

# Ecuador: In defense of democracy, we call for electoral vigilance

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021



Supporters of the presidential candidate Andres Arauz march, Quito, Ecuador, Jan. 26, 2021. Photo: EFE

The Network in Defense of Humanity celebrates the growing electoral strength of progressivism in Ecuador, led by Andrés Arauz and Carlos Rabascall, a force that puts on stage its victory in the contest of February 7. We hope that this victory will be celebrated by all the peoples of Our America on the road to cementing a regional project.

Precisely because of this, in the context of the dispute that neoliberalism imposes on a proposal for sovereignty raised by progressivism, there have been troubling

maneuvers contrary to the rules and institutions of the rule of law, established by the Constitution of Ecuador. We have witnessed violations of inalienable rights, such as the cessation of the political rights of progressive actors and movements; there have even been violations of the rights of citizens by attempting to truncate the electoral process itself.

With this background, while celebrating the democratic spirit of the Ecuadorian people, the Network demands that the government and the electoral authorities of Ecuador fully respect the will of the people as expressed at the ballot box and ask for guarantees that the elections will be transparent and flawless before, during and after the casting of the ballots.

The Network in Defense of Humanity makes an urgent appeal to progressive and democratic forces around the world to be vigilant and watch very carefully the Election Day of 7 February, and with their watchful eye, avoid the misappropriation of the electorate's preferences.

We ask international bodies to certify the non-interference of Lenín Moreno's government, nor of foreign actors, such as the president of the OAS, Luis Almagro, or others, in the electoral process.

We call on the electoral observation delegations to take note of: 1) the impediments to the holding of elections in different places that concentrate the migrant vote; 2) the validity of the legislative elections for the Andean Parliament; 3) the clean counting of the vote in all scenarios.

For democracy to be reborn in Ecuador, it will be necessary to adopt an attitude of permanent participation and vigilance and to be absolutely intolerant of any attempt to pervert the purity of the vote or to ignore the will of the people.

Guaranteeing democracy for the peoples of our America is a task for all of us!

Our America, February 4, 2021

Executive Secretariat of the [Network in Defense of Humanity](#)

Source: [Resumen](#)



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# President vows to cling to power as Haiti is 'on the verge of explosion'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

The usually clogged and bustling streets were empty in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, as well as other cities like Cap Haïtien in the North and Les Cayes in the South, as a general strike called by Haiti's unions and supported by the opposition brought industry, transportation, and commerce to a nationwide standstill on Feb. 1 and 2.

It was a replay of the extended "*peyi lòk*" (locked up country) demonstrations [which almost drove President Jovenel Moïse from power](#) in late 2019. The difference this

time is that, according to Haiti's 1987 Constitution, Moïse must step down on Feb. 7.

While Moïse and the opposition have argued since the start of his term about whether that departure should be the Feb. 7 of 2021 or 2022, Haiti's Bar Association (FBH) seems to have finally put the matter to rest. In a [six-page Jan. 30 resolution](#), the body concluded that what's good for the goose is also good for the gander.

In legal terms, President Moïse is subject to the same "restrictive interpretation [of the Constitution] imposed on parliamentarians on Jan. 13, 2020," when Moïse forced all of the Deputies and two-thirds of the Senators to resign and began ruling by decree, the FBH wrote.

As a result, "the mandate of President Jovenel Moïse must end on Feb. 7, 2021, i.e. 'five years ... following the date of the elections'" and "the [Provisional Electoral Council unilaterally appointed](#) by President Jovenel Moïse has no legitimacy to organize the next electoral calendar."

The next day, the two principal wings of Haiti's constantly uniting and the fracturing opposition - the Political Direction of the Democratic Opposition (DIRPOD) and the Dessalines Children Platform (PPD) of former Sen. Moïse Jean-Charles - along with a smaller, newer [coalition known as the National Front for Democracy \(FND\)](#), announced the [Terrace Garden Final Accord](#), which created the "National Commission for the Establishment of the Transition (CNT) composed of 15 members as follows: Seven members of civil society... [and] eight members from the political parties, groups, and groupings of the opposition." (An outlier in recent years, the Lavalas Family party of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide did not sign the accord.)

The CNT is tasked with appointing before Feb. 7 "as President a Supreme Court [*Court de Cassation*] judge, regularly appointed, deemed to be honest, deemed capable of respecting the [transition's] roadmap, and against whom no charges of

action contrary to the rule of law have been levied.” If it fails to find a suitable judge, the CNT “will choose from among one of the powers that the Commission has deemed duly established or any other suitable institutional solution. This procedure will be adopted and applied by the Commission by consensus or by a 2/3 majority vote.”

For the Prime Minister (Haiti’s most powerful executive post), all the opposition groups who signed the *Terrace Garden Final Accord* will present the CNT with a list of candidates. The CNT’s supposedly separate civil society and political wings then chooses seven of the candidates, votes for one of them, and then submits their choice for approval to the president they have just chosen.

As the *Terrace Garden Final Accord* was unveiled, anti-government demonstrations were taking place not only in the capital but in other cities like Cap Haïtien, Saint-Marc, and Pétionville and rural towns including Mirebalais and Verrettes.

In the face of these developments, on Feb. 1, Jovenel Moïse again took to the airwaves [as he did exactly one week earlier](#), to make a one hour 19 minute rambling and at times incoherent [video address](#) to the nation, trying to blunt the growing movement against him. He vowed that he would remain in office to respect the “will of the Haitian people.”

“Jovenel Moïse doesn’t have power,” he said. “That master is not the big shot who sits plotting or writing a nice declaration so that he can seize power. Power has only one master. That master is called: the Haitian people. That means the 12 million who live in Haiti and the four million living in the diaspora.”

Concerning his dismantling of Haitian state institutions and rewriting the Constitution, he said: “When I speak, I want you to understand that this system which I found here, which I said I would destroy, it’s not me who is destroying it, it’s you, the Haitian people, since you put me here to destroy it.”

He also claimed that “the way I see things going, by the end of February, if not mid-February, we will be completely out of this coronavirus thing.” Haiti has not yet received any vaccines and has seen a spike in Covid-19 cases over the past month, registering 187 cases on Jan. 26, according to the [John Hopkins Coronavirus Research Center](#).

Most importantly, Moïse’s new chief of police Léon Charles has been very aggressive against demonstrators, just as he was against anti-coup [anti-occupation uprisings in 2005](#), which is the reason he’s been reactivated.

Human rights lawyer Mario Joseph, who heads the International Lawyers Office (BAI), spoke out against the police repression in a Jan. 27 press conference. “The BAI is extremely concerned that the corrupt PHTK [Haitian Bald Headed Party] government has weaponized the PNH [Haitian National Police] to use bullets, teargas, physical aggression, arbitrary arrests, and imprisonment to crush popular protests,” Joseph said.

On Feb. 2, Jovenel Moïse lost an ally whose defection almost always is a harbinger of a regime’s fall: the Catholic Church. “It seems to us that everyone agrees that no one is above the law and the constitution in the country,” wrote Haiti’s 10 bishops in an open letter, noting, like the Bar Association, that through his actions in January 2020, the president had “affirmed the unity of the law for all elected officials, including himself.”

“The country is on the verge of explosion,” the bishops continued. “The daily life of the people is death, assassinations, impunity, insecurity. Discontent is everywhere, in almost all areas. Many enraging topics, such as: how to establish a Provisional Electoral Council, how to write another constitution, etc. So it is not only the ravages of kidnapping that make the country totally unlivable. Should we accept or tolerate this?”

In 1986, it was the Catholic Church's open divorce from Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's dictatorship which quickly brought about his flight from the country on Feb. 7 of that year, thereby establishing the start-date of a repeatedly betrayed democracy which Jovenel Moïse is now being called on to respect.

One week before Baby Doc fled the country, he declared on television that he would remain in power "as strong as a monkey's tail." Today, Haitians everywhere are now waiting to see if Feb. 7 this year will look anything like that of 35 years ago.

Source: [Haïti Liberté](#)



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## **Ukraine: Workers protest utility price hikes demanded by U.S., IMF**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

On New Year's Day, the price of electricity, gas and oil for heating, and other utilities doubled for most households in Ukraine. The surprise price-hike was announced by President Vladimir Zelensky's government under orders of the

International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The IMF, dominated by U.S. and Western banks, demanded these harsh measures in exchange for loans to bail out the government.

Throughout January, thousands of people took to the streets in protest across this country of 44 million people in Eastern Europe, in large cities, small towns and rural areas. They blocked highways, occupied government buildings and took other actions to demand immediate relief from the unbearable price hikes.

For many, it was the last straw after seven years of austerity, war, fascist violence and sped-up privatization of the country's industry and natural resources.

Since Ukraine's democratically elected government was overthrown with U.S. support in early 2014, the price of utilities has risen by approximately 900%. Pensioners and many workers now receive bills for these basic necessities equal to or greater than their monthly income. Their only choice has been to go into debt until they are dragged into court, or sit home in the cold and dark.

Except now, people have decided they have another choice: to resist.

"The 'tariff gift' for the holidays was a real shock to the people," [says Andriy Manchuk](#), editor of Liva.com.ua. "This inhuman policy is a direct result of pressure from Western creditors."

He explained: "The Ukrainian authorities signed a memorandum with the IMF, pledging to raise tariffs, force accumulated utility debts from non-payers, and end controls on pricing in the gas market so that residents in Europe's poorest country buy gas at the price paid by consumers in the European Union — even if this gas is produced on Ukrainian territory."

On Jan. 28, protesters in Kiev, the capital city, [marched on the U.S. and EU](#)

[embassies](#) to demand a repeal of the utility prices, aid for small businesses struggling during the pandemic, and against restrictive language laws.

Why did they go there?

Activist and journalist [Dmitri Kovalevich writes](#): “They used to [protest] in front of Ukraine’s parliament and presidential office with no result. Then they realized who the real masters of Ukraine are and who is responsible for everything in our country.”

The group [Chevroni \(Red\)](#), which participated in the Kiev march, reported: “The demands of the protesters already go much further than just demands for lower gas prices. ... Protesters noted that the Ukrainian government is a servant of the oligarchs and the IMF. And it was at the request of the IMF, contrary to the Constitution, that the sale of land, medical, educational, labor and pension reforms were introduced in Ukraine.”

### **Mass action, real dangers**

In 2014, Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. and the NATO military alliance shared a goal with neo-Nazis in Ukraine: to establish a military beachhead to threaten the neighboring Russian Federation.

After the coup installed a new government under Washington’s thumb, the fascist gangs took over the streets as its enforcers. They attacked communists and socialists, immigrants and national minorities, union activists and Jewish people, feminists and LGBTQ2S people, and anyone else perceived as a threat to the new regime.

The ultra-right groups were recruited into the ranks of the police and military. They also formed their own military battalions to wage war against the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine, where there was mass opposition to the coup. Military attacks on

residents of Donetsk and Lugansk began in April 2014, and a month later people in those areas voted overwhelmingly for independence.

Most progressive political expression in Ukraine has been suppressed since 2014. At least 48 people were massacred by the neo-Nazis on May 2, 2014, in the city of Odessa. Thousands of leftists were forced into exile under threat of death or imprisonment, and thousands more were jailed.

Today, fascist groups scour the internet and social media looking for individuals to target with threats and violence. Those singled out can also count on being “investigated” by the government security services. Recent victims include [a young woman](#) from Kiev who posted on TikTok that she would like to visit Russia as a tourist, and a visiting [African medical student](#) in Zaporizhzhya who objected to the government’s suppression of Russian and other languages.

This Jan. 1, as they do every year, far-right groups held their [annual torchlight parade](#) in Kiev commemorating their hero, Ukrainian Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera.

So it was no small thing for working people and pensioners to take action publicly against the utility hikes. Both the government and the fascist movement denounce the protesters as “unpatriotic,” “pro-Russia,” and “communists.” In Ukraine, any one of those charges can mean being fired, beaten, jailed — or worse.

### **‘No tariff genocide’**

On Jan. 10, 100 residents of Nikolaev [blocked the Ingul Bridge](#), while in the village of Vysoky, 50 people blocked the Kharkov-Simferopol highway. Holding posters reading “No tariff genocide” and “People are not cattle,” they allowed emergency vehicles to pass and let traffic through every 15 minutes.

These tactics inspired others. On Jan. 12, a coordinated action by protesters in five

regional cities blocked three major highways connecting the eastern and western parts of Ukraine.

Then, on Jan. 15, [300 protesters in Zhytomyr](#) stormed the regional council building (similar to a state capitol), demanding to meet with local officials to discuss ways to roll back the price of utilities.

In many cities, the protesters have been supported by local officials.

On Jan. 16-17, [a new left-wing group, Livytsya](#), joined protests in Dnipropetrovsk: “Dnipro doesn’t give up! Despite the raging frosts, the left came out to protest against tariff genocide.”

On Jan. 19, young people affiliated with the Party of Shariya, a political party founded by an opposition blogger, held actions in six cities, [wearing only T-shirts](#) in the frigid cold to draw attention to the plight of pensioners suffering without heat.

“While the authorities are basking in warm offices or relaxing in the Maldives, Ukrainians are forced to turn off the heat in order to pay the bills,” the group said.

This is just a small sample of the creative, courageous protests people are undertaking in Ukraine.

### **End U.S. intervention!**

What about the new U.S. administration? Where does it stand?

Joe Biden, in his previous position as vice president, served as the Obama administration’s point person on Ukraine after the 2014 coup. Biden’s job was to keep the new government in line, to make sure that austerity was being imposed on the people and privatization was being carried out to please Wall Street, while keeping up military pressure on the independent republics of Donbass and Russia.

This was carried out under the signpost of “fighting corruption.”

Now President Biden and his new Secretary of State Anthony Blinken signalled that they would [continue this “anti-corruption” focus](#) at the expense of Ukraine’s workers and poor.

“Demanding the results of the fight against corruption from Ukraine’s anti-corruption agencies, created with the help of the United States, is like demanding results from the treatment of a disease by an agent who simply pretends to be a doctor,” Dmitri Kovalevich wrote in his [January update](#) for the website New Cold War.

“Ukraine’s corrupt officials are held accountable only if they dare to deviate from the pro-American course. Evidence is collected by the anti-corruption agencies, but nothing is investigated while they are loyal to the U.S. and they are allowed to continue stealing,” Kovalevich said.

In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned, “The bombs in Vietnam also explode at home; they destroy the hopes and possibilities for a decent America.” Working people in the U.S. saw how Washington’s support for fascist movements abroad boomeranged with the white-supremacist attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6.

When our class sisters and brothers in Ukraine are defying danger unleashed upon them by the U.S. government, we have a responsibility to support them and demand: Stop the IMF’s killer austerity measures! End U.S. intervention in Ukraine!



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# **MST letter to the Brazilian people: For urgent changes! In defense of life and hope!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

*From the [MST web site](#)*

Anchored by the *mistica* of rebellion and imbued with peasant culture, the National Coordination of the MST, within the framework of our 37 years, met virtually from January 28 to 30, 2021, with about 1000 delegates from all over the country, with the goal of analyzing the national and international situation, deepening our study of the agrarian question, projecting Active Resistance and the ongoing building of People's Agrarian Reform.

"We dream beyond ourselves" and dedicate our formulation and willingness to fight in solidarity with the relatives of the 222,666 people (officially) killed in the pandemic in Brazil. We understand that these deaths are not just caused by the virus

but are the result of the logic of a world ruled by neoliberalism, where profit is put above life. And amidst bodies being asphyxiated, some 2,000 billionaires have increased their fortunes by \$12 trillion. Just with the profits made by the ten richest people in the world in 2020, it would be possible to buy vaccine for everyone in the world.

But for ordinary people the crisis of capitalism has worsened. And it has cost the destruction of nature, jobs and income, and above all human lives! In Brazil, this scenario is deepening under the command of the Bolsonaro government, which has the worst pandemic management in the world. We are at the point where of the 100 million economically active Brazilians, 14 million are unemployed, 6 million discouraged and 40 million people are in the informal economy. There are 60 million Brazilians abandoned by the State, exposed to violence and hunger, worsened by the end of emergency aid and the high price of food. Bring Back Emergency Aid!!

Vaccinations are not guaranteed for everyone. And this is not just incompetence, it is a death project by those who despise the life of the Brazilian people! The situation in Manaus and other states, without oxygen, without doctors and supplies, is a state crime. We want to breathe! Vaccinations now!! Free and guaranteed health care for all! So it is urgent to repeal Constitutional Amendment 95, which imposed cuts to public health and education.

However, we know that it will not be guaranteed by the death project, and the Brazilian people have resisted. There are already 66 impeachment requests filed in Congress. We demand that the President of the Chamber of Deputies respect the popular will and put the impeachment to a vote. We will never forget the names of all the authorities who are silent or collaborate with the assassin in power. We are paying close attention and demand the return of Lula's political rights. And we will not back down in the face of threats to break with democracy.

Removing Bolsonaro is urgent and necessary! We cannot wait! The people's turn has

come! 2021 brought a new political climate led by popular and left-wing forces, brought together by the Brazil Popular Front and People Without Fear, demonstrating that it is possible to combine health care with symbolic actions. From now on, we will not give up, we will return to the streets with our cars, bicycles, carts, and a lot of anger. We will continue to struggle in the month of February and in March we will be involved in the struggles of March 8.

Therefore, we call on the entire working class to organize the struggles:

1. The fight for Vaccination Now! Bring Back Emergency Aid! Bolsonaro Out!
2. We demand the overthrow of presidential vetoes to aid the people of the countryside!
3. Opening schools is a crime. Classes can be recovered, lives cannot!
4. Defend the Unified Health System and revoke Constitutional Amendment 95!

We are committed to organizing Bolsonaro Out in all the municipalities where we have encampments and settlements, carrying on dialogues with the people and defending life, producing healthy foods to ease the effects of the crisis with the people, such as 4 million kilos of food donated in 2020.

We will continue inspired by the example of Paulo Freire in his centenary and we will remain firm with his legacy, producing healthy food, planting trees, carrying out political education, organizing our training and work with our base and contributing to solidarity actions in urban slums along with other popular movements and partners in our struggle.

We reaffirm our solidarity with all the peoples struggling in the world and resisting the policies of neocolonialism, imperialism and increasing exclusion and forced migration. We are in solidarity with the people of the countryside, the waters and the forests in struggle! We join the fight against racism, against LGBTQ phobia and against patriarchy all over the world! We offer our solidarity to the peasants of India

who have been fighting for several weeks.

We continue in Active Resistance in our territories, confronting the policies of dismantling agrarian reform and attempts to privatize land, against the handover of 25% of each municipality to foreign capital, the regularization of land grabbing and the appropriation of natural assets. We denounce the agribusiness and mining model as major culprits of the outbreak of pandemics for their model of destroying forests and biodiversity, and of animal production on an industrial scale. "Because struggling for us is doing what the people want to see accomplished".

We will continue to unite in Brazil and at the international level with all the social and popular forces that want to build a society based on solidarity, equality and social justice. A socialist society!

Let's go forward to the struggle with our banners!

Struggle, Build People's Agrarian Reform!



# Open letter from Honduran activist to Biden

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

January 20, 2021

New York

To President Joe Biden:

You were vice president in 2009, when the government of your party led by President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton supported the military coup in Honduras against our constitutional President Manuel Zelaya Rosales.

In 2010, the U.S. government imposed on us Porfirio Lobo-Sosa, whose son Fabio Lobo is imprisoned in the U.S. for cocaine trafficking. In 2013, they also imposed on us the narco-dictator Juan Orlando Hernández (JOH), whose brother Antonio (Tony) Hernández is imprisoned in New York for trafficking tons of cocaine and weapons to the United States. In 2017, the U.S. also imposed on us for the second time (in an illegal reelection) the narco-dictator JOH.

It was from the moment that this violent narco-dictatorship of the National Party was imposed on us that our country, Honduras, plunged into the worst social, economic and political crisis in our history. It is for this reason and in the face of despair that the Honduran people flee in the massive exodus of displaced human beings called caravans. They do not come in search of the American dream, but rather they flee from the nightmare that our country, the United States, has imposed on them.

The fascist government of Trump signed agreements with the countries of Guatemala and Mexico so that their repressive forces prevent the passage of the displaced victims, so that they do not reach the U.S. border, which is their destination to seek asylum and refuge.

So, President Biden, the caravans are the result of the failed policies of the “savage capitalist” system, as Pope John Paul II said, which the U.S. imposes on the Latin American region and the world. And if you and your government want the immigration “problem” to end, then we ask for a halt to U.S. intervention in our internal affairs.

The capitalist system that our country, the United States, imposes on to other countries in the region has not worked. On the contrary, it has produced and deepened extreme inequality, poverty, violence and the massive and inhumane exodus of entire displaced families.

You have been elected at a time of profound racial division, inequity, and economic and health crisis due to COVID-19. Therefore, you must understand how difficult it is when going to an electoral process under those circumstances.

Like you and the North American people, we in Honduras are fighting to recover our democracy, justice and peace, which was destroyed by the 2009 coup d'état. And this coming November 2021, we are going to presidential elections for the third time after that terrible historical moment that changed our lives.

Therefore, the only thing we demand from your government is to allow us to decide at the polls and that our sovereign decision as a people be respected. Do not let your government intervene. And I assure you, that, in this way, your government will not have to face the massive exodus of people who are fleeing from Honduras in search of what was unjustly taken away from them.

With all due respect and hoping that the purposes of your administration are fulfilled for the good of the people,

Lucy Pagoada-Quesada  
North American-Honduran citizen and New York teacher



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## **U.S.-Africom out! Justice and reparations for Somalia!**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

*Remarks by the Socialist Unity Party at a Jan. 16 protest in San Diego against the ongoing U.S. Africa Command (Africom) military intervention in Somalia. Despite an announced Jan. 15 withdrawal of several hundred U.S. troops from the African country, drone strikes and Special Forces operations will continue. The troops will not be brought home, but transferred to bases in Kenya and Djibouti.*

The actions of Africom sparked global controversy. Leaders around the world were alerted. As a result of the outcry, Amnesty International conducted an investigation.

Their investigation of just nine airstrikes revealed 21 civilians killed, 11 wounded, many more displaced, and they ruled it a clear violation of international law.

Africom subsequently admitted to killing and injuring people in four separate airstrikes. Up to this very day, neither the victims nor their families have ever been compensated or even contacted by the U.S. or Somali governments.

So what is Africom for? We know it's not to help people. Nothing the U.S. ever does makes it better for the people there. I challenge anyone to show me one time where the lives of the average people improved when the U.S. moved in.

Imperialism is still the agenda — just like in the slavery trade, just like in the scramble for Africa. To steal and exploit the inexhaustible mineral wealth and to cause the continued underdevelopment of the continent and its inhabitants.

That's an important part, the underdevelopment, when we talk about slavery. When you take key people out of their community, guess what happens to that community? Don't let them tell you that they were all savages and barbarians.

In western Africa, we know that they had empires before the 1500s. They had doctors, teachers, what you would call professional people who maintained those societies. And when you went in and took millions out, you underdeveloped that entire continent. That's a crime in and of itself.

Specifically, the U.S. is in central Africa for the coltan mines that fuel the tech industry. Coltan is key. That's why they're there.

A news report from 2015 after the reporter visited a coltan mine demonstrated how the imperialists were exploiting the workers. After their haul is weighed and classified, the miners are paid \$5 a day for the backbreaking work to dig out the precious metals that power our smartphones.

Recently, Africom announced it would be withdrawing from Somalia. This is no doubt in response to the public outcry against their war crimes in the country. But Somalians are demanding justice for these crimes. You can't do the out-of-sight, out-of-mind trick. Pulling out of Somalia is not going to make us forget. It doesn't absolve you of those crimes or make you not responsible.

Citing Africom's own admission of wrongdoing, Amnesty International said the troop withdrawal must not derail this momentum. Africom has an ongoing duty to care for the civilians impacted by its operations.

It's been said that solidarity with Somalia is key. So we must stand with the Somali people in demanding justice, from Africom and its imperialist aims.

We must not only join in Amnesty International's demand for justice and for reparations, we must also call for an end to Africom. And we must call for the destruction of U.S. imperialism around the world.



# Turkey: Freedom for people's lawyer Aytaç Ünsal

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

*Struggle-La Lucha is sharing this urgent bulletin on the case of political prisoner Aytaç Ünsal in Turkey, who won his release in September after a 213-day hunger strike. His fellow lawyer, Ebru Timtik, died after 238 days on hunger strike. [Get background on the struggle here.](#)*

Dec. 10: Death Fast resister and lawyer of the People's Law Bureau, Aytaç Ünsal, was arrested in Edirne, Turkey. His mother, retired judge Nermin Ünsal, was informed that he was detained by Edirne anti-terror police last evening: "His health was not good. He was nervous, had a lot of trouble and was receiving treatment. The one-year suspension of his punishment was revoked. The police just called and said that he had been detained on suspicion of escaping."

According to information obtained from the People's Law Bureau, it was reported that anti-terrorism police officers had detained him for 48 hours. For Aytaç Ünsal, whether 48 hours or even a minute, he is not in a position to be kept in a cell and remain safe. The fascist police in Edirne tortured him and are responsible for everything that might happen to our comrade.

The fascist AKP [the Justice and Development Party of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan] is afraid of Aytaç because, together with the resisters and the martyrs of resistance, he achieved victory with the Death Fast. Because he is a fighter of justice. Because together with our martyr Ebru Timtik, he has been the advocate of the people and has devoted his entire life to the struggle for his people. Because with their struggle they give voice to the thousands of people of Turkey,

workers and youth, who are feeling the injustice and repression of AKP fascism. This fact was clearly shared with every place in the world through the death fast resistance and the martyrdom of Helin, Mustafa, Ibrahim and Ebru.

That's why they arrested him, tortured him and made the decision to send him to prison again, in Edirne F-type prison. That's why, one month earlier, police raided the house of resistance where he was being treated after 213 days of Death Fast. Because he never surrendered. He never stopped being the advocate of the people. This is not a crime but an honor! For this cause our immortal comrade, lawyer Ebru Timtik, gave her life, for the cause of the people, for the cause of justice.

We stand by Aytaç Ünsal's side. We are giving our solidarity to him and promise that we will struggle together and in the end WE WILL WIN.

Freedom for people's lawyer Aytaç Ünsal!

The honor of resistance will defeat torture!

International solidarity is the weapon of the people against fascism and injustice!

[Source: Anti-Imperialist Front](#)



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# **Indian workers and farmers unite for historic strike, besiege far-right gov't**

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

Nov. 30 — A political and class struggle of historic proportions is taking place in India, the world's second most populous country. U.S. corporate media have treated it as invisible.

For the second time in less than a year, more than 250 million Indian workers joined a general strike on Nov. 26, shutting down much of this huge, multinational Asian country. According to the alliance of 10 trade union centers that called the strike, it was even larger than the one on Jan. 8, 2020 — the largest strike in human history.

Of tremendous significance for an oppressed country that combines giant industrial cities and huge swaths of agricultural land, this new workers' action linked arms with India's poor farmers — who today are besieging the capital of Delhi from all

sides to demand that the far-right, U.S.-backed government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdraw three new laws aimed at speeding up the privatization of agriculture and eroding the rights of peasants and agricultural workers.

The fear instilled in the Modi government by the emergence of this worker-peasant alliance was reflected in the brutal repression deployed against strikers across the country — especially the farmers and allies who marched on the capital. Riot police dug trenches, fired tear gas and other chemical agents, sprayed water cannons and beat protesters with truncheons.

But to no avail. The marchers broke through each police blockade until they reached the borders of the Delhi Union Territory. (Like Washington, D.C., the Indian capital has a separate status from the surrounding states.) And there the farmers have remained, for five days and counting.

In other states, workers and farmers blockaded highways and railways. They shut down scab operations that tried to defy the strike call. Though peaceful, in many areas they fought back when attacked by the cops.

The strike even reached the majority Muslim region of Jammu and Kashmir, which has spent more than a year under veritable martial law imposed by the chauvinist regime in Delhi.

### **Strikers' demands**

India's impoverished workers and farmers have been hard hit by the global capitalist economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic. [Unemployment has soared to 27 percent](#), while the gross domestic product has collapsed by nearly 24 percent.

As reported by [Proletarian Era](#) on Nov. 1, "India has ranked 94 among 107 nations in the Global Hunger Index 2020 and is in the 'serious' hunger category. Experts have blamed poor implementation processes, lack of effective monitoring, a siloed

approach in tackling malnutrition and poor performance by large states.” The conclusion: “Malnutrition is endemic in India.”

Since Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party took control of India’s national government in 2014, it has imposed a growing list of austerity and privatization measures while slamming civil rights, especially targeting women, Muslims, migrants and Indigenous communities. Modi is part of the global far-right trend that includes figures like Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro and, of course, U.S. President Donald Trump.

“It was the tens of millions of migrant workers who had to suffer as the Modi government announced the [COVID] lockdown abruptly. In the name of the pandemic and lockdown almost all the employers have cut the number of workers drastically. In spite of court orders against it, a 12-hour working day is imposed by most managements,” according to a statement by the [Communist Party of India \(Marxist-Leninist\) Red Star](#).

For the Nov. 26 all-India strike, the alliance of union centers — many affiliated with the country’s diverse leftist parties — [issued seven main demands](#):

1. Cash aid of Rs7,500 per month (roughly \$100) for all unemployed households;
2. 10 kg of free food monthly to all needy people;
3. Expansion of the National Rural Employment Act to provide 200 days’ work per year in rural areas at enhanced wages; extension of employment guarantee to urban areas;
4. Withdraw all anti-farmer laws and anti-worker labor codes;
5. Stop privatization of the public sector, including the financial sector, and stop corporatization of government-run manufacturing and service entities like railways, ordnance factories and ports;
6. Withdraw the circular on forced early retirement of government and public

sector employees;

7. Scrap the current privatized National Pension Service and provide adequate pensions for all.

“Hundreds of our party workers have been arrested in different states along with workers of other organizations,” [said Provash Ghosh](#), general secretary of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist). “We demand their immediate release.”

## **96,000 tractors, 12 million farmers**

Some 12 million [farmers began marching](#) early in the week from northern Indian states near the capital. They were joined by delegations of farmers throughout the country, as well as workers, students, and women’s and other people’s organizations. An estimated 96,000 tractors provided symbolic strength to the massive march.

The All India Kisan Sangharsh (Farmers’ Struggle) Coordination Committee (AIKSCC), a coalition of over 200 farmers’ groups, declared it “the longest march in the history of Planet Earth.”

It included a convoy of 10,000 women farmers from the state of Punjab. Its leader, Harinder Bindu from Bhatinda, has been a farmer for 30 years. She was interviewed by the Indian web publication [The Wire](#):

“The large number of women protesters has been a noteworthy aspect of the farmers’ march to Delhi. Bindu feels that the time is ripe for women to come out in large numbers now. She, like others, has brought along cooking essentials and rations to last them for the length of the protest.

“‘The three laws brought by the Modi government will impact women in a very different way,’ said Bindu. She says that even though all Indians will be affected adversely by these three laws, women need to raise their voices more because the

kitchen, which is considered their department, will come to a 'halt with this law.'

"If the farmers are affected, they will not be able to earn enough money to sustain their households. This will impact women as they will have to control the portions of meals that they cook,' she says, adding that children will also be affected ultimately.

"This is not all. She says that when farms stop generating enough income, women will have to go out to work in areas where there are no guarantees for their safety."

During a Nov. 30 press conference, farmers' union leaders vowed that protesters will keep sitting at the borders of Delhi until the government revokes the farm laws.

Two representatives of the transport workers' unions joined the news conference. They announced: "All taxis, buses, trucks will be put on halt. We will go on strike and let nothing run in Delhi."

"The workers and peasants will not rest till the disastrous and disruptive policies of the BJP government are reversed," said Tapan Sen, general secretary of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions. "The strike today is only a beginning. Much more intense struggles will be following."



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# Three typhoons rock the Philippines, militant students strike

written by Struggle - La Lucha

February 7, 2021

As if extrajudicial killings, the worst COVID-19 infection rate in Southeast Asia and a renewed government effort of red-tagging weren't enough, the Filipino people were struck by three typhoons within the space of three weeks.

- **October 25:** Typhoon Molave (called Quinto in the Philippines) made landfall at San Miguel Island and tore across Luzon for two days.
- **October 31:** Super Typhoon Goni (or Rolly) struck the Bicol region, very close to where Molave made landfall.
- **November 11:** Super Typhoon Vamco (or Ulysses) hit the Quezon region on Nov. 11, just north of where the first two typhoons made landfall.



## PHILIPPINES

### Typhoon Vamco (Ulysses) and Super Typhoon Goni (Rolly) Snapshot

As of 19 November 2020

President Rodrigo Duterte declared a state of calamity for the entire Luzon, after a series of typhoons, including Typhoon Vamco (locally named Ulysses), ravaged the country's largest and most populous island.

While the affected areas continue to reel from the consequences of "Typhoon Goni and three preceding cyclones in October," Typhoon Vamco has further hampered response efforts and caused further destruction.



#### TYPHOON VAMCO (ULYSSES)

3.67M	PEOPLE AFFECTED	73	DEATHS
277.7k	PEOPLE DISPLACED	67k	HOUSES DAMAGED OR DESTROYED

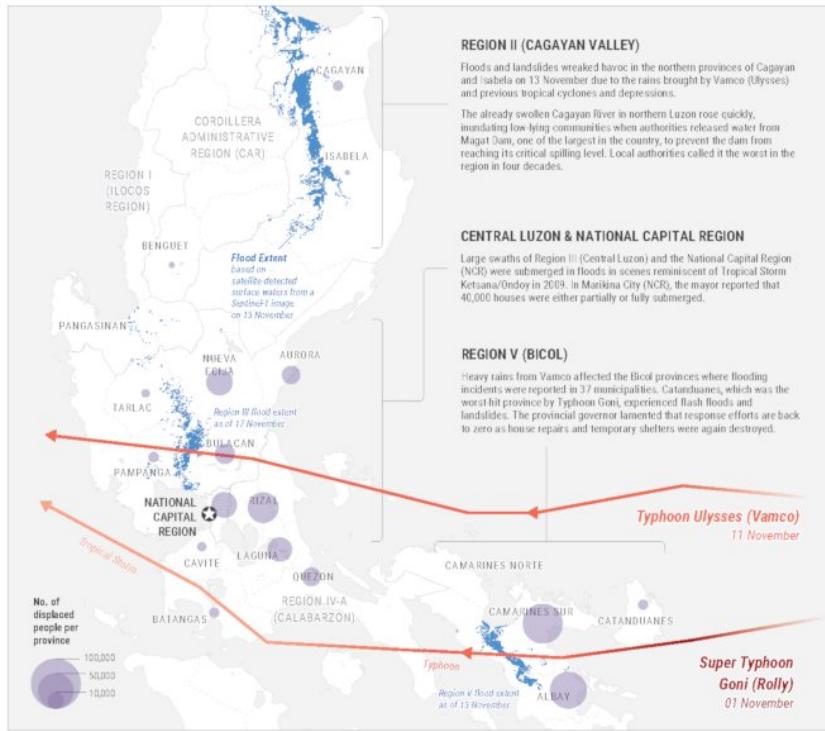
#### SUPER TYPHOON GONI (ROLLY)

2.14M	PEOPLE AFFECTED	25	DEATHS
71.3k	PEOPLE DISPLACED	189k	HOUSES DAMAGED OR DESTROYED

#### COVID-19 AND WATERBORNE DISEASES

The Department of Health (DOH) issued a press release stating that they are on heightened surveillance and warned the public against possible outbreak of water-borne and foodborne illnesses, influenza-like illnesses, leptospirosis and cholera. (DOH, 10 November 2020) "The DOH also "reiterated its call on the precautionary measures against spread of COVID-19 among the displaced population."

COVID-19 movement restrictions in Cagayan were放宽ing access of humanitarian actors at the onset of flooding. On 14 November, the national government requested the provincial authorities in Cagayan, and in other typhoon-affected areas, to lift strict COVID-19 health protocols to allow relief, search and rescue teams and media outlets immediate access to areas affected by Typhoon Vamco.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Sources: PSA, DSNE, DROMC, NDRRMC/OCD, FAGASA, DOH, UNOSAT. Feedback: ocha.philippines@un.org | www.unocha.org | www.rfeleweb.info

Following the destruction of these three storms, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [reports](#):

- 73 deaths
- 24 injured
- 19 people still missing
- 283,656 people are in evacuation centers
- 82,900 people remain displaced
- 50 villages remain isolated
- Over \$165 million in infrastructure damage across 8 regions
- Only 60 out of 316 municipalities have had power restored

Many of the working and oppressed masses of the Philippines have accepted that [help is not coming](#). Despite the millions of U.S. dollars poured into military and police aid, none of it will be utilized for disaster relief or rescue.

Some of the most calamitous consequences of the storms were those that were avoidable and unnecessary — those that can be traced back to the actions, or lack thereof, of the Philippines government.

President Rodrigo Duterte's persecution and subsequent [shutdown of the ABS-CBN news service](#) meant that entire regions, where ABS-CBN was the only news service available, went without any prior warning of the incoming typhoons.

The budget for the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council has been dramatically slashed over time, specifically by 4 billion Philippine pesos (or more than 82 million USD) in 2020. [Writer JC Punongbayan also comments](#) on the funds allocated for the government's war on activists:

"But, at the same time, he said they won't likely touch the P19.1 billion that will be allocated for the National Task Force to End Communist Local Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) — an anti-insurgency committee engaged in red-tagging and propaganda. That P19 billion is no joke, and the whole amount will be much better repurposed to augment disaster relief efforts, as well as the COVID-19 response."

## NDRRMC budget slashed by P4b in 2020

Budget of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) in billion PHP.



*In 2016, P18.9 billion was added for the Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Recovery Plan (CRRP) in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda.*

Source: Department of Budget and Management

## Students strike back

Youth and student groups called for a national academic strike against the criminal negligence of the Duterte administration. Students at University of the Philippines campuses, the Ateneo de Manila University, the University of Santo Tomas and many more submitted pledges to withhold all submissions of enrollment requirements until their demands are met.

The demands:

- National academic break and semester end
- Urgent calamity aid and pandemic response
- Ouster of the Duterte administration
- Fair wages for university staff and faculty

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque threatened: “Babagsak po kayo,” or, “you

will fail." Duterte [threatened to cut off funding](#) to the University of the Philippines, red-tagging the university in the process: "Sure. UP? Fine. Stop studying. I will stop the funding. You don't do anything except recruit communists. You study, and then you criticize the government. You are so lucky. Don't threaten me, because I will oblige you."

Alongside the student protests, at least 134 faculty members of the University of Philippines-Diliman [issued a statement](#) calling for the end of the semester.

The situation is very fluid. One way to follow developments is to tune into the hashtag #YouthStrikePH on all social media platforms. Whatever happens, this action led by youth and students, bringing together the workers and faculty of the universities and surrounding communities, is a remarkable example of mass action.



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## **Nigerian youth fight back against police terror**

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
February 7, 2021

Several reports say it started on Oct. 3 with [this tweet](#): an eyewitness report of a young man in Nigeria shot and left for dead by an officer of SARS, who then drove away with the young man's car. Within minutes, the tweet had over 10,000 retweets. The #EndSARS hashtag has been trending worldwide continuously to the publication of this article.

SARS, or the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, is a Nigerian police unit empowered to arrest, extort and murder with impunity. The Nigerian masses, particularly the youth, knew very well that SARS had been responsible for thousands of extrajudicial killings since its inception in 1992. SARS particularly targets young men between the ages of 15 and 35, harassing them for trivial noncrimes like plaiting their hair, having expensive phones or driving nice cars.

That's why thousands of people hit the streets all over Nigeria starting on Oct. 5 calling for the disbanding of SARS and an end to police brutality. The demonstrations and international support — including from [Black celebrities](#) like Beyonce, Naomi Campbell and John Boyega — were so massive that the Nigerian government was forced to dissolve SARS on Oct. 11. This is a historic victory for the Nigerian masses, particularly the youth.

But the protests did not end with this. This massive uprising is about more than just dissolving SARS — it is also about ending police brutality and the economic policies that destroy Nigeria's public sector and deny jobs and liveable wages for Nigerian youth, both of which are largely driven by Nigeria's neocolonial relationship with Europe and the U.S.

Despite the victory, protesters maintain their distrust, citing several occasions when the Nigerian government made similar promises and failed to deliver. Protesters have [demanded a comprehensive review](#) and investigation of the entire police system and punishment for those who have committed crimes against the people.

Moreover, the Nigerian government announced the formation of a “Special Weapons and Tactics Squad,” or SWAT, which protesters see as a simple rebranding of SARS.

## **Protesters massacred**

On Oct. 20, the Nigerian military was deployed to suppress the protests shortly after the Lagos state government announced a 24-hour curfew. The curfew was also a response to a massive prison break in Benin City.

At Lekki Toll Plaza, where the protests were more like a cultural festival, the military fired live ammunition into the crowd, killing at least 12 protesters. The military then abducted the bodies of those they had shot, leading to confusion about how many had died that day. The Nigerian army has since [denied the shootings](#).

In response, the protests escalated both in number and intensity. Immediately, the crowds burned down the Lekki tollgate, government infrastructure that makes billions of naira (Nigerian currency) in revenue monthly. The Lagos governor’s home was torched and a television network linked to the current ruling party was burned down.

As of Nov. 8, Twitter users posting with the #EndSARS hashtag are reporting that the Nigerian government has not only been disappearing protesters, but also freezing their bank accounts and seizing their passports.

Twitter user Reno Omokri (@renoomokri) points out the hypocrisy: “In 5 years General@MBuhari has been in power, I never read that bank accounts of Boko Haram or their sponsors were frozen, or that their passports were seized. Sadly, in the eyes of Buhari, #EndSARS protesters deserve frozen accounts and seized passports, but terrorists don’t!”

Currently, the movement is calling for the freedom of Eromosele Adene, kidnapped by the Nigerian police after a raid on his home.

Pan-African Community Action and the U.S. Out of Africa Network released a [joint statement](#) highlighting the involvement of Western imperialism in Nigeria, providing a crucial historical context that helps to clarify the conditions that the Nigerian masses face today:

“The police in Nigeria are a colonial institution begun in 1920 by the occupying British Empire. The British Empire used both taxation and the police to fuel a colonial system built on forced labor, which was used to run the colonial government itself and to build the infrastructure it needed to extract revenue from the country as a whole.

“The exploitative role of the police survived Nigerian independence, and has continued until the present day: police have been deployed to raze slums to the ground to clear land for developers to make luxury real estate for the Nigerian middle and upper classes. Nigerian police, like the elites they protect, enjoy total impunity for their actions: more than three out of four Nigerians who have encountered police over the past year report having been extorted for bribes, and sexual assault and extrajudicial killings are also chillingly common. SARS, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, is simply the ‘most notorious’ perpetrator of crimes endemic to policing throughout the country.”

### **Link to U.S. anti-racist rebellions**

Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of the Pan-African News Wire, [explains the political economy](#) of Nigeria as well as the connection between these uprisings and the anti-racist rebellions in the U.S.:

“Undoubtedly the mass demonstrations against police brutality were influenced by events in the United States since the police execution of George Floyd on May 25 in Minneapolis. Historically, there has been an intersection between the struggles for civil rights and self-determination among the tens of millions of people of African

descent in the West and their allies, where political convergences during the 1950s and 1960s linked the movements against racism in North America with the independence campaigns to end colonialism on the African continent.

“Nigeria is a vast oil-producing state where multinational firms such as Royal Dutch Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Total, among others, are involved with the extraction of petroleum and natural gas resources. Despite its tremendous wealth in energy, the character of the neocolonial system of dependency has deprived the majority of people from benefiting from its advances in the economic sphere.”

If the global working class can lend enough support and solidarity to the Nigerian masses, perhaps these protests can be another step towards genuine peace and self-determination for people of Nigeria.

