

A close-up photograph of a woman with a joyful expression, carrying a large, light blue, weathered metal basket on her head. The basket is overflowing with fresh produce, including yellow tomatoes, green onions, and red onions. She is wearing a yellow and blue headscarf and a dark, patterned top. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

# up front

autumn / winter 2011 [waronwant.org](http://waronwant.org)

## FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Calling for a sweat  
free Olympics

Freedom for  
PALESTINE

Bangladeshi  
workers stitched up

**WAR ON  
WANT**

SIXTY YEARS  
FIGHTING  
GLOBAL POVERTY

# WELCOME

Welcome to your latest edition of Up Front. In this issue we introduce the solution to the global food crisis – Food Sovereignty – and highlight how this approach makes a genuine difference. With just under a year to go, we are calling for a sweat-free 2012 Olympics. You will also find an update of victories and highlights from the last six months. Happy reading!



*John Hilary*

**John Hilary**  
Executive Director



**FIGHTING GLOBAL POVERTY**

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Front cover image: Giacomo Pirozzi / Panos Pictures

# FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## TACKLING THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS FROM THE BOTTOM UP

**In 2009, for the first time in human history, over a billion people were officially classified as living in hunger. This record total was not a consequence of poor global harvests or natural disasters. Hunger on this scale is the result of the hijacking of the global food system by large agribusiness and food retailers.**



People in rural areas have been driven off their land and lost their livelihoods, while low paid workers in cities struggle to put food on the table. Riots and social unrest have spread across the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, as hunger and desperation have forced the poor onto the streets to demand change.

Across the world traditional seed banks no longer exist and there is an absence of national food programmes that allow communities to be resilient in times of adversity. In the rush to attract foreign capital, governments from many developing countries have been all too willing to sanction land grabbing by multinational

# What is Food Sovereignty?

Food Sovereignty is the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. It rejects short termism in favour of defending the interests of future generations. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime and enables farmers and communities to become self-sufficient, protecting them from poverty and hunger.

Food Sovereignty is built on the following values:

- 1 Food as a human right
- 2 Ending the dominance of large corporations
- 3 Agriculture based on ecological principles
- 4 Democratic control of agricultural policy
- 5 Changing the rules and practices of world trade
- 6 Redistribution of land back to rightful owners
- 7 Ending the exploitation and oppression of small-scale farmers



corporations. Small-scale farmers have been left destitute as thousands of hectares of arable land are now under corporate control to grow food for exports or to cultivate crops for biofuel production. The food system is broken and fails to meet the rights and needs of hundreds of millions of people across the world. An alternative system that offers a genuine solution has been established – Food Sovereignty.

## Food Sovereignty: The solution to the crisis

Small-scale farmers in the global South have demonstrated that it is possible to feed entire communities over the long term with food grown using sustainable agricultural methods without the use of highly advanced technology, chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

War on Want's partner the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) has been working with 12,000 landless people living in settlements (reclaimed land) in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. With the help of MST the families of landless people, labourers, sugar cane cutters and sharecroppers have regained their land and are now self-sufficient in food. They have reintroduced traditional seeds and are now growing crops free from harmful pesticides and fertilisers. The lessons learned by these small-

scale farmers is now benefiting 3,000 families who are participating in the Government Food Acquisition programme, which buys produce from farming families to provide nutritional food for poor people and school meals.

These successes are the result of years of community education by MST in methods such as soil protection, crop diversification, and the use of natural fertilisers and herbicides. They have also established a democratic process within their communities for decision making. There is a special focus on women, young people and children's education in the settlement schools run by members of the movement. The community now has meetings where everybody discusses how they will work in the fields or how they will go about collecting the harvest. The community elects leaders who take part in the state level and national coordination of the food sovereignty movement. After several years of struggle MST has established partnerships with national state universities and now runs several courses on agro-ecology that are open to poor small-scale farmers. This means many young people who come from landless and poor rural families are now growing up able to finish their education, provide for their communities and have a future as rural farmers. **Find out more about Food Sovereignty and how you can support the movement at [waronwant.org/food](http://waronwant.org/food)**

# Food Sovereignty in action

## Maria's story

War on Want's partner the Movement of Women Nut Breakers, MIQCB, is fighting to maintain the livelihoods of 300,000 women in four states across Northern Brazil. These women babaçu nut breakers are in danger of losing their livelihoods as they are denied access to the palm trees from which they collect nuts by cattle landowners and lumber companies.

Maria, a nut breaker, told us about how her life used to be. After private landlords claimed the people's ancestral land, Maria and her daughter had to leave the house before eating breakfast to make the six mile round trip to the forest to collect nuts. Their journey was fraught with danger as they had to climb under barbed wire fences and ran the risk of physical attack by landlords. The pickings were always slim but there was no other option as their survival depended upon it.

Maria and her daughter returned late in the afternoon to trade their meagre harvest at the market for their daily food. They would have to go without food if they didn't make a sale or failed to collect enough nuts. Maria reflects that whilst in the past they didn't have electricity or phones, they did have access to land; if hunger struck, they went to the forest to collect fruit or hunt; they didn't have to walk long distances or risk their lives to collect nuts and they didn't have to go hungry.



Maria joined MIQCB five years ago and has seen many elements of her life and community positively transformed. The struggle of Maria's community to win back the title to their ancestral land has scored a notable victory by securing formal recognition as a Cultural Foundation, which entitles them to begin legal proceedings. They have also set up an agro-forestry education project in the village school that has reached 36 families and increased crop yields from the accessible land. The members of the movement have also successfully lobbied for a minimum price policy for the food grown and nuts collected, which means that Maria and others in her community are now able to support themselves.

**Please help more women like Maria to become self-sufficient by supporting our Food Sovereignty work. See the back page for more details on how to donate.**

# CALLING FOR A SWEAT FREE OLYMPICS

With the London 2012 Olympics less than a year away, anticipation for the Games is reaching fever pitch. While the world's focus is on the athletes, the Olympic ideal masks a murky underworld of abused and exploited workers making merchandise in sweatshops across the world.

**“The Olympic Games are the quadrennial celebration of the springtime of humanity.”**

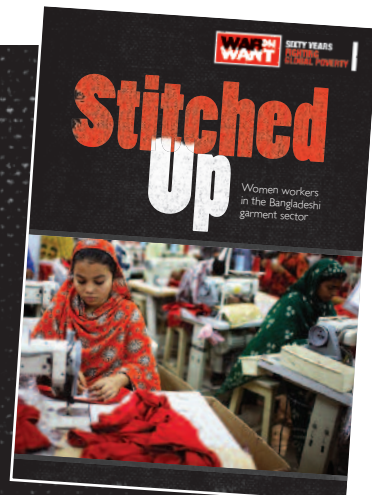
**Pierre de Coubertin, father of the modern Olympic Games**

As part of the Playfair 2012 Campaign, a coalition of trade unions and labour rights organisations, War on Want has launched a new campaign calling for workers' rights in the supply chains of sportswear firms involved in the 2012 Olympic Games. The Playfair 2008 campaign found workers in China employed by Adidas suppliers facing 80-hour weeks stitching footballs. Adidas is the main sportswear sponsor of the London 2012 Olympics.

Sweatshop exploitation is all too common within the supply chains of multinational companies. War on Want research conducted over the past five years has revealed how factory workers are routinely forced to endure long hours in appalling conditions for poverty wages. This exploitation thrives because costs are kept low to meet the interests of profit-hungry Western clothing firms. For our recent *Stitched Up* report we surveyed 1,000 women workers in Bangladesh and found that eight of 10 interviewees worked more than 12 hours a day with no overtime pay, and that average monthly wages of £25-£32 fell well short of the £75 these women required to meet the costs of basic household needs.

This campaign is being supported by the Methodist Relief and Development Fund, the Battersea & Wandsworth Trades Union Council and Glastonbury Festival.

Decent Work is based on the principles of freedom, equality, security and dignity. It ensures that workers receive a living wage, paid sick leave and maternity pay, and are freely able to join a trade union. By providing stable, fairly paid jobs with strong health and safety standards, Decent Work gives workers the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty.



Companies must not be allowed to wrap themselves in the Olympic flag if they are not prepared to live up to the ideals of the movement. We have to ensure that the principles of Decent Work are applied across Olympic supply chains, in countries such as China, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Download *Stitched Up* and take action at [waronwant.org/stitchedup](http://waronwant.org/stitchedup). We'll update you with more news on the Olympics campaign soon.



# An evening of laughter

Thanks to an amazing bill of top class comedians, this year's War on Want Comedy Gig at the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire raised the roof and vital funds. We were delighted to be joined by a stellar line up of first class comedians. Huge thanks to Sean Hughes, Izzy Suttie, Andy Parsons, Stewart Lee, Omid Djalili, Simon Evans, Dan Antopolski, Imran Yusuf, Idiots of Ants and Charlie Baker for giving their time for free. Massive thanks to everyone who came along and made the evening such a huge success. **Planning for the 2012 Comedy Gig is already underway; to find out more send an email with the subject line 'Comedy Gig' to [support@waronwant.org](mailto:support@waronwant.org)**



Photo Credit: Fran Monks / War on Want



## Festival goers fight supermarket power

This summer we have been overwhelmed with support from festival goers for our Stop Supermarket Power campaign.



Thousands of people added their weight to our campaign for a strong, effective and independent supermarket watchdog. This body would have the power to stop supermarkets squeezing suppliers and driving down pay and conditions around the world.

After five years of campaigning, a cross-party commitment to create a supermarket watchdog was secured. As the subsequent bill edges closer to becoming law, supermarkets have stepped up their lobbying to derail the process. It is vital that public support for this campaign continues to ensure we get a strong and effective watchdog. Please write to your MP telling them that you want to see a supermarket watchdog with teeth in place now.

**Take action at [waronwant.org/trolley](http://waronwant.org/trolley)**

## The great tax swindle

War on Want, civil service union PCS and the Tax Justice Network have produced a report showing that tax havens, many of them British, are robbing the UK exchequer of up to £18bn annually in lost revenue. The same tax havens deprive developing countries of 10 times that sum every year. This means that hundreds of billions of pounds which could be spent on public services and anti-poverty programmes are being spirited away by rich individuals and corporations to tax havens.

The UK government's cuts programme will increase poverty and fall hardest on the most vulnerable people in society who use public services the most. We continue to call for a just alternative: for the government to 'Close the Tax Gap' to pay off the debt and recover the billions in missing tax from the banks and big business.

**We will continue to work with others in the tax justice movement to end the tax scandal. Read the Tax Havens report at [waronwant.org/taxhavens](http://waronwant.org/taxhavens)**



War on Want / DJ Photography

## Celebrating 60 years

We recently marked our 60th anniversary at the House of Lords, and were honoured to be joined by thespian Sir Patrick Stewart of Star Trek fame, Leader of the Labour Party Ed Miliband and most notably some of our longest serving supporters.

**Thank you to everyone who has supported the fight against global poverty and injustice over the last 60 years.**

# Freedom for Palestine makes chart history

**ONEWORLD**



**FREEDOM FOR PALESTINE**

“I am proud to support Freedom for Palestine by OneWorld. Let’s send a message to governments that a critical mass of people want to see an end to the Israeli occupation and the oppression of Palestinian people. Peace, Shalom, Salaam.” Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Thank you to all our dedicated supporters who made the Freedom for Palestine single the anthem of the summer. The song made chart history, making it to number 10 in the Indie charts, 18 in the Dance charts and 79 in the Gallup charts.

We broke down the wall of silence in the music industry by releasing the first ever mainstream single in solidarity with Palestine. From the fields of Glastonbury to the

streets of Gaza, thousands of people around the world were inspired to dance and sing for justice in Palestine.

Musicians and artists such as Roger Waters, Massive Attack, Lowkey, Mark Thomas, Julie Christie, Sami Yusuf, Ken Loach, Alice Walker, Billy Bragg and Benjamin Zephaniah all got behind the campaign, as did high street store Lush. Fox News anchor Glenn Beck cried on air, fearful of the song’s challenge to the Israeli status quo. The song was supported by an Early Day Motion in the Houses of Parliament, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu came out of retirement to endorse it.

**Join the fight and take action now at [waronwant.org/Palestine](http://waronwant.org/Palestine)**



## Christmas is coming

Visit our online shop for all your Christmas cards and gifts. [waronwant.org/shop](http://waronwant.org/shop)

## Make fighting poverty your lasting legacy

Gifts in wills have played a vital part in funding War on Want’s work over the last 60 years. Please follow in the footsteps of other supporters who have chosen to include War on Want in their wills. Together we can continue the fight against global poverty and injustice. It’s a simple process: all you have to do is give your solicitor our registered address and charity number (found on page two).

If you would like more information please call Duncan on **020 7324 5043** or email us at [legacies@waronwant.org](mailto:legacies@waronwant.org)

## A costly victory

Earlier this year hundreds of Sri Lankan free trade zone workers were brutally repressed by the police during a protest against the government’s approval of a new pension bill that had not been consulted upon. According to War on Want’s partner, the Free Trade Zones & General Services Employees Union (FTZ & GSEU), more than 270 protestors were injured, 60 people were seriously wounded and a 22 year old worker died.

In a landmark victory, the government acknowledged that excessive force had been used by the police and arrested two police officers. The government also announced the withdrawal of the Employees’ Pension Benefit Fund bill until an agreement between all the concerned parties has been reached.

War on Want stands in solidarity with free trade zone workers in Sri Lanka, with the injured and with the family of the worker

killed. We call on the Sri Lankan government to address the demands made by FTZ & GSEU together with the Joint Trade Union Alliance.

**For more information on free trade zones in Sri Lanka go to [waronwant.org/FTZ](http://waronwant.org/FTZ)**



