Richardson a journalist in East Timor in November 1975 prior to the invasion of Timor by Indonesia in December 1975. The photos include the ceremony for East Timor's Declaration of Independence on 28 November 1975. There were only two people taking photographs at this event: Jill Jolliffe and Michael Richardson. The photos are extremely significant as the only known images of the Declaration of Independence and the only copies of these. The negatives are thought to be lost.

The History of Portugese Timor (East Timor) Declaration of Independence and Invasion (extract sourced from Wikipedia)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_East\\_Timor#Decolonisation,\\_coup,\\_and\\_independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_East_Timor#Decolonisation,_coup,_and_independence)

Developments in Portuguese Timor during 1974 and 1975 were watched closely by Indonesia and Australia. Australia's Labor Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, had developed a close working relationship with the Indonesian leader Suharto, and followed events with concern. On 11 August 1975, the UDT mounted a coup. Indonesia sought to portray the conflict as a civil war, which had plunged Portuguese Timor into chaos, but after only a month, aid and relief agencies from Australia and elsewhere visited the territory, and reported that the situation was stable. Nevertheless, many UDT supporters had fled across the border into Indonesian Timor, where they were coerced into supporting integration with Indonesia. In October 1975, in the border town of Balibo, two Australian television crews (the "Balibo Five") reporting on the conflict were killed by Indonesian forces, after they witnessed Indonesian incursions into Portuguese Timor.

On 28 November 1975, Fretilin made a unilateral declaration of independence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor (República Democrática de Timor-Leste in Portuguese). This was not recognised by either Portugal, Indonesia, or Australia; however, the UDI state received formal diplomatic recognition from six countries that were led by leftist or Marxist-Leninist parties, namely Albania, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Fretilin's Francisco Xavier do Amaral became the first President, while Fretilin leader Nicolau dos Reis Lobato was Prime Minister.

Indonesia's response was to have UDT, Apodeti, KOTA and Trabalhista leaders sign a declaration calling for integration with Indonesia called the Balibo Declaration, although it was drafted by Indonesian intelligence and signed in Bali, Indonesia not Balibo, Portuguese Timor. Xanana Gusmão, now the country's Prime Minister, described this as the 'Balibohong Declaration', a pun on the Indonesian word for 'lie'. The Indonesian invasion of East Timor began on 7 December 1975.

## **ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

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## **SOURCE OF ACQUISITION**

The collection was donated by Michael Richardson in 2009.

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## **EXISTENCE AND LOCATION OF ORIGINALS**

Special Collections, UNSW Canberra

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