



# WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

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## Editorial

2013 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first International Meeting, when we defined our first platform of demands and forms for common actions. It is also the final year of the Brazilian National Coordinating Body hosting the International Secretariat of the World March of Women. We will be taking advantage of this moment to assess what we have built together, the challenges facing the feminism of today and the trends arising for the future.

The perpetuation of armed conflicts has affected our actions in many ways, such as when our sisters in Kenya and Mali were unable to organize their March 8<sup>th</sup> activities as they wanted, due to the situations in their countries. Responses to the causes underlying these conflicts – territorial monopolization – continues to mobilize us in many countries, as we will see in this newsletter. We will also look at the different offensives launched by the instruments of patriarchy and capitalism: the attack on workers' rights, sexist violence, and the various obstacles to women being able to freely enjoy their own sexuality.

We need to continue analyzing and discussing how feminism as a whole is responding at this time. We must ask ourselves what it means when the female executive directors of the social networking industry announce a movement to reconcile personal life and work life, and when private corporations' foundations announce a movement to end violence against women in the next few years.

Women – who have been balancing care-taking and work on the marketplace for millennia, at the price of their rest or leisure time, those same women who have been resisting and denouncing all forms of violence experienced by our gender – know that what is actually needed is an overhaul of the systems by which society is organized. They have invented movements, just as they invented new practices for organizing their lives. Each of us has experienced times when we felt free from obligation, when we realized that it is possible to have a society based on the sustainability of life and nature. One of those moments is when we occupy the streets, as we did on this March 8<sup>th</sup>, like so many others before it.

## INTERNATIONAL

### 9<sup>th</sup> WMW International Meeting: Dates finalized!

From August 25<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013, the city of São Paulo will host the WMW's 9<sup>th</sup> International Meeting (IM)! The location and dates for the event were chosen on the basis of several points, such as the calendars of social movements in the country during the month of August, the existence of adequate spaces for the series of activities included in the IM, the ease and cost of access to the city, and funding possibilities.

We are planning the IM as a time of strong mobilization, at both the national level and for the WMW's Southern Cone sub-region (including Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay), with the goal of sharing our experience in movement-building and our contributions to feminism worldwide. The program, as we have established it thus far, will begin with an opening activity, followed by two days of

feminist discussions and training, with the participation of all of the participating NCBs' official IM delegates and WMW activists wishing to join in. 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. In parallel, the other WMW activists will participate in workshops and self-managed activities. 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. For more information about the IM, please contact your country's National Coordinating Body and watch our site and our newsletters for the latest updates.



*The Brazilian NCB meeting took place from March 16th to 18th with participants debating, among other issues, the preparation of the IM*

## March 8<sup>th</sup>: Turning our grief into strength!

We received updates from 26 countries (Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Catalonia, the Philippines, France, Galicia, Guatemala, England, Morocco, Martinique, Mexico, Nepal, New Caledonia, Basque Country, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Quebec, Democratic Republic of Congo, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey and Zimbabwe), on the actions in which WMW member groups participated on International Women's Day. Below is a selection of some of the photos sent to the IS before this newsletter was finalized:



**Nepal:** In the capital city of Kathmandu, with songs, poetry, dancing and speeches, some 3,000 women joined in the March 8<sup>th</sup> demonstration, which stressed the fact that the fight to end domestic violence begins in the home and then expands to all of society and the State, and that a collective struggle will be needed in order to overcome it.



**Galicia:** Demonstrations in Ferrolterra, Ourense and Vigo (photo) showed that governments owe a debt to women, not to banks, and asserted that, "We, as women, want to control our lives and build a more just society that will put an end to the capitalist, patriarchal system and that will allow every woman and man to enjoy a decent life." For videos and more photos of the event, visit: <http://www.feminismo.info/webgalego/>



**Zimbabwe:** Preventing violence against women is a concern for all of us, around the world. In this country, grief and outrage at the rape and murder of a 10-year-old child marked the event.



where demonstrators protested against transgenic crops and the economic violence that they represent and demanded tougher investigations of crimes against women.

**Paraguay:** Under the slogans, "For the sovereignty of the people and our bodies!" and "Enough of violence against women!," the march's path took it past different institutions,



**Basque Country:** In the face of public budget cuts, we asserted that we are human beings, that our lives take priority over markets, and that care-taking and domestic work must also be recognized as work.

**New Caledonia:** Violence against women, characterized by rape, death and prostitution resulting from collusion between mining companies and the Indonesian army, was the topic of a radio program organized by the WMW on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Special emphasis was placed on the situation of women living near the largest gold mine in the world, operated by Freeport (an American multinational mining conglomerate) in West Papua.





**Peru:** Under the main slogan, "When a Woman says 'No,' that means No," hundreds of women marched together on March 8<sup>th</sup> and participated in a discussion of women's rights, social inclusion and national development.



**Brazil:** In São Paulo, not even a wind and hailstorm could stop women from marching to denounce patriarchal capitalism and the commodification of our lives, our bodies and nature.



**Philippines:** Protests in different cities focused on the gold and copper deposits operated by SMI (Sagittarius Mines Inc.) on the island of Mindanao, in the south of the country. The WMW denounced how the mine poisoned the local communities' food and water supplies, resulting in the deaths of indigenous women, in the exploitation of its workers, in the displacement of women and in a rise in prostitution. Click [here](#) to read the declaration concerning this action (in English).



**Guatemala:** "We defend our right to defend and exercise our rights" was the general slogan for March 8<sup>th</sup> in Guatemala, where a symbolic action remembered the women and men killed in the massacres of the 1980s, under the dictatorship of José Efraín Ríos Montt, who will be the first former Latin American Head of State to be judged on charges of genocide. Read more here (in Spanish): <http://paraqueseconozca.blogspot.com>



**Quebec:** Actions focused on the conservative government's attacks on the rights won by women and a denunciation of the continuous violence that we suffer each day, in its many different forms.



**France:** demonstrations took place in several cities, including Paris on the evening of March 8<sup>th</sup> under the slogan "Always in the streets to demand equality". The event also strengthened the message of national solidarity, with a big mobilisation of Kurdish associations demanding the truth about the murder of three Kurdish activists in Paris



**Catalonia:** In Barcelona, thousands of women – mainly young feminists – called for “Feminist disobedience against the patriarchal offensive!”



**Mexico:** in Chiapas, the WMW organized a Feminist Information Fair on the cathedral square.

**Switzerland:** Looking ahead to the April elections, the WMW in Neuchâtel invited representatives from each of the political parties to discuss their promises regarding nursery schools and daycare centers, which have fewer and fewer spaces due to public funding cuts. The dolls in the photo represent the absent parties: neoliberals, green liberals and the far right. Now we know who NOT to vote for...



## EUROPE

### Young women of Europe organize to defend their right to decisions about their bodies

A meeting of the Network of Young Feminists of Europe, held in late January 2013, allowed 15 women in Europe (from Switzerland, Portugal, England, Galicia, Poland, Romania and France) to work together for a week in Paris. We realized that attacks on women’s right and access to abortion were occurring simultaneously, in many different countries.

The State and right-wing parties, as well as the church, use arguments varying from nationalistic (“We need to protect the nation”) to conservative (“Abortion is against our values”) to economic (“We can’t afford free abortions”), in order to legitimize restrictions on our ability to make decisions about our bodies.

The group decided to create a website containing information about the real situation of access to abortion in the various countries and about women’s struggle for control over their own bodies. As laws do

not always reflect reality, we call on all feminists in Europe to contact us to share information about the context in their countries. The website will be launched later this year. Contact: [mmfjeunes@gmail.com](mailto:mmfjeunes@gmail.com)



### Turkey: Pinar Selek case requires our attention

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, Turkish writer, journalist and sociologist Pinar Selek was sentenced to life in prison in a sham of a lawsuit, where she was accused of placing a bomb in the Spice Market in Istanbul. Pinar had already been judged for the same event three times previously – in 2006, 2008 and 2011 – and was acquitted by the judicial system each time. We, the WMW, have been following this case since 2010 and

were present at the trial in January, which was marked by a large demonstration, press conferences and meetings with Pinar solidarity groups.

A reminder of the case: In July of 1998, Pinar was arrested by the Turkish police, who tortured her for several days with blows and electric shocks in order to get the names of some 60 activists that she had interviewed as part of a sociology project on the

Kurdistan issue (people whose identities she firmly preserved). While in prison, Pinar found out through television news that she was being accused of having planted a bomb at Spice Market that resulted in the deaths of seven people. Later, technical reports concluded that the incident was not a bomb, but an accidental gas leak. Still, one of the persons – alleged to have placed the “bomb” with her – acknowledged that he had lied under torture. Facts like these show that the false case against Pinar was actually a persecution of an investigator committed to the people’s struggle, in a clear case of criminalization of human rights advocates. Pinar was freed in 2000 and went first to Germany and then to France, where she has been living and pursuing her studies.

After the third acquittal, in 2011, the Turkish prosecutor used a legal maneuver (the need to formally collect, for the third time, the various testimonies) in order to reverse the last judge’s decision, from not guilty to guilty. Pinar’s defense strategy chose to recognize the illegality of the process of reversing the decision. But, as our sisters who were in Istanbul on January 29<sup>th</sup> reported, the judges (the same as in the previous trials) did not care about the different facts



presented by the defense lawyers and condemned Pinar by a vote of 2-1. It is possible that the judges may have received threats to convince them to change their opinions.

Pinar’s condemnation happened two weeks after the murder of three Kurdish activists in Paris (*see below*) and is very worrying to all of us. The Turkish government might ask France to extradite Pinar and we fear for her physical and moral well-being. As we have been reporting, many activists – intellectuals, journalists, writers, Members of Parliament and trade union representatives – are in prison in Turkey. Their freedom of expression and right to a fair trial have been violated. No one is safe under these circumstances.

We are alert to these facts and continue to talk with our sisters in Turkey about how we can intensify our support internationally.

## Killing of three Kurdish activists: We demand justice!

On January 9th, Sakine Cansiz, founder of PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party), Fidan Dogan, a KNK (Kurdistan National Congress) representative, and the activist Leyla Soylemez, were found dead, shot in the head, at the Kurdish Information Office in Paris, France, the country where they had been living in exile.

The highly professional execution of the three women occurred at a time when the Turkish State and Abdullah Ocalan, PKK’s leader who has been imprisoned since 1999, resumed talks to start a peace process and put an end to the undeclared war in which more than 40,000 Kurds have been exterminated since 1984. As a first step in this process, the PKK has demanded that the Turkish State recognize the political and

cultural rights of the Kurdish people and a substantial improvement in the Abdullah Ocalan’s prison conditions (he has been held in complete isolation for more than 1<sup>1/2</sup> years).



We are convinced that the extermination of women fighting for the rights of their people only benefits the oppressive state and its allies. We, the World March of Women, condemn this crime and denounce it as an attack against peace and the struggle for freedom, and express our solidarity with the Kurdish women and people.

Click [here](#) to read the complete information about this case

## ALLIANCES AND MOBILISATIONS

**WSF 2013: Strengthening women's resistance in Tunisia**

The situation in Tunis is becoming ever more complex. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, left-wing activist Chokri Belaid, leader of the Democratic Patriots' Movement and a recognized opponent of Ennahda (the party leading the transition government), was assassinated in front of his home. This has sparked wave after wave of mass protests. The demonstrations are not only an expression of the people's outrage toward violence, but also of the absence of a solution to meeting their basic needs, which was the original motivation for the revolution. These events mean that the World Social Forum (WSF), scheduled from March 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> in Tunis, is now even more of a necessity.

We will be participating in this WSF, with the main goal of helping to strengthen the resistance of Tunisian women and of connecting with more organized women in the Arab World. We will be arriving in Tunis with a spirited attitude of openness toward program changes and to meet the challenges of the current context, building our international vision in close connection with the visions of social movements within the country.

At the WSF, the WMW's International Secretariat has organized two activities:

1. World March of Women: Building a feminist, anti-capitalist movement (27 March, from 9am to 11h30 am)

2. Feminism at the heart of anti-systemic alternatives: Exchanges between women from different parts of the world (28 March, from 1 pm to 3.30 pm)

We will also be participating as co-organizers of a series of activities in collaboration with other social movements, on topics such as internationalist feminism, debt and austerity, the fight against transnational corporations and North-South international cooperation. In addition, other activities have been registered by the WMW and by WMW members groups from various countries (such as the exhibition on the picture).

The Women's Assembly, which will take place on the morning of March 26<sup>th</sup>, before the main opening event, will be the primary meeting point for all of the women participating in the WSF. Another key moment will

be the Assembly of Social Movements (on March 29<sup>th</sup>, at 6 pm). The complete program, with the dates and times of each activity, will be widely distributed, as and when these are shared by WSF Tunisia's organizing committee.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.fsm2013.org>



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