



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Basque political prisoner on hunger strike for prisoners' health

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Solidarity protest for hunger striking Basque political prisoner Patxi Ruiz. Photo: Ahotsa.info

“The Basque Country? How come I’ve never heard of it?”

Someone in this country asked me that question several years ago after she detected my foreign accent and I told her where I came from.

I answered, “Maybe because we don’t have oil.” It was 2003, when the U.S. invaded Iraq.

The Basque Country (“Euskal Herria” in the Basque language) is a land occupied by two colonialist states: France and Spain. Geographically, the Basque Country is where the Pyrenees mountain range meets the Bay of Biscay.

We have many political prisoners as a consequence of a long struggle for freedom and socialism. Basque political prisoners are sent by the Spanish and French prison systems as far as possible from the Basque Country, to the farthest corners of Spain and France. Since the coronavirus hit Europe, our prisoners, like all prisoners everywhere, have been mistreated. The Spanish prison system made it an objective to punish them even further.



Patxi is in the struggle, so are we!

In the case of Basque political prisoner Patxi Ruiz, there were some altercations and threats to his life from guards and the director of the prison in Murcia, where he is incarcerated. This was because he asked for the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep the prisoners safe from COVID-19. Not only did they not

listen to him, but they continued to threaten his life.

So a month ago he started a hunger and thirst strike. After the first 12 days, he is continuing only the hunger strike, but his health is deteriorating rapidly. And, of course, Spain and its prison system could not care less if he dies.

Nevertheless, there is a strong feeling of solidarity with Patxi Ruiz among other Basque political prisoners who followed his hunger strike, and outside the prison, in the Basque Country, where people are on hunger strikes in solidarity. On



Ahotsa.info's YouTube channel, you can see some of the actions in solidarity with Patxi Ruiz.

Justice for George Floyd and Elhadji Ndiaye

People in the Basque city of Iruñea (also known by the Spanish name Pamplona) have been holding solidarity actions with George Floyd and Elhadji Ndiaye, who was killed by Spanish occupation forces in October 2016 in a very similar manner. Iruñea is the capital city of Nafarroa, also the birthplace of Patxi Ruiz.

The Spanish police never answered the popular demand to explain why the young Senegalese Elhadji Ndiaye was first arrested for no reason and soon afterwards was dead in police headquarters in Iruñea. To this day, nobody knows the true facts and people are demanding answers.

As Basque activist Ainhoa Urrutia said: “We are prepared to defend them [oppressed peoples and prisoners] and fight for them against the oligarchical powers that pull the strings of fascism to perpetuate their privilege at the expense of our lives.” And the truth is that Spain remains a fascist state under a monarchy that signed the principles of a fascist dictator in 1975.

From the Basque Country, we have always demonstrated our solidarity with the Black community in the U.S., the Palestinian people, the Saharawi people and all people worldwide living under occupation. And that solidarity is stronger than ever these days.

I happened to hear comedian and activist Lee Camp say something like this: “As long as you hate other people and other countries, you are distracted from placing your anger in what your government is doing to you.” That is how governments use racism to divide people. We need to do the opposite and show solidarity with each other. We are many. They are few.

Free Patxi Ruiz and all political prisoners!

Free them all!

Put killer cops in prison!

