



# up front

spring / summer 2017 [waronwant.org](http://waronwant.org)

## Fighting Oppression

VOICES THAT MUST BE HEARD

## ERITREA

British business and a brutal regime

## Western Sahara RESISTANCE IN EXILE



FIGHTING GLOBAL POVERTY

# WELCOME



Right now a racist, anti-immigrant, anti-women sentiment is taking hold. Our partners in the global South have long shown

us that building movements from the ground up is key to tackling such injustice. In this edition read about the voices that must be heard in the fight against oppression. You can read about how British firms are reinforcing a ruthless dictatorship in Eritrea and how we are demanding action to halt corporate complicity in brutal human rights abuses. Read too about the growing resistance of the Saharawi people, denied their basic human rights and suffering under the Moroccan occupation. Also in this edition learn more about how we're standing with migrant workers, fighting racism and together with our partners in Sri Lanka securing fundamental rights for garment workers.

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FIGHTING GLOBAL POVERTY

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Front cover: Protesters in Madrid take part in a demonstration in support of Western Sahara's independence © REUTERS/Juan Medina

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# FIGHTING OPPRESSION

## The voices that must be heard

**We cannot stand by as human rights, justice and equality are trampled on. War on Want stands in solidarity with those fighting poverty, injustice and the abuse of their human rights. We work with partners around the world to protect their rights, lives and livelihoods.**

A racist, anti-immigrant, anti-women sentiment is sweeping through Europe and the US. It follows the UK vote to leave the European Union, the rise of the far right in European countries like France, Germany and the Netherlands, and the inauguration of Donald Trump as US President. The dangers are very real. And it's clear that the government's attack on Muslims through the PREVENT programme, together with a rise in expressions of anti-immigrant feeling post Brexit, are contributing to a mounting climate of fear. A record number of hate crimes are now being reported, at the same time that the government is shamelessly using the status of EU immigrants as a bargaining chip in the Brexit negotiations.

Moreover, the UK government continues to undermine its international human rights obligations. Its treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, including women who have suffered torture such as rape, is cruel and speaks volumes. Already the UK has reneged on its commitment to give refuge to child refugees fleeing Syria.



@CODEMUH

Looking across the Atlantic, US foreign and trade policies over the years have been toxic, especially for countries in the global South, yet Trump's administration threatens to go much further. The swift reinstatement of the Global Gag Rule, a Bush-era policy that denies US government funding to organisations delivering crucial sexual and reproductive health programmes, alongside a disregard for reproductive rights legislation, shows a government turning its back on women and women's rights. This was one of the first decisions by a President whose misogyny was exposed well before he was elected.

The rise of white supremacy and misogyny in the global North is being matched by growing grassroots resistance in the UK and elsewhere. We have seen thousands take to the streets in London alone. Many ordinary people are recognizing the threat to people's rights at home and around the world. They are angry and are, some for the first time, stepping out and showing they are on the side of justice and human rights.

And alongside these expressions of outrage, tackling the twin evils of white supremacy and misogyny must begin with a grassroots movement that has women and people of colour at its core. They are the people most affected by the dangerous global political shifts and the racism and hatred of women that is being peddled. It is they must who must lead us in the response.

**Honduras:** Violence against women is widespread and systematic in Honduras. Our partner, the grassroots movement CODEMUH (Honduran Women's Collective), is fighting for better living and working conditions for garment factory workers. From providing legal advice on domestic abuse cases to taking direct action to advocate for women's labour rights, CODEMUH creates a community of strong women who are able to challenge rampant machismo and gender-based oppression.

The movement must be built from the ground up. It must start with a space where people of colour, especially women of colour, can safely share their experiences and knowledge and be at the heart of shaping a response that represents them. This is crucial if we are to dismantle the systems and structures that entrench bigotry and xenophobia and fuel hatred of women and people of colour.

For decades now, our partners in the global South have shown us how building movements from the ground up is key to tackling injustice. The voices of women of colour, Muslim women, migrants, indigenous groups, diaspora, can no longer be ignored, pushed to the margins or simply paid lip service. War on Want is committed to promoting and platforming global voices to achieve justice.



# Bankrolling a brutal regime

**In the pursuit of profit British firms are turning a blind eye to human rights abuses and reinforcing a ruthless dictatorship.**

The Eritrean people live in fear. Eritrea is one of the most repressive states in the world: no elections since 1993; a crackdown on press freedom; forced labour; arbitrary arrest and detention without trial; indefinite compulsory military conscription; and sexual violence against women and girls. The list goes on.

Yet these shocking human rights violations mean nothing to big business, whose only purpose is to exploit Eritrea's wealth of natural resources. Right now in Eritrea, mining companies from around the world are bankrolling a brutal regime and are complicit in its forced labour system, whether through mining taxes paid to the state or investments made in mining construction projects.

Four mines are currently under development and over a dozen companies, including British firms, are hunting for the next minerals to plunder. A number of British financial institutions are invested in these companies, including Barclays Stockbrokers Ltd and Halifax Share Dealing.

In a country which does not publish a national budget and where state revenues are unknown, mining companies are providing funding to Eritrea's totalitarian state. Join War on Want to demand international action to halt corporate complicity in these ongoing human rights abuses.

## Fleeing terror: the legacy of war

**Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993, following three decades of war. A further war between the two countries from 1998 to 2000 cost tens of thousands of lives. Since then Eritrea has become one of the most totalitarian states in the world.**

**The number of Eritreans fleeing repression and seeking refuge in Europe has increased five-fold since 2008. More than 45,000 Eritreans applied for asylum in Europe in 2015. Yet the UK government disgracefully downplayed the risk of human rights abuses in an attempt to reduce asylum seeker numbers.**

**Our partner Eritrea Focus, an association of refugee groups, human rights organisations, and non-governmental organisations, is working to draw attention to human rights abuses in Eritrea and to press the international community to work for democratic accountability in Eritrea.**

# Resistance in exile



© War on Want

**Deep in the Sahara desert some 165,000 Saharawi refugees cling to the hope that they will one day return to their confiscated homeland. But despite a lifetime in exile, and denial of their basic human rights, resistance is growing.**

When Moroccan military forces invaded Western Sahara in 1975 the indigenous Saharawi people were expelled from their homes by force. Most fled to the Algerian desert. Ever since, the Saharawi people have been denied the right to self-determination, and mass migration of Moroccan settlers has turned them into a minority in their own land.

As Morocco continues to plunder the rich supply of natural resources that belong to the Saharawi people, such as fish stocks and phosphate (a crucial component in fertilizer), it uses its financial and diplomatic means to further cement its hold on to its lucrative colony. Foreign oil investment continues to boost Morocco's frail veneer of international legitimacy and finances the expensive occupation, while its recent readmission to the African Union, having left in 1984, has served to embolden the regime.

The Saharawi refugee camps are located near the city of Tindouf in the Algerian desert. Here the terrain is harsh and temperatures can top 50°C in the summer months. It's clear why this stretch of desert is known to some as 'The Devil's Garden'. What is also evident is the lack of any productive or income-generating activities, which entrenches poverty and further deepens the dependence on international aid.

Yet, despite a lifetime in exile, resistance is growing. War on Want partner the Saharawi Campaign Against the Plunder (SCAP) is working tirelessly to raise awareness among Saharawis in the refugee camps, and occupied territories, about the ongoing illegal plunder of Western Sahara's resources and its impact on the conflict. SCAP is organising presentations in camps and protests against the companies exploiting Saharawi resources. They mobilised an incredible 4,000 people to protest against the Irish company San Leon Energy, which is exploring for oil near El-Aiun, the occupied capital of Western Sahara.

Jalihena from the Saharawi Campaign Against the Plunder (SCAP) is categorical: "As long as the Moroccan monarchy continues to benefit, without impunity, from the plunder of Saharawi natural resources, it will not be pressured to give up the territories it occupies and will make the Saharawi efforts to liberate the territories even harder."

The conflict is keeping so many people in poverty. War on Want will continue to support our Saharawi partners by helping raise awareness of the struggle, in order to build resistance and bring the occupation to an end.

**Find out more: [waronwant.org/western-sahara](http://waronwant.org/western-sahara)**



**STAND  
with  
MIGRANT  
WORKERS**

**WAR ON  
WANT**

FIGHTING SOCIAL INEQUALITY

**Workers' rights are human rights – from the protection of the right to join a trade union, to being free of racism, abuse and exploitation, and much more. The struggle for workers' rights is central to War on Want's work. We have long promoted the rights of migrants and other workers around the world.**

Today migrant workers across the UK face wholesale abuse and threats to their rights. As part of our ongoing work to secure and protect labour rights, we are standing with migrant workers.

As the UK is withdrawn from the European Union, the explicit aim of 'controlling migration' goes against government commitments to protect workers' rights. Millions of migrant workers in the UK now face uncertainty and threats to their rights.

Several insidious migration myths continue to be peddled, most notably that immigration is to blame for low wages. Not true. It's the deregulated flexible labour market and the crackdown on trade unions that are the real causes of low wages.

Another myth is that migration undermines public services. This ignores the massive contribution migrant workers make to public services, such as the NHS, and conveniently overlooks the significant toll austerity and privatisation have had on public services over the years.

Right now 3.5 million migrant workers are in a perilous position with no guarantee of their right to remain. With workers dependent on their employer for their right to stay, they are unable to challenge abusive practises at work. They are stuck between a rock and a hard place. In this way the migration system can be used as a weapon to attack workers' rights, with irregular workers having no way to claim their rights without the threat of arrest and deportation hanging over them.

A tougher migration system will not improve the lives of low paid workers. The real drivers of the UK's low pay and precarious work are the weak enforcement of labour rights, ever greater restrictions on trade unions and the growing numbers on precarious contracts. The so-called benefits of flexibility in the workforce mainly benefit profits and not workers.

Protecting workers' rights means standing with migrant workers. War on Want is calling for basic rights to be protected:

### ● **The right to work:**

Everyone should have the right to work to provide for their basic needs. When someone doesn't have the right to work legally and so can't provide for their basic needs, they often face no real choice but to work illegally. Working illegally makes workers vulnerable to extreme exploitation including modern forms of slavery. They are often afraid to approach the authorities to complain about exploitation for fear they'll be detained or deported.

### ● **Equal social and labour protection:**

Restrictions on social protection weaken the ability of workers to demand better conditions. If there's no safety net you can't afford to be without work, so workers dare not challenge unfair treatment for fear of losing future work. These protections will be in the firing line during the government's post-Brexit negotiations with the EU. Equal social and labour protection must be upheld and enforced for all workers.

**Find out more:**

[waronwant.org/StandWithMigrantWorkers](http://waronwant.org/StandWithMigrantWorkers)

## **When bosses act as border guards**

**BYRON**  
PROPER STITCH-UP

Byron, the hamburger chain with a £70 million turnover, invited some of its migrant workers to a 'training day' only to hand them over to the UK border agency for deportation. They were all too happy to make money off the back of migrant workers, but then betrayed them in a stitch up with the Home Office. When bosses are compelled to act as border guards, exploitation and abuse will soon follow. Workers with the threat of deportation hanging over them will always struggle to challenge poor pay and appalling conditions. That is why everyone should be entitled to basic rights at work irrespective of their immigration status.

## **Precarious contracts: a recipe for insecurity and exploitation**



© War on Want

More and more workers in the UK find themselves on precarious contracts, unable to plan their lives or support their families as their hours and schedules are unpredictable. With bosses holding all the power, workers are too afraid of speaking out for fear of losing their job. One in five workers, some 7.1 million people, now face precarious employment conditions. Precarious work has been on the rise since the mid-1970s, coinciding with the crackdown on trade unions, deregulation and free market economics. Precarious work comes in many forms, including bogus self-employment, zero-hours contracts, agency work, temporary work, and casual or 'on-call' work. Join War on Want in our call to end precarious contracts.

# From TTIP to Brexit, the fight for trade justice continues

**War on Want works for a fairer world where trade deals don't put people in poverty or threaten their basic rights. Focused campaigning against EU-US trade deal TTIP, and its Canadian equivalent CETA, has helped build a vibrant trade justice movement in the UK already wise to the dangers of secretly negotiated trade deals that put big business above people.**

Our biggest challenge is yet to come, and together we can succeed against it. With Brexit looming the status of our trade deals and economic partnerships is in flux. Like a vast school playground, we'll be busy taking down the bullies with the combined strength of ordinary people like you.

Through TTIP and CETA, millions of people now know the dangers of modern trade deals. These deals attack social and health rights and regulations, covering everything from food to the environment and climate change. They enforce privatisation of our public services; and they grant big

business unprecedented powers to sue governments for lost profits. Such deals have enforced a lethal agenda, rolling out the decades of exploitation of the global South to the rest of the world.

Moreover, Theresa May's recent meeting with President Trump heralded a swift US-UK trade deal after Brexit. Chillingly, when asked whether she would exclude the NHS from such a deal, May could only muster that her government was "committed to an NHS that is free at the point of use."

Fresh from our battles against TTIP and CETA, War on Want, alongside our allies in the Trade Justice Movement and our undaunted supporters, is ready to promote a trade agenda that puts the rights of people before profits: a trade agenda that protects our treasured public services, defends social, health and environmental regulation, and serves ordinary people in the UK and the wider world.

**Find out more: [waronwant.org/trade-justice](http://waronwant.org/trade-justice)**

## CETA deal passes, but future far from certain

**Toxic EU-Canada deal CETA has been voted through the European Parliament. Yet the vote was far closer than anticipated. More UK Labour MEPs voted against the deal than for it (joining established Green Party opposition to CETA) – a direct result of the tireless campaigning work of War on Want supporters.**



© War on Want

However, CETA still faces significant hurdles. The European Commission had planned to side-step national parliaments but thanks to more than 13,000 War on Want supporters, national parliaments across the EU will now vote on CETA before the deal's 'corporate court' mechanism can come into force. And if one country goes against CETA, the whole deal will fall.

Trade Secretary Liam Fox has admitted to bypassing UK parliamentary scrutiny to sign the UK up to CETA. This gives us much to worry about when the government begins negotiating its own deals after Brexit, but as ever we will be fighting to ensure that democracy is at the heart of any future deal.

**Find out more: [waronwant.org/what-ceta](http://waronwant.org/what-ceta)**





# Taken at night

**Israel's use of arrest and detention is an integral part of its oppression of Palestinians and its blatant abuse of human rights. At any time Palestinians can be arrested by the Israeli authorities; taken from their homes, at checkpoints or at demonstrations. No one is immune, not even children.**

"A child's place is not in a prison," says Hisham. His son Mohammad was arrested and sent to prison when he was 15 years old. "Who knows how a child will turn out in the future after living through all that."

Mohammad is a political prisoner. A political prisoner is someone who is detained because of their identity, beliefs or political activities. In Palestine, political prisoners refers to people detained in relation to the Israeli Occupation.

Nearly every Palestinian family living under Occupation has a family member currently in prison or who has been. As of October 2016, Israel is holding 7,000 Palestinians as political prisoners, including 720 in administrative detention.

Hisham and his family live in Jalazon Refugee Camp, in the shadow of Beit El, one of the hundreds of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Children like Mohammad are often arrested in night-time raids following demonstrations. Arrests connected to demonstrations are part of a broader practice of political repression, with the expectation that villages will be less likely to protest the theft of their land if children are targeted.

Mohammad was arrested after one such demonstration, accused of throwing stones. He was fined and sentenced to 7 months in prison. His father Hisham says: "The sentence is just to intimidate him so that he will not get involved in anything in the future."

Mohammad's two younger brothers, Yusef and Ahmad (pictured), saw their brother arrested and marched from their home in the middle of the night by Israeli soldiers. "We miss everything about him," says Yusef. "We want him to come home."

War on Want has joined forces with our partner Addameer: Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association to produce a series of photo stories about Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli detention.

## Colonialism in action

Israel, like other colonial regimes, has a long history of using arrest and detention as a method to repress political organising by Palestinians. During the first intifada (uprising) in the 1980s, thousands of Palestinians were taken prisoner by Israel for their political activities. These included 'offences' such as organising and participating in protests, taking part in vigils, waving flags, or printing and distributing political material. In short, basic rights of freedom of expression and assembly are flagrantly abused.

**Find out more:**  
[waronwant.org/palestinian-political-prisoners](http://waronwant.org/palestinian-political-prisoners)

# Worker solidarity beats bosses dirty tricks

● Union members of War on Want partner FTZ/GSEU have won a two-year fight for the right to organise at the British-owned ATG factory just outside Colombo, Sri Lanka. Factory bosses used every dirty trick in the book to try to undermine workers but the intimidation and bribery ultimately failed. FTZ/GSEU Joint Secretary, Anton Marcus, said: "This is a lesson for employers. In a global economy it is not only investment and profit that travel across borders, but also worker solidarity and unity". A big thank you to TRAIID for its ongoing support in the struggle for garment workers' rights.

Find out more: [waronwant.org/workers-rights](http://waronwant.org/workers-rights)



© FTZ/GSEU

## We're winning! Spotlight on supply chains

● Fashion giant UNIQLO has bowed to campaigning pressure and announced it will release the details of its supply chain. For too long global fashion brands have escaped responsibility for workers' rights abuses in the factories supplying their clothes. Now for the first time workers and labour rights groups will be able to directly target UNIQLO for its poor labour conditions. Transparency in supply chains is critical if brands are to be held to account for exploitation of garment workers' basic rights. A big thank you to War on Want supporters who called on UNIQLO to make public its list of supplier factories.

Find out more: [waronwant.org/workers-rights](http://waronwant.org/workers-rights)

## Stop G4S campaign win

● Private security giant G4S has finally sold its Israeli business. News of the sale followed much to-ing and fro-ing by G4S over its earlier promise to end its business in Israeli prisons. Our unrelenting pressure on the world's largest security provider made the cost of complicity in human rights abuse too high.

More information:  
[waronwant.org/justice-palestine](http://waronwant.org/justice-palestine)

## Water crisis in Colombia

© Comité Cívico por la Defensa de la Guajira



● The La Guajira region of Colombia is home to the Cerrejon coal mine: a massive open pit mine that uses a staggering 17 million litres of water a day. Yet in the last ten years some 5,000 indigenous children have died due to a lack of access to drinking water in the region. The mine is jointly owned by Anglo American, BHP Billiton and Glencore, all British-listed companies. War on Want partners, the *Federation of Black and Brown Communities Affected by Mining in La Guajira*, are fighting back and have succeeded in temporarily halting Cerrejon's efforts to divert a main tributary which feeds the Rancheria River, the principle water source in the region. One of the important ways War on Want supports its partners in Colombia is by helping raise awareness of the issues here in the UK and making sure their voices are heard. War on Want is calling on the UK government to regulate the operations of British companies in order to safeguard the environment and communities' right to water and life.

[waronwant.org/profitting-conflict](http://waronwant.org/profitting-conflict)

## Bangladesh crackdown: another Rana Plaza?



© Stephen Russell

The Bangladesh government's campaign of repression against garment workers and trade unions has intensified with more arrests and raids on trade union offices in the capital Dhaka. As long as garment workers are denied the fundamental right to organise in factories, the risk of another Rana Plaza disaster is on the cards. We protested outside the Bangladesh High Commission in London in solidarity and to highlight their struggle.

Find out more: [waronwant.org/workers-rights](http://waronwant.org/workers-rights)

## Operation Hedgehog

We teamed up with Talk Socialism to train supporters in delivering fun, interactive workshops to help win arguments over the economy, progressive policies and a fair future. Interested?

Find out more: [waronwant.org/hedgehog](http://waronwant.org/hedgehog)

## Land rights in Papua New Guinea

We have a new partner in Papua New Guinea. Act Now PNG is supporting communities in the struggle to defend indigenous rights to their land and protect precious rainforests. More than 10% of land in Papua New Guinea has been seized by timber and palm oil companies (mostly foreign owned) under the guise of development. Our joint project with Act Now PNG seeks to return confiscated land to indigenous communities. War on Want is funding important research work which is vital in raising awareness of the struggle for land rights.

## British complicity in the colonisation of Palestine

2017 marks 50 years of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It also marks 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, which announced British support for the colonisation programme in Palestine and ushered in a century of Palestinian dispossession and poverty. Maintaining pressure on the governments and companies lending support to Israel's oppressive policies is essential in War on Want's Justice for Palestine campaign. In this highly symbolic year we demand accountability from the UK government and corporations that back the oppression of Palestinians. Find out more: [waronwant.org/justice-palestine](http://waronwant.org/justice-palestine)



© War on Want/ID | Photography

## Fighting racism

We recently joined **One Day Without Us**, a national day of action, to celebrate the contribution of migrants to the UK. Migrant workers across the UK face racism, abuse and exploitation fuelled by years of hostile policies and anti-migrant rhetoric. Join the fight back!

Find out more: [waronwant.org/StandWithMigrantWorkers](http://waronwant.org/StandWithMigrantWorkers)



# 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 Israel and help us to campaign against the brutal occupation oppressing Palestinians



[waronwant.org](http://waronwant.org)

# Yes, I want to support War on Want by making a donation

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