



## *our developing world's voices*

Spring 2015

[www.ourdevelopingworld.org](http://www.ourdevelopingworld.org)

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13004 Paseo Presada, Saratoga CA 95070

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### Water!

Here in California we're struggling with the Governor's wanting to use two tunnels under the Delta to divert water to the south mostly to Big Ag that uses it for almond orchards that need year round irrigation. This is our 5th year of drought and likely to continue with climate change.

Meanwhile Nestle bottles California's water from forest land with a 25 year old expired permit and profits from it as do some water districts who sell their share.

Did you hear the big news? After months of mounting pressure around the world, the World Bank has divested from global water privatization giant Veolia! This is a huge victory for everyone who believes water is a human right -- and not a commodity to be bought and sold by corporations. They have been sent packing in some US communities, too. Corporate Accountability International ([info@stopcorporateabuse.org](mailto:info@stopcorporateabuse.org)) team is on the ground in D.C. at the annual World Bank meetings right now to ramp up pressure and ensure the World Bank cuts ties with ALL water privatizers.

**[Join this call and tell World Bank officials: Water is a human right. Divest from ALL water privatizers.](#)**

### Migration

(excerpted, [ghrc-usa@ghrc-usa.org](mailto:ghrc-usa@ghrc-usa.org))

April 10 hundreds of Latin American and European organizations for Justice signed a letter to the presidents of the US, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico asking them to rethink their Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity of the Northern Triangle on migration at the meetings of the Summit of the Americas in Panama:

For years, civil society organizations in our countries and other allied nations have been sounding the alarm regarding the dire human rights crisis in Central America and Mexico. The militarization of citizen security has contributed to systematic human rights abuses while harmful, private and foreign investor led "development" policies continue to dispossess communities of their lands and livelihoods. The result of these policies, among others, is forced migration, the impact of which differs based on social conditions, including gender, ethnicity and ability. Migrants continue to be criminalized, which heightens the grave risk to their lives, physical safety and human dignity. Migration that occurs under these conditions continues to divide families and increase human suffering in the region. While we welcome the commitments from the governments we fear the Plan will only exacerbate the very conditions of and violence they claim to address: economic policies that have resulted in skyrocketing inequality, widespread abuse of workers' rights and increased violence against labor leaders, and forced displacement throughout Mesoamerica, construction of large scale extractive, hydroelectric or infrastructure projects in marginalized communities and the notable absence of any democratic processes

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## Migration ( continued)

to ensure free, prior and informed consent of the affected populations.

Our deepest concern is that the Plan reinforces and perpetuates the same militarized security policies that have become synonymous with the horrors of the Drug War. Many of our organizations are witness to and have suffered from the systematic human rights abuses carried out by police and military.

## Action

Contact the Latin American desk of the State Department, President Obama, your Senators and Congress people. CISPES is partnering with Oxfam to help the Salvadoran social movement meet their goal of 10,000 signatures: [sign our joint petition today!](#)

## Summit of the Americas in Panama

In addition to the formal and informal meetings there was also the Summit of the Peoples with 3,500 delegates mainly from trade unions, peasant farmer organizations and indigenous, women's, students' organizations, including a delegation from Nicaragua. The final Summit of the Peoples' declaration condemned "aggressions and threats of all kinds from the United States and its allies against our region through the construction of military bases, operations sites, and similar installations that in the last four years have grown in number from 21 to 76." The declaration

demanded an end to the trade embargo against Cuba and the closing of the US military base at Guantanamo. The declaration also supported Puerto Rican independence and condemned the US declaration that Venezuela was a threat to the United States which it said "merited the unanimous rejection of all of the countries of our America." (La Prensa, Apr. 10; Informe Pastran, Apr. 10, 13; El Nuevo Diario, Apr. 11, 12; Radio La Primerisima, Apr. 8, 9, 10, 11) Excerpted from Nicanet

Several presidents attended the closing session of the Civil Society forum, including Obama. Obama said that "strong nations had no fear of civil society." He said that the days of US intervention in the hemisphere were over and spoke only in general terms of the "risks" to human rights and liberties that still exist in the region and in other parts of the world without mentioning specific cases.

Such a contradiction between these words and US vastly increased military bases, the increasing aid to militaries part of the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity for the Northern Triangle. He said the US and Central America shared a strong common agenda, adding, "What is good for the region is good for the United States." He's asking Congress for one billion dollars for an Alliance for Prosperity to attack poverty and violence in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. ( Quite a difference between the Latin American and European NGO's understanding of the Plan. 2

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With relation to Venezuela, Ortega said that Latin Americans were right to think that nothing had changed if the US, while starting a dialogue with Cuba, had increased threats against Venezuela. He rejected the explanation that the US had to say that Venezuela was a threat to the United States in order to prohibit several officials from traveling to the US. "If it was to deny visas, why was a decree necessary? They deny visas to us every day!" He said that it was the fault of the United States that no final declaration was coming out of the Summit: "Why will there be no final document from this Summit? Because of the United States. There was consensus on almost everything, except on the subject of the decree against Venezuela."

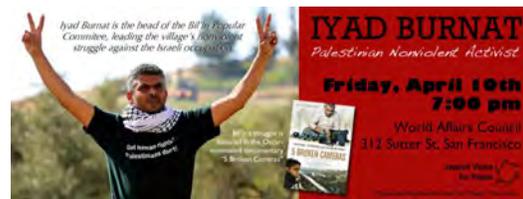
## Palestine

For years, Palestinian rights supporters have been asking how to **scan their own investments** or the **portfolios of their churches, universities, municipalities, unions, businesses, and other institutions** to ensure they're not invested in companies profiting from Israel's brutal military occupation, war crimes, and daily violations of Palestinian rights and international law. This information is a crucial first step to launch a divestment campaign in response to the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS). A crucial campaign by South Africans to end apartheid. Palestinians

learned from them and are asking us to boycott, divest and ultimately use sanctions.

[Visit \*\*investigate.afsc.org\*\*](http://investigate.afsc.org) to view the new screening tool, list, company info.

We had the privilege and pleasure to be at a gathering with Iyad Burnat, leader from Bil'in, Palestine whom we had met and stayed with in August '13 on an Interfaith Peace Builders (IFPB) delegation. His wife was pregnant.. When Iyad was shot by Israeli



military a few months later we worried. Fortunately the baby, now 13 months is fine. His son who was 2 in Five Broken Cameras (on Youtube) now 15, drove us to the wall that the protests had succeeded in getting moved but their olive trees were demolished. He showed us tear gas canisters (made in PA) bullet shells and a burned building. A few months ago he was shot with live bullets severing a nerve in his leg. He has no feeling there. (IFPB accepts funds to help). He wasn't allowed to go past the check point when taken to Jerusalem Hospital for important nerve surgery. Of course they will try again.....but.....Israel receives more of our US tax dollars than any other country. That's the reason for BDS.

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## South Africa/ Xenophobia *Abahlali*

“There is a war in our city. Our African brothers and sisters are being openly attacked on the streets.

In 2008 our movement stood firm against the attacks on people born in other African countries. We committed ourselves to shelter and defend our brothers and sisters. There were no attacks in any of our communities.

For some time now we have been working very closely with the Congolese Solidarity Campaign. We have been working to build a politic from below that accepts each person as a person and each comrade as a comrade without regard to where they were born or what language they speak. In this struggle we have faced constant attack from the state, the ruling party and others. We have been attacked for having members from the Eastern Cape, members born in other countries and Indian members. We have always stood firm against these attacks. Our movement has survived almost ten years of repression.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of April we supported a march against xenophobia organised by our comrades in the Congolese Solidarity Campaign together with the Somali Association of South African and other migrant organisations.

There was a permit for the march and yet the police would not allow it to go ahead. They stopped people from leaving their communities to travel to the march. They attacked the

march with tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets. One Congolese man was severely beaten by the police with a plank. One of our members, from the Marikana Land Occupation in Cato Crest, had her leg broken during the assault by the police. We also noted senior police officers accusing Abahlali: “What do you have to do with this march? Why are you supporting them”? One of our comrades from the Eastern Cape was told by the police that: “You are from the Eastern Cape, you will cause a war here and then run away to Eastern Cape. Keep quiet.” We do not know who will be the next. Some of the people who are now attacking people born in other African countries are saying that they will attack the Indians next.

But the violence used to expel us from this democracy does not only come from the police. Since 2009 we have also been openly attacked by the ruling party. At the march on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April there was another march of the so called “locals” who were screaming and saying “awahambe (“foreigners must go”). What we noted in this march that went parallel to ours was that it used people working at taxi ranks and drug addicts known as whoonga boys in Durban. Some people had been transported all the way from Port Shepstone to support this march. We were not only assaulted by the police. We were also threatened and assaulted by this group who said to us: “Why are you supporting these foreigners”. On that day the police were supporting this group.

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Despite the violence and intimidation from the police and 'the locals' we made it to the City Hall.

Many of the Congolese here in Durban are fleeing war and the destruction of their country. Yet here they are subject to more violence, including from the police. People in the Marikana Land Occupation have also been subject to serious violence, including regular evictions, beatings, torture and assassination. Yet when we try to unite and to take to the streets to assert that every person is a person, that everyone counts, we are openly beaten by the police. Once we again we say that there is no democracy for the poor in this country. It does not matter which country you were born in, or what part of South Africa you come from, or what language you speak. If you are poor and black you are excluded from this democracy with the open use of violence.

The march on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April revealed an important lesson. These attacks are well planned and supported by powerful people. When the police began to attack a legal and peaceful march we realized that there was a bigger political plot to attack the march against xenophobia. Today in some areas the police are just escorting the thugs that are carrying out these attacks. They come in groups to ask for foreigners' permits to be in South Africa and start stealing and looting. The police have not stopped these attacks.

Today we are told that the KZN government is organizing their own march to be held on

the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. We ask ourselves why now when the march supported by migrant organisations was banned and attacked. We ask ourselves who will be marching? And who will be receiving a Memorandum and from who? We are now clear and ashamed that just as there has been high level political support for attacks on people from the Eastern Cape there is also support for this violence. There are many in the ruling party who would rather have the poor divided than united and would rather have the poor turning against their neighbours instead of their real oppressors.

There are also people who have their eyes on the businesses and homes of others.

Opportunists are emerging everywhere to use this violence to build their own power and to loot. In Clare Estate members of a group whose name is known to us did not only attack and loot Malawians and Ethiopians but forcefully evicted a South African family from a house belonging to an Indian family. This family reported that this group has an official campaign to drive Indians and foreigners out of Clare Estate. When reporting these threats at the Sydenham police station the police refused to open a case against the attackers that are known to the family and the entire community. The state is not doing enough to stop this. Some senior political leaders and police only condemn the violence when on camera and in public spaces but on the side they say "bashayeni" (hit them). It is time we tell the truth about what we are confronted with on the ground, which makes our work extremely difficult. We will not stop this war for as

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long the police and politicians say one thing for the cameras and another on the ground.

It is very hard for us to organise effective support in this crisis when we face violence from the state and from the groups attacking people on the streets. Many of our members are scared and they are scared for good reason. The attackers have often threatened that Abahlali will be next if we continue to support our African brothers and sisters. We are fully aware that if this happens we will get no support from the police.

We believe this should be a joint fight. After our own meeting that took us the whole day this Sunday we made the following decisions:

1. We will work to support the development of a joint committee against xenophobia made up of South African organisations and organisations representing foreign nationals.
2. We will identify troubled communities and visit those communities to speak to them. We will not, like the politicians, only visit the victims in the refugee camps when the cameras are there. We will visit the communities from which the attackers are coming too.
3. Abahlali will continue working with migrant organisations in all our activities and engaging our members in all the communities where we have branches to bring peace.

We urge the South African government to take urgent steps to stop the attacks and to

arrest and prosecute all perpetrators. We also urge the South African government, all African Ambassadors based here and the AU to work for peace and stability across the whole continent and for an Africa in which land, wealth and power are fairly shared between the people. Africa is rich. There is no reason for Africans to have to live in war and impoverishment.

We are appealing to all South Africans, even those that are silence, to help us end this war on fellow Africans. We are appealing to the church leaders, progressive forces and to the radical students to join us in this struggle. We are doing what we can. We are holding meetings – we will hold a meeting in uMlazi in the next hour – and undertaking small acts of solidarity like arranging for South Africans to fetch the children of migrants from their schools and take them to safe places. But it is very difficult to advance a politic of peace in the middle of this kind of violence coming from both the state and other forces.

These are dangerous times. Everyone in the city is scared. The sun is about to go down and we fear that there will be a lot more killing and looting tonight. We don't know what will happen tomorrow.

ED note: Abahlali is an organization of informal settlements and shack dwellers who are dedicated to making a difference through non-violent means. They are strongest in the Durban area and Eastern Cape. 6

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**A** Committee of Inquiry established by South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs will begin hearing expert testimony tomorrow on the subject of legalizing the rhino horn trade as the Southern African country, home to more than 80 percent of the world's rhinos, grapples with a rhino poaching crisis.

Based on its own investigation and testimony given by experts at the three-day meeting, the Committee will eventually make recommendations on whether South Africa, a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), should submit a proposal to legalize rhino horn trade at CITES' 17th Conference of Parties meeting in Cape Town next year. Any move to legalize the trade in rhino horn, however, will do more harm than good, says African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).

What are they thinking? If it's legal there will be even more rhino slaughter and soon there will be none left! We'll never forget climbing a hill in Botswana to find a mother rhino with her baby about 30 feet in front of us! And the baby was QUITE big!

**[Peace & Planet Mobilization for a Nuclear-free, Peaceful Just and Sustainable World](#)**, taking place in New York City and around the world April 24 - 26!

With the Mobilization taking place on the eve of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, our goals are two-fold:

1. to demand immediate negotiations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and,
2. to use this Mobilization to strengthen and connect our movements.

Do you remember what the reason for Obama getting the Nobel Peace Prize?

He said he'd work to end all nuclear weapons! Now he's asking for funding for new ones for the US.

August is the 70th Hiroshima anniversary.



**NEVER AGAIN!**

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**\$9.4** billion dollars every year. ROC's latest report shows that's how much we all, as taxpayers, spend every year to subsidize the low wages of the full-service restaurant industry.

For too long, Fortune 500 restaurant companies like Olive Garden, Applebee's, and Crackerbarrel have been getting away with paying employees so little that, despite working full-time, their employees still require public support programs like SNAP to get by. Our [report](#), "Picking Up the NRA's Tab: The Public Cost of Low Wages in the Full-Service Restaurant Industry," shows that nearly half of full-service restaurant workers are enrolled in public support programs. In fact, most of the country's lowest paying jobs are in the full-service restaurant industry, and the lowest wage in the country is the federal tipped minimum wage - it's been frozen at \$2.13 an hour since 1991, and remains lower than the regular minimum wage in 43 states. That's what \$15 is all about. Many universities and colleges are paying adjunct professors such an un-liveable wage, too.

NIAC Newsletter

<[niacnews@niacouncil.org](mailto:niacnews@niacouncil.org)>

- [\*\*TAKE ACTION: Urge Your Representative to Support Iran Diplomacy, Not War\*\*](#)

April 16, 2015 Yesterday, we encouraged you to call your Representative in the House to ask them to sign a letter supporting the framework deal and opposing war. We've got some great news: the letter now has over one hundred signers, including Minority [...] [Read More »](#)

- [\*\*TAKE ACTION: Let's Go Back on Offense and Seal the Deal\*\*](#)

April 15, 2015 I'm not going to water this down: yesterday we hit our first setback in our push to a final Iran deal. In case you missed it: a compromise version of the Corker-Menendez bill was accepted by key Senate Democrats [Read More »](#)

- [\*\*Summary of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, as Amended by Committee\*\*](#)

April 15, 2015 Under the amended version of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, S.615, most fundamental elements of the original Corker-Menendez bill remain intact. This includes the most problematic elements of the original legislation. As amended, S.615: delays the implementation. [Read More »](#)