



WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

We continue to share with you the World March of Women's responses to the care and environmental crises, which are expressions of the system's multidimensional crisis. Capitalism is in crisis; its response is more militarization and control. The interrelationships between capitalism and patriarchy are increasingly complex and we must improve our analyses. The reading of WMW activists in Mali, Tunisia and Guatemala of their national situation contribute in this regard. We accepted the risk of being a bit outdated compared to the speed of events, but maintain the perspective of women who live there and act to change the situation. Acting strategically in an increasingly complex world is our challenge in the organization of the 24-hour feminist action as a sign that we are alert and on the move. We express our solidarity with the women and youth living in Quebec who are resisting over 100 days of repression by the national government and continue express aloud their demands that defend education as a right and common good.

INTERNATIONAL

International Committee meeting follows up on decisions made at the International Meeting in the Philippines

The International Committee (IC) of the World March of Women held its first physical meeting on April 17-18, 2012, in Istanbul, Turkey, at which women from each region of the world – Africa, the Americas, Europe, Asia/Oceania and the Middle East/Arab Region – were present.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the IC members to get to know one another, particularly since several of the sisters had been unable to attend the 8th International Meeting in the Philippines. It was also a time for defining concrete follow-up actions from the meeting and for an in-depth discussion of the real-life situations in the different countries and regions around the world.

The details of how the 24 hours of worldwide feminist action would proceed were one of the main topics on the agenda. It was decided that the action will take place on December 10, 2012, from 12 pm to 1 pm. The action is our response to the increase in militarization, violence against women and femicide, poverty and the austerity measures imposed by governments, which hinder our fight for economic independence and lead to the privatization of commons goods around the world. This date is the

anniversary of the day in 2004 when we, at the WMW, approved the Women's Global Charter for Humanity, which summarizes our common goal: a world based on the values of equality, freedom, solidarity, justice and peace. The date is also known as International Human Rights Day. More information on arrangements for the

day will be sent out in the months to come.

At the press conference held on the 20th, we declared our solidarity with our sisters in Turkey – union representatives, political activists and reporters – wrongly imprisoned for defending their rights, as well as Kurdish women who suffer from constant marginalization. In 2009, we

of the WMW demonstrated in solidarity with the union representatives arbitrarily detained in Turkey. Some of these activists have been tried and sentenced to six years in prison. These cases are now being appealed.

We also expressed our solidarity with our sisters in Mali, Tunisia, Guatemala and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and demanded that governments take the necessary steps to put an end to the rise in violence and militarization. We declared that we will continue



to build and enrich our feminist alternatives, making efforts to increase the diversity of the women participating in the March, especially those who are often excluded, such as lesbians, indigenous women, migrant women and women in prostitution, among others.



After the IC meeting, some of the members participated in a number of round tables at the 12th AWID (Association of Women's Rights in Development) International Forum (*photo*), held from April 19 to 22, 2012, which allowed us to share feminist analyses

and positions with women from around the world.

AFRICA

Security situation in Mali: between armed rebellion in the North and the military coup d'État

Tuareg armed rebellion has been a fact of life in Mali since 1963, when the first instance was overcome by force. It restarted in early 1990 and was handled through negotiations, signature of a document and the integration of ex-combatants into the army and security forces. In 2005, the rebellion began once again, leading to further negotiations and the signature of another agreement. But at that point, there had never been a territorial occupation.

After NATO's 2011 intervention in Libya, led by France (with a significant amount of weapons), many young people from Mali who had fought in Gaddafi's army had access to all kinds of weapons. After the war, groups returned home, better armed than the Malian army. Malian authorities allowed them to settle in the North, went to visit them and gave them financial support.

However, for more than four months now, the sound of weapons has replaced dialogue and consensus in the country, and is unlikely to stop in the near future. Mali is experiencing an unprecedented crisis, whose complexity and multiple participants will make it difficult to resolve.

On January 17, 2012, armed assailants took Ménaka, a city in the region of Gao, and planted their flag in the place of the flag of Mali. This resulted in the hasty flight of the armed forces, the security forces and the State administration, as well as a massive displacement of the population.

A few days later, rebels took the city of Aguelhok, where they lined up dozens of Malian soldiers and slaughtered them one by one.

Malian communities were still under the shock of such atrocities, when on 22th March 2012, the insurgence of a group of soldiers from the Malian army soldiers ended in a coup d'État, during which the State radio and television stations and the airport were occupied and the Presidential Palace was attacked. The Constitution was suspended, the institutions dissolved, borders were closed and the presidential elections scheduled for April were canceled.

The situation worsened after the military coup that sought to stop the rebel advance: one week after the coup, the rebellion had advanced and more than 66% of Mali's territory was occupied in just three days, from 28-30 March, when the attackers took three northern regions without resistance from the army, which abandoned the scene. All State personnel departed these regions. Faced with this abandonment, the people began to flee in all directions: to neighboring countries and to non-occupied parts of the country.

In Gao and Timbuktu, the rebels have destroyed all physical structures, such as banks, schools and hospitals, childcare facilities, churches, State food stores (which were full at the time, as these regions have been facing a severe food shortage and free distribution was then in progress), and associated institutions in Mali. The rebels walk through the city firing their rifles into the air.

They continue to impose fear through practices such as public throat-slitting, kidnapping, and gang rapes of women and youths, depriving people of their dignity. Now they are marrying young girls by force, under threat of arms.



During the WMW 2010 action in Mali, women's participation in the prevention and the resolution of conflicts was debated in Bamako and Gao

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the attackers come from different groups with different agendas: the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA), which is a division of the Tuareg that demands independence and does not hesitate to ally with former Libyan armed combatants and the jihadist movements of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM); Ansar Dine (a Salafist group); MUJAO (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa); Boko Haram in Nigeria; as well as drug traffickers and criminals of various nationalities: Afghans, Pakistanis, Libyans, and more.

As if this were not enough, on 30 April and 1 May 2012, armed clashes between the Parachute Regiment Command, commonly known as "Red Berets" (who were responsible for the safety of deposed President ATT) and the Kati Soundiata camp, the "Green Berets" (from which came the members of the military junta), spread a general state of panic among the population. In this context of widespread terror, the general situation of insecurity and total lack of freedom is exasperating the youth in Gao, who in early May came

out to confront the rebels, empty-handed, over the course of two days. Since then, acts of violence against the population have declined.

Economic sanctions imposed by ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) have put pressure on the junta, which eventually restored the Constitution and the institutions of the Republic. The Constitution dictates that, in the absence of the President, the President of the National Assembly will assume interim presidential responsibilities and must organize elections within a maximum of 40 days. This led ECOWAS and the junta to appoint an Interim

President (who became Transitional President on 22 May), a Prime Minister and a targeted government to carry out a 12-month transition, manage the matter of North and organize the presidential elections.

But, unfortunately, the North of the country remains under occupation and the Islamic law imposed by groups comprising Malians and foreigners.

"The people of Mali are organizing to stand up against the occupation of their lands by the attackers. Many actions are being carried out at all levels for the restoration of peace and social cohesion", says Nana Aicha Cissé, a member of WMW Mali and of our International Committee (IC) for the African region. "Negotiations are continuing and it is uncertain how long they will last. The truth is that most of the parties have agreed to negotiate on everything... except the division of the country".

During the press conference held at the Istanbul meeting, the WMW's IC demanded a quick resolution to the conflict, in the interest of the women and the people of Mali.

AMERICAS

Guatemala: authoritarianism and criminalization of social movements are characteristic of the current government

Far-right military forces in Guatemala managed to return to power at the end of 2011 with the election of retired general Otto Pérez as President. After a 15-year process of transitioning toward peace, these forces are under investigation for genocide, committed during the country's civil war and resulting in thousands of deaths, disappearances and sexual assaults.

"Under a civil facade, a major militarization process was launched in the country, during which the authoritarian, excluding, racist and patriarchal model took deeper root, along with mining, agro-industry and industrial policies that involve exploitative labor policies, the dispossession of land from the people, the criminalization of social struggles and the judicial

persecution of grassroots women and men working in their defense."

This was one of the statements made by the women and men from different types of social movements, representing original peoples, students, women's and feminist organizations, community radios, NGOs and cooperatives, union reps, slum dwellers and academia, who met at the University of San Carlos on April 29 and 30 (2 Kat and 3 Kan in the Mayan calendar) in an indigenous, rural and popular assembly for the unity, dignity and sovereignty of the people (click to [read the complete declaration](#), in Spanish only).

In this context, they drew attention to the judicial persecution that has been occurring since November of

last year, launched by military relatives against former members of revolutionary movements, who are now continuing their peaceful resistance in order to demand their rights and protect their territory from transnationals.

Sandra Morán, from the Sector de Mujeres (Women's Sector), an organization that coordinates the WMW in Guatemala and a member of our International Committee (IC), is one of the activists targeted by this persecution. "From the military's point of view, I am accused of thousands of crimes. This is a form used by the military as a means of pressure and to put an end to legal processes", explains Sandra. These events have weakened the small advances accrued at the institutional level, within the implementation framework for the Peace Agreements and as a result of the actions undertaken through ongoing struggles.

Authoritarianism has also taken on other forms, such as the declaration of a State of Siege, at the start of

May, in the city of Barillas, Huehuetenango, a department that shares a border with Chiapas, Mexico, and where, three years ago, 298 (out of a total of 305) communities signed their rejection of plans to build a hydroelectric plant in an area traditionally used as a recreation site and ceremonial center, and which would restrict the use of water for household and agricultural purposes. The state of siege was declared after a rally of more than 5,000 people against the ambush of the leaders of the resistance in the community, which led to the death of Andrés Francisco Miguel and left Pablo Antonio Pablo and Esteban Bernabé in serious condition. As we were finalizing this newsletter, we received information that the state of siege has been lifted, although attacks against the community continue. Click here to read more about the situation (Spanish only): <http://alainet.org/active/54605>

EUROPE

Care-givers' strike in Basque Country

As part of its participation in the general strike held on March 29, the WMW in the Basque Country (Euskal Herriko Emakumeon Mundu Martxa) called for a "care-givers' strike" to demand that housework and care-giving – traditionally performed by women and perceived as having no value and entailing no rights or

protection – also be considered as work. They called for women to stop cleaning, cooking and care-giving on that day and to hang their aprons from their windows and balconies, as a symbolic act to show that their homes were also on strike.



Meeting of the European Coordinating Body of the WMW

Scheduled for June 1-3 in Romans sur Isère, France. The main topic of the meeting will be the European campaign against the effects of the crisis, and the associated austerity measures, on the lives of women. The campaign was initially discussed at the previous meeting in Skopje, Macedonia. The objective now is to move forward with building an agenda including proposals for joint actions, as well as ideas for ensuring that the campaign is both visible and dynamic.

The first campaign publication is a video bringing women testimonies. Click to watch it: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUX14wL7tWE&feature=youtu.be>

Young feminists' manifesto

Preparations for the second Young Feminists of Europe camp are proceeding. The camp will be held from August 6-16, 2012, in Moroieni, Romania. Based on the debates during the first camp, which took place in France in July 2011, a document was created to serve as a starting point for discussions of a shared youth agenda. The manifesto covers the following subjects: solidarity, multiple forms of discrimination, the economy, the environment, violence, healthcare, sexuality and the promotion of feminism. On the path to the second camp, the idea is to continue to work together to build a world without oppression or patriarchal domination and to maintain and strengthen ties between young women. Click here to read the manifesto in: [English](#), [French](#). For more information about the preparation of the camp, write to mmfjeunes@gmail.com.

MIDDLE EAST/ARAB WORLD

Solidarity with Tunisian women fighting for their rights



On March 8, more than 5,000 people – chiefly women – gathered before Bardo Palace in Tunis, the seat of the National Congress, to demand the constitutionalization of women’s rights. The ATFD (Tunisian Democratic Women’s Association), a member of the World March of Women, set up an online petition to broaden support for the inclusion of women’s rights in the Tunisian Republic’s new Constitution. The petition can be signed by individuals or in the name of an organization, using the following link:

http://www.petitions24.net/la_constitutionnalisation_des_droits_humains_des_femmes

During the WMW’s International Committee meeting, Souad Mahmoud shared the fact that the situation of Tunisian women is of great concern at present. “There is a palpable fear among the Tunisian population - and especially women - that rights will be lost in the new Constitution. There is also a threat from conservative

Islamic sectors who want to establish Sharia as the source of the new Constitution”.

“As a reminder, Tunisia is the only country in the Arab World in which women enjoy a favorable, egalitarian legal arsenal, in terms of both their private and public lives, thanks to the institution of the Code of Personal Status in 1956 and to the Constitution of 1959, which established equality as the foundation of legislation. The rights won by women in the economic, political and cultural spheres have been strengthened by social victories that have given women control over their own bodies, the number of children that they want, the right to education, and the possibility of contributing to development with early access to the labor market and of participating in decision-making, including political decision-making”.

Click here to read Souad’s full article on the current situation in Tunisia.



ALLIANCES AND MOBILIZATION

The WMW participation at the People’s Summit in parallel to the Rio+20

Between June 15th and the 23rd, the People’s Summit for Social and Environmental Justice: against the commodification of life and in defence of the commons will be held in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The event will take place at the Aterro do Flamengo, in parallel to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio +20. The official meeting marks the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 92 or Eco 92).

The People’s Summit is a broad space for debates and proposals built by global civil society in order to propose a new form of life on the planet, one that is based on solidarity, against the commodification of nature and in defence of the commons. The official agenda of Rio +20 privileges the so-called “green economy”, whereas the global social movements and networks who are organizing the People’s Summit - in

which the WMW participates - are against this new disguise for the same capitalist production and consumption model that it is responsible for the current global crisis.

Building of convergences based on our current struggles and capable of calling for new processes of anti-capitalist struggle is the challenge that guides the methodology to be used at the People’s Summit, which will be organized around three axes:

1. The **structural causes of the current crisis** and social and environmental injustices, false solutions and new forms of capital accumulation imposed on the peoples and territories
2. **Real solutions** and The People’s New Paradigms
3. **Agendas, campaigns and mobilizations** that unify the anti-capitalist struggle process after Rio+20.

The general program for activities during the Summit will be developed in the following way:

Fecha	Morning	Afternoon
5	Global Day of Action Against Capitalism	
15 y 16	Self-organized activities (organized by networks and/or coalitions)	
17	Pre-assembly plenary of convergence	
18	Self-organized activities and women's mobilization	Pre-assembly plenary of convergence
19	Self-organized activities and mobilizations	People's Assembly -- Structural Causes and False Solutions
20	Day of Mobilization	
21	Self-organized activities and mobilizations	People's Assembly - Our Solutions
22	People's Assembly – Agenda for campaigns and struggles	Closing Cultural Activity
23	Evaluation of the summit	

Within the summit, together with other social movements that share our anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal and anti-racist vision, we, the women of the WMW, are putting emphasis on the People's Assembly. The assembly is a space where, through testimony and analysis, exchanges and solidarity, mobilizations and concrete actions, we will have the

challenge of strengthening existing struggles and calling for new actions and initiatives that will generate new platforms of unity.

People's Summit official website
<http://cupuladospovos.org.br>

Actions already planned by the WMW

We are coordinating our presence in the activities and demonstrations together with other allied social movements (Via Campesina, Friends of the Earth, etc.). During the event, we plan to organize a WMW camp for around 1,000 women (which will be working from **17 to 21 June**): this will be a space for accommodation, organization and sharing, for both the Brazilian delegation and the WMW international delegates from other countries who might be in Rio. The WMW committees at the Brazilian state-level are already organizing training, mobilization and fundraising activities to guarantee their delegations' presence in Rio.

We are organizing our activities at the Summit so as to emphasize the construction of the various plenaries of

convergence and the Peoples' Assembly, ensuring that the feminist perspective is part of these processes. Thus, together with women from Via Campesina, National Agroecology Coordination (ANA) and the Andean Coordination of Indigenous Organizations (CAOI), we have registered a self-organized activity on "Feminism, Food Sovereignty and Agroecology" on **16 June** (morning). With these organizations, and also including trade union women and other feminist organizations, we have confirmed **June 18** (morning) as the date for the women's street mobilization.

Finally, we will join the pre-assembly plenaries of convergence (on the 17 and 18 afternoon) and the mobilization on **June 20th**, which is the first day of the Rio+20 official meeting.

The WMW in the debates on Rio +20

We are part of this construction process, part of a broader global process to resist capitalism, which is patriarchal and racist and that nowadays, is increasingly invading all spheres of life. Through our participation in the process towards Rio +20, we aim to, even before the summit starts, give visibility to the processes of struggle against false solutions and green capitalism that we are involved in in our own countries. And, from a feminist standpoint (anti-systemic and critical), we seek to provoke an open debate in order to expose transnational corporations' and governments' intentions behind the green

economy concept and its effects on women's lives. Through our active participation and in alliance with other movements, we also aim to give visibility to the alternatives for the good life and coexistence proposed by women. We have, as a starting point, the discussions and actions organized throughout our history as a movement which have been synthesized in our action areas, particularly that of "Common good and public services"

(<http://www.marchemonde.org/actions/2010action/text/biencomun/en>). We position feminism with the criticisms of the false solutions to the environmental

crisis and we assert that the new discourse of capitalism, hidden today behind the mask of “green economy” concept, is the same market model that commodifies our lives, our bodies, and our territories. We say NO to the false solutions proposed by the market and its agents, such as carbon markets, agrofuels, REDD and REDD++ mechanisms and geo-engineering. We do not accept solutions than only generate more business and do not change the production, consumption and social reproduction model. Moreover, we defend that the alternatives built and proposed by the peoples must integrate a dimension that generates equality, emphasizing that to become real global alternatives, these must include equality between women and men, the right of women to live without violence, and sharing of housework and care-giving between women and men. To do this, we must start with the knowledge we have accumulated in the area of feminist economics, establishing the sustainability of human life as a challenge. This critical debate on capitalism and the development of alternatives does not take place within the

institutional frameworks of the UN or in its spaces of dialogue with civil society. There, often only gender clauses are added to treaties, as leaders or negotiators follow a rationale similar to that of the negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

We believe that the debate on alternatives can only progress through extensive efforts to build awareness among women and in spaces of alliance with other social movements that are also fighting against the patriarchal and racist capitalist system. From this perspective, then, we were present in several peoples' spaces created in parallel to official summits such as the COPs (Conference of the Parties) of the UN Convention on Climate Change in Bali (2008), Copenhagen (2009), Cancun (2010) and Durban (2011). We also participated in processes built together with the peoples, particularly the Peoples' Summit on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, in Cochabamba, Bolivia, 2010, and in the Thematic Social Forum "Capitalist Crisis, Environmental and Social Justice", in Porto Alegre, Brazil, January, 2012.



Rio +20: an overview of the official process

In January 2012, the United Nations launched the Zero Draft preparatory document for the official debates with the title, “The Future We Want.” The draft contains several problems: it proposes the green economy and the participation of the private sector as solutions to the problems they themselves have created. It also reiterates support for the WTO Doha Round, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and COP-17 – which are agreements that favour the interests of the corporations. Finally, as a concrete measure, it proposes the establishment of Sustainable Development Goals. These are none other than a repetition of the Millennium Goals, agreements that completely disregard all agreements from the cycle of UN social conferences of the 1990s.

The document only makes a generic reference to gender inequality, mentioning that sustainable development depends on the contribution of women, that barriers that prevent their participation in the economy must be removed, and measures promoting gender equality should be promoted. It follows the

same logic of as free trade agreements: it includes women as one way to legitimize one dreadful proposal for all. We don't want to be included in the “green economy”, because it implies the commodification of nature and the continuation of the environmental destruction, which will be compensated with small preservation areas controlled by private companies and the NGOs at their service, turned into businesses.

To transform the “services” of the nature (the transformation of the contamination – the dioxide of carbon in oxygen, biodiversity as the regulation of vital process, etc.) in business, demands that one institution with social legitimacy name it (carbon credits) and price it, besides, certifies that a certain NGO or enterprise assures it. This is the reason why a central issue in the Summit Rio + 20 is the creation of an environmental agency in the United Nations, with emphasis in sectors that are monopolized by transnational corporations (click to read the [manifest against the UN corporate monopoly](#)).

June 5th: international day of action

Aware of the need to expand the process that criticizes the green economy, during the Thematic Social Forum "Capitalist Crisis, Environmental and Social justice", held in Porto Alegre (RS), Brazil, from January 24 to 29, 2012, the Social Movements Assembly decided to organize a global day of common action on **June 5th** in order to send a strong message to all of our governments before the UN Rio +20 Conference. On this date, which coincides with the World Environment Day, we want to clearly show our position against policies that are at the service of transnational corporations and result in the commodification of nature, of our lives and our bodies, and to voice our alternatives.

In Porto Alegre, we reinforced our common axes of struggle, decided in 2011, during the World Social Forum in Dakar (Senegal):

- against transnational corporations,
- for climate justice and food sovereignty,

- against violence against women
against war, colonialism, occupations and the militarization of our territories.

In Brazil, in addition to June 5th, the first day of the official conference, June 20th, will be marked by a large demonstration in Rio de Janeiro and in many other Brazilian cities in order to express the people's struggle against the commodification of nature and in defence of the common good.

Click to [read the declaration of the Social Movements Assembly](#) in Porto Alegre 2012:

From now on in, we want to give visibility to the actions or demonstrations that your movements are organizing in the various countries around those days. Please share with us information (date, place, time) and other materials used for awareness-building to the following email: communication@marchemondiale.org

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