



WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

Volume 14 – Number 4 – December 2012

Editorial

As we take a look back on the year 2012, the title of Joi Barrios' poem "To be a Woman is to live in a Time of War" takes on a particular significance. This year, our sisters in Guatemala, Iran and Turkey have been the victims of criminalisation processes. We have accompanied the increasing aggression of Salafist militias towards the UGTT (Tunisian Trade Union Confederation) and, last week, the attack by the Israeli army on the Ramallah office of UPWC (Union of Palestinian Women's Committees). We remain on the alert with regard to the occupation of Northern Mali by Islamic fundamentalists and the rebel offensives in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. We worry about the sisters with whom we march, and ask ourselves how we can strengthen our solidarity network to the point that we create the necessary conditions for them to drive forward the changes for which they struggle.

Throughout 2012 we have organised our resistance to the European Union's austerity measures in the form of a continental campaign that demands the reorganisation of the economy and politics so that our lives are worth living. We support and share the resistance of our Northern Peruvian sisters against the Conga mining project and of so many other sisters in their own territories. These resistances are the basis for our rejection of the market's false solutions to socio-environmental problems, and we expressed them strongly during the People's Summit for Social and Environmental Justice mobilisations and assemblies, parallel to the Rio+20 UN conference. We also stand in solidarity – along with other women's organisations and social movements – with the Palestinian people, in order that they may recover their territory, break down the walls, and live in justice and peace.

Neither extreme heat, nor extreme cold, have stopped us from occupying the streets once more at the end of this year: the energy that comes from our indignation, our dreams and the victories we have achieved has motivated us in our 24 Hours of Feminist Action around the World.

INTERNATIONAL

Women in 37 countries participate in 24 Hours of Feminist Action around the World!

Marches, performances, sit-ins and other kinds of street protests, in addition to media initiatives and meetings, workshops and seminars marked 24 Hours of Feminist Action around the World. They took place between midday and one o'clock (local time in each country) on the 10th December 2012. In total, actions were carried out in nearly 80 cities in 37 countries: Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Catalonia,

Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, England, Euskal Herria (Basque Country), Germany, France, Galicia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, New Caledonia, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Quebec, Romania, United States, South Africa, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey and Western Sahara.



Bangladesh



Mexico



The activists of the cities of Manila and the Bohol Islands in the Philippines used dance, songs and theatrical performances to champion the passing of the law for women's reproductive rights, climate justice and equal pay for equal work as proposals towards an end to the oppression of women.



The action in Mozambique included the construction of the mural "Victims of Violence", with letters, articles and other material published by newspapers about cases of aggression towards women. Participants of the action and the general public were able to read about cases, write messages of repudiation against violence and of solidarity between women.

The main focuses of the actions in **New Caledonia, Nepal, the Philippines, Mozambique, Kenya, Germany, Chile, Bolivia, Haiti, Honduras** and **Ecuador** were the condemnation of violence as a structural part of the capitalist and patriarchal system, as a means of controlling women's territories – their body and work, their land and resources, and a demand for an end to the impunity for perpetrators of violence against women. Sexist violence was also the theme in **Canada**, where the coalition the Rebelles highlighted and analysed the massacre at the Polytechnique Montreal school from a feminist perspective. The massacre was carried out on the 6th December 1989 by a male

student who assassinated 14 other colleagues, all of them women.

Working together with human rights organisations, the WMW in **Haiti** organised a sit-in in front of the Ministry of Justice to demand the incarceration of a high level government official, responsible for assaulting a woman.



Germany



Bolivia



Chile



Kenya



Nepal



England

In **Belgium, Turkey, Tunisia, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Paraguay**, the central elements of actions included: violence perpetrated by the State (ranging from security forces acting on private interests to fundamentalist religious groups); the criminalisation of social protest; and the repression of activists and advocates of women's rights. In **Turkey**, protests took place in the cities of Ankara, Antalya, Bursa and

Istanbul and called for the liberation of female prisoners, who are for the most part union activists. They received international solidarity from activists in **Belgium**. The struggle for peace and against militarisation was present in various actions, including the **United States**, the country which spends most on arms and war industries.



Belgium



Paraguay



United States



Guatemala



Ankara, Turkey

Condemnation of the capitalist development model which, to save itself from its crisis, is infringing on universal human rights, imposing austerity and authoritarian measures, was a key feature of the actions in most European countries, with particular attention paid to the right to public health services and safe abortions. In the streets of various cities in **France, Catalonia, Switzerland, Euskal Herria (Basque Country), Galicia and Portugal**, women denounced budget cuts

which primarily impact on women, and even more so on poor and migrant women. They are triply affected: either they have no access to healthcare, they are exploited workers in this sector, or they are carers for the elderly or children or those who have no access to basic healthcare and education. The privatisation of public health services also featured in the action in **Colombia**.



Catalonia



France



Galicia



The attack on the right to a safe abortion in Europe, with the closures or cuts to the resources of

various voluntary pregnancy interruption centres in countries in which this right was already guaranteed is symbolic of a conservative ideology which is gaining ground in these times of capitalist crisis, in the attempt to take women out of public spaces and send them back to the home. The decriminalisation of abortion was also a theme of the action in **Japan**.

In a creative way, the hour of aerobic body combat in the streets of Bilbao, Donostia, Vitoria-Gasteiz and Pamplona-Iruña (in Euskal Herria, Basque Country), emphasised the pledge of WMW activists: “We will continue to march, resist and gain strength to take on capitalism and the patriarchy!”



The denouncement of the occupation and appropriation of women’s territories and natural resources as another face of the same coin of the capitalist and patriarchal model was integral to actions carried out in **Brazil**, **Peru** and **Quebec**. The role of transnational mining companies in the appropriation of natural resources – water, land, minerals – and in the violation of human and environmental rights and the criminalisation of social movements which denounce their conduct was highlighted in vigils carried out in various cities in **Peru**, but also in actions which took place in **Quebec**, the country of origin of many of these companies.

hundreds to destitution was echoed from north to south in Araras, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Quixadá, Feira de Santana, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Cruz do Sul, São Paulo, Araguaina, Curitiba and Sao Joao del Rey, as well as in the Apodi region itself. Protestors in many of these actions also supported women in other parts of the world, who resist the occupation of their territory on a daily basis, such as the Saharans and Palestinians.

In **Brazil**, the actions focused on solidarity between social movements in the “Chapada do Apodi” region in the north-east, where an irrigation project threatens to destroy more than 50 years of an agriculture model developed in harmony with the semi-arid climate, for the benefit of a mere five companies. The condemnation of agribusiness, which destroys family agriculture, concentrates power and land in the hands of a few, imposes the use of agrochemicals which affect the health of millions of people and which drives



Apodi, Brazil



Quebec



Peru

The 10th December also marks international Human Rights Day, thus we reiterated that we also have the right to equality, to participate in public life, to be heard; rights which were claimed in many countries, such as **Bangladesh**. Many female domestic workers around the world, such as in **South Africa** demanded the right to be able to organise ourselves, have our work valued and have access to labour rights, and they met on this date to make plans and reaffirm their fights and demands.



South Africa



Cuba



Refugee camp of Tindouf, Algeria

The right of people to self-determination, to choose their lifestyle and means of development marked actions in **Cuba**, which suffers constant attempted attacks on its sovereignty. Equally for the action held in the refugee camp of Tindouf, Algeria, where women from **Western Sahara** rejected Moroccan occupation, denounced arbitrary detentions, torture, abuse, violations of the occupied zone and the wall of embarrassment which separates a multitude of families, as well as all forms of aggression which Saharans endure.



Our action also enabled us to progress in our fight against corporate control of communication. We managed to develop our own media through this action – our website

Here we communicate, instantaneously sending photos of events in different countries, as well as reports in written form, audio files and videos of the preparation and post-action. The site has now been converted into a dynamic space of information and memories of our acts.

With our 24 Hours of Feminist Action around the World, we've shown once again that in the World March of Women – both on the streets and on the web – we are alert to what is happening in the world and we reaffirm that we are ready to resist and to promote our alternatives!

Click to [read the WMW International Declaration](#) for the 10th December.

<http://www.24heures2012.info>.

Looking ahead to the 9th WMW International Meeting: Brazil 2013

The 9th International Meeting (IM) of the WMW will take place in Brazil (city to be determined), around the second or third week of August 2013. At the last International Committee meeting, held in the Basque Country last October, we defined the objectives for the IM and an initial outline for its program.

At this next IM, we will continue working to strengthen the World March of Women as an ongoing movement capable of influencing the political and economic context, by:

- Deepening and increasing the visibility of our political analyses, alternatives and resistance;
- Deciding on and planning the 4th International Action;

- Electing the National Coordinating Body that will host the International Secretariat and agreeing on the transition process for its ensured continuity; and
- Strengthening the organization of the National Coordinating Bodies by means of exchanges of experiences.

At the IC meeting, the Brazilian NCB indicated its desire to make the IM a time of strong mobilization, at both the national level and for the WMW's Southern Cone sub-region (including Argentina, Chile and Paraguay), with the goal of sharing our experience in movement-building and our contributions to feminism worldwide. The IC members approved this aim and

looked for ways to combine it with the decisions that will need to be made by the assembly of delegates.

The program, as we have established it thus far, will begin with an opening activity, followed by two days of feminist discussions and training, in which we will all participate, both the NCBs' official IM delegates and WMW activists wishing to join in, a majority of which are expected to come from the sub-region. Next, the delegates will have three days of plenary sessions, during which we will make decisions on our next International Action and our internal organization. At the same time, the other WMW activists will participate in workshops and self-managed activities.

ALLIANCES AND MOBILISATIONS

Until Palestine is free!

More than 10,000 people participated in the march on November 29, marking the official inauguration of the World Social Forum Free Palestine (WSFFP), which took place in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, from November 28 to December 1. Some 2,500 participants from 36 countries and more than 230 organizations registered for the forum, which involved conferences around five themes and more than 120 workshops, seminars and other self-managed activities, including cultural ones. More than 250 of these participants were Palestinians, come either from occupied Palestine or as refugees in neighboring countries like Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan, in addition to a large number of refugees now living on other continents. We, of the WMW, accounted for more than 100 delegates, come from the different Brazilian states, as well as from Quebec, Palestine and South Africa.

The forum's organizers were confronted with all types of pressure from the Israeli community, causing governments and institutions to withdraw their

On the final day, we will come together again in a large plenary session in the morning, to share our experiences over the course of the previous days. The IM will end with a large rally during the afternoon, when we will occupy the streets of the city.

The International Committee and the WMW National Coordinating Body in Brazil will continue to work on the subjects and methodology for the training activities and we hope to finalize the program at the next IC meeting, scheduled for April 2013. The exact dates of the IM will, however, be determined as soon as possible.

support for the event, which entailed the loss of many physical spaces for conducting activities, as well as cuts in resources, which prevented the presence of leaders and key figures in the Palestinian struggle. But the social movements, groups and solidarity committees heading up the organization of the forum in Brazil stood strong in their decision to ensure there would be a space for meetings and dialogue and for building concrete strategies for resistance. On several occasions, the Palestinians thanked the social movements in Brazil for having taken up this challenge.

Khitam Saafin, of UPWC, the WMW's main group in Palestine, stressed the fact that the forum was a big step forward for social movements worldwide. "We saw that the Palestinian cause is not isolated; it is part of a global struggle for freedom and democracy around the world." The forum was a time for encounters between Palestinians themselves, who do not have the freedom to travel within Palestine and who, after many years had passed, were able to meet together in Brazil.



November 29 activity, "The resistance struggle of Palestinian women," jointly organized by the WMW, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), the Brazilian Women's Union (UBM) and the Confederation of Brazilian Women (CMB), in addition to CUT, MST/Via Campesina, KAIROS and more



November 29, WSF Free Palestine Opening march, on the International Day of Solidarity to Palestine. Click to watch video: <http://coletivocatarse.com.br/home/?p=3012>



Assembly of Social Movements, December 1: reading and confirming our approval of the reference document that guided the creation of WSFFP ([click here to read the text](#)).

Photo gallery of the WMW at WSFFP:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/marchamulheres/>

Video on the November 29 activity:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hefij_UsUEk

Lorraine Guay, of WMW Quebec, added that “this meeting would never have been possible in Canada, due to the difficulties in obtaining visas for Palestinians ... It is very difficult to go to Palestine, and it is difficult for its people to leave. So the fact of holding this forum, where we can meet with them, talk with them, and share our analyses and life experiences, is very important. I am certain that the forum will also strengthen the political movement in Palestine.”

We, at the WMW, worked hard to help organize the forum. We understand that the Palestinian cause is at the left of the world, of all the social movements, and that we need to show our solidarity, primarily with Palestinian women, who are seeing their position in society worsening due to the war and the occupation.

Our commitments for the future

The liberation of Palestine is a fundamental part of the left agenda in the world. To make this come to pass, we identified a number of vital tasks during our activity on November 30 (“Building solidarity through action”, *see photo*):

- Doing work within the WMW.

This will involve: organizing a broad process of discussions and popular education, including confrontations and mobilizations; understanding and denouncing the interests of our governments and transnational corporations, which take advantage of the occupation of Palestine; working with women from the Palestinian diaspora in our countries; linking the Palestinian question to the context of the fight for people’s sovereignty and autonomy, strengthening the struggles that we are also engaged in, in solidarity with our sisters in Western Sahara, who are living under Moroccan occupation, and our Kurdish sisters, whose territory is divided between several countries and who suffer from repression, especially by the Turkish government;

- **In our relations with other social movements and in our alliance-building processes, inserting the topic of the feminist vision** and connecting critiques of

“We stand beside the question of the wall of patriarchy: we want to demolish the wall, criminally imposed by Israel, but we also want to demolish the wall of patriarchy that exists in Palestine and around the world,” reinforced Sonia Coelho of the WMW Brazil.

Wilhelmina Trout, of WMW South Africa, highlighted the considerable presence of the delegation from her country: “It is also important for me, as a South African, who as part of the oppressed, having fought the apartheid regime, comes to share that experience with the women and with the comrades from Palestine, to let them know that it is not impossible to free Palestine.”

We will be on the March until we are all free, but we will not be free so long as Palestine is not free!

capitalism and patriarchy as part of the Assembly of Social Movements and our joint actions with Friends of the Earth International and Via Campesina;

- **Participating more actively in the BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) campaign, from a feminist**

perspective: over and above cosmetics and other companies, our main target could be the arms industry, which would allow us to establish ties between our action areas of demilitarization and violence against women. For example, we know that the heavy circulation of “light” or “small” arms results in more deaths of women in

situations of domestic violence;

- **Building and expanding on social movements’ communications tools** and on the convergence between these movements, to topple the mainstream media circus, which obscures the Israeli occupation of Palestine;

- To evaluate the possibility of **organising solidarity missions to Palestine**, which was one of the countries suggested for the closing ceremony of the Third International Action in 2010.



This **Newsletter** is edited by the World March of Women International Secretariat (IS) and distributed by email.

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