



up front

autumn / winter 2018

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RESISTING THE FAR RIGHT



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WELCOME



In this special edition of *Up Front* we highlight how we are resisting far right extremism: a politics that is turning back the

clock to the darkest moments in recent history, and creating fertile ground for rising inequality, climate crisis, racist scapegoating and attacks on our human rights. **That's why we helped co-found the Stop Trump Coalition, and brought together thousands of people from all walks of life.** Read too about how we continue to challenge the unaccountable power of corporations, and how we're fighting against the UK's proposed plans for deals with the US, Australia, and joining TPP. We also highlight human rights defenders around the world, including Palestinians marching for their right of return earlier this year. Thank you for your ongoing membership with War on Want – we're proud to have you in this fight.

Asad Rehman
Executive Director



FIGHTING GLOBAL POVERTY

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RESISTING THE FAR RIGHT

In February 2017, just weeks after Donald Trump's inauguration, UK Prime Minister Theresa May offered to roll out the red carpet for an official State visit for President Trump, despite his horrifying record of racist comments, the allegations of sexual violence, his denial of climate change and his promise to roll back human rights.

At the time, we pledged to work together with human rights and women's groups, migrant and refugee organisations, Muslim and other frontline communities, and trade unions in one of the biggest rejections of bigotry and hatred. We worked to build one of the biggest demonstrations in British history and together, we did it. **We made history.** The US President's visit to the UK in July 2018 mobilised people in over 50 towns and cities nationwide. A quarter of a million marched in the biggest weekday demonstration ever to take place in London. Thousands of people from all walks of life across the political spectrum protested, many for the very first time in a nationwide Carnival of Resistance.

We helped co-found the Stop Trump Coalition and lead the protest because we knew this was never about one man. It's about the policies and politics that this President of the United States represents: a politics that is turning back the clock to the darkest moments in recent history, and creating fertile ground for rising inequality, climate crisis, racist scapegoating and attacks on human rights.

It's a politics that's on the rise around the world in the form of extreme right wing authoritarianism and mainstream politicians normalising far right demands for 'walls and fences'. While we hear the cries of family separation and child detention on the US-Mexico border, there is silence on crimes committed closer to home. Italy's far right is trying to ban migrant rescue boats in the Mediterranean. The UK and EU backs prison camps for migrants in Libya and Turkey. Here in the UK, we've seen the Windrush immigration scandal and the detention and deportation of those seeking safe haven. All this has been the inevitable result of politicians playing the 'race card'.



The UK should be championing a human rights agenda that tackles the root causes of forced migration: poverty and human rights violations driven by the global arms trade and the exploitation of the global South through forced privatisation and unjust trade deals. Instead, the UK government prioritised seeking a post-Brexit trade deal with Donald Trump: **a deal that will rip up our human rights, environmental protections, and offer up public services like the NHS to corporate greed.** Cosying up to Trump's free-trade agenda of economic deregulation is a recipe for disaster for the people of Britain. It continues the relentless neo-liberal drive for rich countries to continue to exploit and dominate poor ones, denying billions the right to a dignified life.

The Carnival of Resistance created a rare opportunity for us to platform vital arguments and powerful stories in front of millions. They were told by their authors, many of them our partners including the McStrikers, Latin American migrant cleaners and Palestinian campaigners for justice. And as we saw from the tidal wave of messages from frontline communities in the USA and around the world, **it showed our brothers and sisters that they are not alone and that our struggles are all connected.**

But by itself, this is not enough. For too long, these frontline communities – those hardest hit – have been deliberately made invisible and ignored by both politicians and the media. As one of the few organisations that for decades has consistently built genuine partnerships with frontline communities towards ending the root causes of poverty and human rights violations, **War on Want has always sat at the heart of opposition to far right extremism.** So whilst mobilising a quarter of a million

people against Trump was a great achievement, we must also recognise the scale of the challenge ahead of us in the UK: from the resurgence of fascism on the streets, a populist 'Free Tommy Robinson' campaign bankrolled by extreme right wing American foundations, mainstream media outlets providing uncritical platforms for hate propaganda, and the explicit support of white supremacists in the Trump administration for the rise of a new far right across Europe.

Hate crime in the UK has skyrocketed in just a few years. Islamophobic attacks, already at unprecedented levels, increased 26% last year alone and predominantly target Muslim women. Targeted attacks on LGBTQ+ people are up 80 per cent and Britain now boasts the highest number of sexually violent crimes in Europe. In a recent poll 24% of the British public said they would vote for an extreme right wing, anti-Muslim and anti-migrant party. **Already senior politicians are making 'dog whistle' attacks on the Muslim community aiming to harness that support for their own agendas.**

As members and supporters of War on Want, many of us already recognise and resist the rise of the extremist far right wherever we find it. Now we must help to rebuild a movement for justice: one with strong internationalist principles, invigorated by grassroots community struggle and informed by an understanding of how different forms of oppression intersect, one that recognises that the antidote to the poison of the far right is to tackle racism, inequality and injustice both locally and globally. That is how we reclaim our communities with a message of hope and a vision for the future based on justice and solidarity.

Fighting corporate

War on Want has a proud history of speaking truth to power: we will continue to call out wealthy corporations for building themselves on the backs of the poor.

CHALLENGING THE UNACCOUNTABLE POWER OF CORPORATIONS

In today's globalised economy, transnational corporations have amassed tremendous amounts of wealth and power. In the process, transnational corporations have violated human rights, committed crimes and destroyed the environment with complete impunity. The profit margin of corporations has come at the expense of communities, workers and territories in the global South and increasingly in the global North.

National legislation has proven ineffective when dealing with corporations that carry out their activities abroad, hiding behind complex corporate structures and intermediaries to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. Most states are powerless when confronted with major economic and political entities more powerful than they are; and whose interests are protected by multiple trade and investment agreements. At the same time, some states wilfully promote, subsidise and protect these corporations.

Social movements and international organisations have long advocated for binding norms at the international level to protect the rights of frontline communities and end the impunity of big business. In 2014, a historic process towards establishing such binding legislation took off in the UN Human Rights Council, establishing an open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights.

Since then, War on Want has supported The Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity, a network of over 200 social movements, networks, organisations and affected communities resisting the land grabs, extractive mining, exploitative wages and environmental destruction of transnational corporations; and campaigning for a binding treaty.



power



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SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER AT CORPORATE AGMS



HSBC: Stop Arming Israel

Campaigners from around the country protested at the HSBC annual general meeting this April, decrying the bank's dealings with companies selling weapons to Israel as revealed in War on Want's 'Deadly Investments' report (2017). In the run up to the AGM, over 18,000 people emailed HSBC expressing concern, and over 20 HSBC branches nationwide have seen regular pickets over the bank's complicity in violence against Palestinians. As a result, HSBC wasn't surprised when we showed up outside the AGM with Stop Arming Israel banners and placards. But it was caught off guard when we dominated the session inside the meeting, grilling executives over investments and loans to companies like Elbit Systems and BAE Systems that provide key equipment used by Israel in attacks on Palestinians. HSBC argued back that the bank is "not political" and pointed to its weakly-worded human rights policy. But campaigners won't be placated so long as HSBC remains complicit.



BP: Pay up!

This May, BP held their AGM in Manchester for the very first time. War on Want – along with allied organisations and an army of anti-fracking community activists from Preston and Manchester – met them there.

Joining us were Fabian Laverde, from partner organisation COS-PACC (Colombia) and Fernando Cabrera of OPSur (Argentina); who travelled from Latin America to call out BP's 'fossil fuel imperialism': the ongoing plunder of nature for profit at the expense of the territories and rights of rural communities and our planet.

At the AGM, we held BP to account for past and present human rights abuses; and dispelled their myth of using destructive fracking as a viable 'transition' towards renewable energy.

Fighting for justice from UK mining company



6 August 2018 marked the sixth anniversary of the Marikana Massacre: the worst incident of police violence in South Africa since apartheid. Thumeka Magwangqana, from women's movement Sikhala Sonke ('We Cry Together') reflects on her visit to London this past March, to confront the corporation she holds responsible.

As soon as I stood, I wanted to cry. I'd travelled all the way to London for this chance to speak for my community to the Lonmin Mining Company, which preferred to have 35 of my brothers and sisters shot dead than grant a fair wage. I had waited years for this chance to address them. Everyone back home was counting on me.

I fought back my tears and told them again about the Marikana Massacre because they looked to me like people who had forgotten. I recalled how we waited for our husbands on the mountain in Wonderkop, expecting wage negotiations when instead **armed police surrounded and shot them down.**



The killings were planned. Police now admit that the miners posed no threat; that they begged for their lives. They were under orders to end our strike by any means necessary. **I did not know that asking for a living wage was a crime in post-apartheid South Africa.** Now I understand that to those in power, our blood is cheaper than the pay rise we were fighting for.

If you have ever lost someone in violence, you will know how hard it is to heal without constantly re-opening those wounds. But there can be no healing without justice; and to win justice, we must speak out. Our community has been abandoned to grief and poverty with no support. These are fundamental workers' rights, fundamental women's and children's rights at stake. This is a police brutality issue, a trade union issue and above all, it is a black lives matter issue.

Finally, it is an issue of corporate power. Lonmin is headquartered in London, far from the families of those killed; **far enough, they think, to get away with murder.** Only the resolve of my community stands in their way. I lead a women's organisation called Sikhala Sonke, meaning 'We Cry Together'. We campaign for justice for those killed and injured and for the rights they died to defend. We successfully lobbied the World Bank to investigate Lonmin, to which it gave millions to deliver decent housing and living standards that never came.

Faced with this investigation and the risk of being implicated in the massacre in court, executives resolved to sell Lonmin to the mining company Sibanye Gold Ltd. They think if Lonmin no longer exists, they can escape accountability, take their millions and simply walk away.

Lonmin may disappear but we will still be here. The executives won't disappear, either. They will move onto the next community, like vultures do.

That is why we need more than reparations. We need the British people to remember Marikana. Together, we must show that justice walks too tall to be kept at bay by borders. You stood with us against apartheid. Stand with us still.

Amandla Awethu: Power to the People

Read more: waronwant.org/marikana



Toxic trade deals: Ramping up the fight

The UK government is charging ahead with plans for high risk trade deals, without any real oversight or democratic control. Trade minister Liam Fox recently announced plans for deals with the US, Australia and New Zealand and for joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Trade deals are powerful. Exposés have shown business lobby groups have already been discussing how post-Brexit UK trade deals could be used to shred our standards – standards that protect decent jobs, good healthcare, climate action and all the things we value.

The risks of a deal with the US are well known, and we can be certain any future agreement would continue to entrench corporate power and put profit over people. Trump is using trade policy to bully countries around the world into giving a better deal for American big business. US healthcare companies want to open up more of the NHS for private profit, and the US has a fifty page list of UK standards they want to weaken in a trade deal.

The Transpacific Partnership (TPP) is the sister trade deal to TTIP, which we defeated two years ago, and has the same corporate agenda. Even in a deal with Australia there are risks – **we already know Australia wants the UK to open its market to hormone-fed beef as part of a trade deal.**

Though Fox has only recently made public announcements on these plans, we know trade talks with these countries and others have been going on for over a year. But the government continues to negotiate in secrecy: **they won't tell us what's on the table, how far discussions have got or even who is attending the meetings.** Our current government is desperate to do deals at any cost, which is precisely why we know how important it is to fight against these secret deals being done with no oversight from parliament and the people.

This is why War on Want has been campaigning for a democratic framework for trade to be included in the current Trade Bill, making its way through parliament. Five opposition parties backed us, who together put an amendment to the bill to increase democratic oversight, but it was narrowly defeated. The bill is now going to the Lords – **we're currently building on the campaign with a massive petition to tell peers how important trade democracy is.**

More info: waronwant.org/trade-justice

Global human rights defenders

Human rights defenders across the world – whether defending their lands and livelihoods, or protesting for their right to return to their homes – are on the frontlines in the struggle against corporate power and neo-colonialism. They are the first line of defence for their communities. Many face brutal violence, and risk losing their lives in the fight for justice.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS IN LATIN AMERICA

Global Witness reported that almost four environmental defenders were killed globally every week during 2017. **In addition to this, War on Want learned from our partner organisations of two more killings of land defenders in north-east Brazil.**

Each assassination is an attempt to silence and break the community struggles directly challenging corporate power, catastrophic climate change and the unlimited extraction of nature for profit. The violent tactics aim to instil fear into the communities who defend their lands, water and livelihoods.

Governments and corporations must be held to account. This means naming not just those who are killed but the corporations they were confronting and the governments that stand behind them. Big business has demonstrated what it is willing to do to guarantee its investments; to stand against them, communities are forced to go even further, with people risking their lives to make governments protect their rights.

Above all, we need to challenge – as defenders do – the economic growth model that drives needless resource speculation, inequality and injustice. This means listening to the voices of the communities and leaders left behind. **War on Want will continue to extend our active solidarity to these communities, amplifying their calls for justice.** While here in the UK we will continue to confront UK-based extractive companies like BP to hold them accountable for their impact on communities and devastating their environments.

Find out more: waronwant.org/land-defenders



© Thom Perce/Guardian/Global Witness/UN Environment

The number could in fact be much higher. As industries in Latin America like cattle ranching and industrial mining expand into the territories of indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant communities, human rights defenders are increasingly targeted by paramilitaries, government troops and hired gangsters.



PALESTINIANS MARCHING FOR THEIR RIGHT OF RETURN

This spring, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians held a ‘Great Return March’, a demonstration to protest Israel’s illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, and to demand their return to the homes and properties from which they were forcibly displaced in 1948. The protest was also a celebration of Palestinian culture, featuring music, dance, poetry, and food. As one organiser said, participants “...have breathed life into a place that is slowly being depleted of it... most striking is the young, living and playing, their laughter the greatest protest of all.”

However, the festival atmosphere was marred by brutal violence. The Israeli military opened fire on the weeks-long protest, escalating dramatically on 14 May, Nakba Day, making it the bloodiest day in Palestine since Israel’s bombing campaign of 2014. In a single day, 59 unarmed Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers, and thousands were injured. These numbers were added to the already high casualty rate from the weeks before, bringing the number killed since April to over 130, including children, and over 13,000 injured.

This violence is unfortunately not exceptional; it is a part of Israel’s systematic use of armed force against Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and inside Israel itself. Israel’s militarised repression is one of the key ways in which it maintains its apartheid regime of control over Palestinians, denying them their basic rights enshrined in international law, and attempting to choke their struggle for freedom and justice.

The UK Government is not just a neutral onlooker; it is directly complicit in Israel’s violence against Palestinians. Since 2014, the UK Government has approved over £490 million worth

of arms exports to Israel, including millions of pounds worth of small arms such as sniper rifles, drones, and other items precisely like those being used to attack Palestinians. **The UK Government knows that these weapons are being used for this brutal violence and for grave breaches of international law, and yet it allows this arms trade to continue.**

Grassroots civil society, individual people of conscience, trade unions, students and activist groups have a key role to play in pressuring our government and our institutions to end their complicity in Israel’s crimes against the Palestinian people. As we watch the horrific news stream through on our televisions, we have a responsibility not just to mourn the dead, but to take action to force the violence to stop, and to hasten the day when justice, human rights, and peace will prevail for all people.

Read more: waronwant.org/justice-palestine



All of us or none of us: fighting for workers' rights

Why are workers' rights important? Workers everywhere, especially women, face threats, intimidation, harassment and dismissal for organising into trade unions and speaking up for themselves and each other. Work is crucial, not just for people to provide for ourselves and our families but also to shape the world around us.

McStrike sparks long hot summer in hospitality

It's been a long hot summer for those working in hospitality. In spite of overheating kitchens, overcrowded pubs and restaurants, and the highs and lows of the World Cup, hospitality workers – who face some of the poorest conditions in any sector of the economy – are recognising their own power and coming together in trade unions to challenge exploitation.



Since McDonald's workers made history by going on strike last year, they've been out on strike again on International Workers Day (1 May 2018).

Workers at TGI Fridays, who were given only 4 days' notice that their employer was taking away 40% of their tips to subsidise the low wages of kitchen staff, have been on strike multiple times. With both campaigns growing, workers in other high street fast food, restaurant and pub chains are waking up to the fact that coming together gives them the power to demand better.

This summer War on Want has been working closely with trade unions, such as Unite the Union – Hospitality Branch and The Bakers' Food and Allied Workers Union to help workers speak out about their conditions. We've been standing shoulder-to-shoulder with protesting workers and helping them get their message across in the media. Watch this space for further campaign action in the coming months.

The workplace should never be a hostile environment

The current immigration system poses a significant threat to workers' rights in the UK. Strict visa restrictions on migrant workers and the creation of a hostile environment, an approach created by the government that aims to make life as difficult as possible for anyone without the correct immigration papers, threaten basic workers' rights. **And when Brexit comes into effect, many more workers will be subject to UK immigration controls.**

War on Want has been campaigning with and building support for migrant workers' rights amongst trade unionists. We've been calling for an end to the hostile environment at work to ensure all workers can have their basic social and labour rights respected. We believe work should never be a crime: it's time to lift the ban on asylum seekers working, and to call for labour rights enforcement

bodies to be separated from immigration enforcement, **so all workers can report abuse without fear of arrest and deportation.**

Whilst many employers are lobbying hard to ensure they can continue to recruit migrant workers after Brexit their concern does not extend to workers' rights. An immigration system based solely on the economic needs of big business risks restricting migrant workers' rights so they can be more easily exploited. This would entrench a two-tier workforce where different groups of workers have different sets of rights.

Only by protecting the rights of all workers can we stop a race to the bottom where employers drive down conditions for everyone.

Read more: waronwant.org/workers-rights

BDS win in Ireland!

● This July, the Irish Senate voted to ban the import of goods originating in illegal settlements in occupied territories. Both the Sahrawi and the Palestinian people have struggled for decades against land grabs and settlements, and to make matters worse, they have watched Western governments pledge commitment to international law on one hand, while continuing to trade in products from illegal settlements. Allowing trade with illegal settlements incentivises regimes like Israel and Morocco to continue policies of displacement and plunder. The Irish Senate has taken the right step, and the UK should follow suit.



MPs call for suspension of arms sales to Israel



● When the Israeli military opened fire on unarmed Palestinians protesting in the Gaza Strip this spring, the UK government was quick to condemn violence and call for “restraint”. But these words rang hollow as the government continued approving licences for the export of arms to Israel. Over 5,000 War on Want supporters emailed their MPs, prompting 62 MPs from across parties to put their names forward to a call for the suspension of arms exports to Israel. In the coming months, we’ll be following up with all of them to continue building the knowledge and political will amongst policy makers to implement a two-way arms embargo on Israel, along with other human rights abusing regimes.

War on Want partners to challenge BHP in London

● This year our partners from Brazil, Chile and Colombia will travel to London to challenge BHP, the world’s biggest mining company.

Our visitors will hold BHP to account for the destruction caused by the Samarco dam disaster in Brazil; the ongoing systematic violation of the rights of communities by the Cerrejón coal mine in Colombia; and the dangerous expansion of copper mining in Chile.

We will hear their stories of grassroots resistance, and the radical alternatives proposed to challenge the dominant economic and development model which is wrecking their lands and our planet. **Stay updated on this momentous visit by following War on Want’s website updates, Facebook and Twitter feeds.**



Groundbreaking social research project

● War on Want is excited to be part of a groundbreaking research project that brings together four social movements in four continents advocating for peace with social justice in conditions of violent conflict. This project, led by the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex brings together War on Want’s partners NOMADESC in Colombia and The Housing Assembly in South Africa with social movements from Turkey and Nepal. **For the first time, social movements will be reflecting on and documenting how they produce knowledge and how they learn within the context of conflict and state repression.** The research process will forge solidarity links through exchange visits, knowledge sharing and collaboration. In an era of increasing inequality, conflict and rising authoritarianism, **it is critical for us to be forging global solidarity given increased state repression, criminalisation of dissent and the closing down of spaces for activists internationally.**



Donate today to help War on Want fight for justice

What your donation could help us do:

£25 could pay for vital campaigning materials, action cards and posters we need to help raise awareness of human rights violations around the world

£50 could help us to provide resources to communities being devastated by extractive industries, so they can mobilise themselves to stand up for their rights

£100 could help us research the insidious arms trade between the UK and human rights abusing regimes and help us to campaign against violations of international law



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