

up front

South Africa 2010

This summer the world's attention will be fixed on South Africa, host of the 2010 football World Cup. The first African nation to stage the tournament, South Africa has spent billions on stadiums, airports and hotels.

While vast sums have been invested in tourist facilities, millions of South Africans today face appalling living conditions. In informal settlements across the country, whole communities are denied access to essential public services. Evictions are commonplace, and many thousands of people have been displaced to transit camps that are isolated from cities and work opportunities.

The plight of the poor has grown worse in the lead-up to the World Cup. But War on Want's South African partners – social movements and shack-dweller organisations – have built a powerful campaign to fight back. May 2010

A member of the Anti-Eviction Campaign protests for the equal rights of South Africa's poor



War on Want is working alongside grassroots organisations in South Africa to resist evictions and the denial of public services.

Despite the fall of apartheid in 1994, South Africa remains one of the most unequal places on earth. Over 30% of the country's population live on less than \$2 a day and the national unemployment rate is 40%. Millions of South Africans are deprived of decent housing and access to public services, even though these rights are guaranteed under the country's constitution.

On the sidelines

A quarter of all South Africans live in the 2,700 informal shack settlements located in and around major cities across the country. The conditions in these settlements are deplorable. Local authorities frequently refuse to provide these communities with water, electricity, sanitation services and proper drainage. Home ownership is rare, leaving many shack-dwellers vulnerable to rent increases and being evicted without notice.

Over a third of South Africans lack affordable electricity and water. Many of those with access to these utilities are supplied by expensive pre-paid meters. Cut-offs are a common problem, and every year 1.5 million South Africans have their services disconnected. Sharp price hikes in water and electricity are set to take effect in the near future, meaning that even fewer people will be able to afford these vital services.

A place in the city

The South African government has promised decent, affordable housing to millions of South Africans. But due to chronic shortages only a fraction of those entitled to a home have been provided with one. Some South Africans have spent the last 20 years on a waiting list for a house.

To relieve this housing shortfall, the government has built hundreds of Temporary Relocation Areas (TRAs), or transit camps. Over the last decade thousands of poor people have been forcibly removed from their homes and sent to these camps. Although most residents were promised that their relocation would be temporary, some have spent years living in a camp.

Crowded and poorly constructed, the TRAs are seen by most residents as being even worse than shack settlements. The majority of the camps are isolated from cities, making it difficult for residents to earn a living. In some camps the cost of travelling to a city market can equal a day's wages. Being uprooted also means having to leave behind vital community-based organisations, such as schools and crèches.



A football pitch in Blikkiesdorp, which is home to many World Cup evictees

World Cup 2010

Viewed by many as a crucial source of income for the country, the 2010 football World Cup has only exacerbated the plight of South Africa's poor. Since South Africa was named tournament host, the rate of evictions has increased, particularly in areas around stadiums, practice facilities and other sites designed to cater to tourists.

Although the tournament will attract a large number of visitors, few South Africans will see an increase in their daily earnings. Under pressure from FIFA, football's governing body, South Africa has promised to crack down on unlicensed vendors in designated areas around the stadiums. This means that few among the poor, many of whom make a living by selling wares on the street and in markets, will benefit from the event. In short, those living on the margins will be virtually shut out from the World Cup.

The biggest winner of the tournament will be FIFA itself. The terms of agreement with South Africa are structured in a way to ensure that FIFA, not South Africa, receives the bulk of the profits from the event. For example, the organising body has been granted the right to set up 'tax-free bubbles' covering key areas such as stadiums, media centres and even public viewing sites. All merchandise sold by FIFA will be tax-exempt, while any unlicensed trader caught selling goods marked 'World Cup' or even '2010' risks arrest.

Second class citizens no longer

Drawing on the legacy of the anti-apartheid movement, over the past decade a vibrant resistance to evictions and economic discrimination has emerged in South Africa. Led by groups like War on Want's partners the Anti-Eviction Campaign, the Anti-Privatisation Forum and Abahlali baseMjondolo KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape, thousands of poor people across the country have banded together to claim their rights and fight injustice.

Using methods ranging from street protests to litigation, our partners have won several hard fought victories benefitting shack-dweller communities in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. For instance, to make way for hotels for the World Cup and to 'clean up' the road from the airport to Cape Town, 10,000 people were set to be evicted from Joe Slovo, a shack settlement. Thanks to the work of the Anti-Eviction Campaign, these evictions have been suspended.

In another key victory, Abahlali baseMjondolo led the successful campaign to overturn the KwaZulu-Natal Slums Act in October 2009. The defeat of this bill, which gave city officials the authority to evict shack dwellers in Durban, represents a landmark achievement in the fight against forced displacement.

To learn more about the work of War on Want's partners, including their plans to protest the World Cup, visit www.waronwant.org/southafrica2010

Poor communities on the margins of society are being shut out from the benefits of the World Cup.



Raymond, a construction worker, inside a shack in Blikkiesdorp

Find out more about the work of our partner organisations like the Anti-Eviction Campaign, which are leading the fight for the rights of South Africa's poor. Visit www.waronwant.org/southafrica2010

World Cup evictees speak out

Raymond is a construction worker from Cape Town. He recently worked on the upgrading of Athlone Stadium, which will serve as a training facility at the 2010 World Cup. After being forced out of his home, Raymond was sent to live in Blikkiesdorp, a crowded transit camp of roughly 15,000 evictees, including those who were displaced to clear room for the expanding Athlone grounds.

Raymond has no illusions about why he and other Blikkiesdorp residents were moved to the camp. "Why am I staying here? Because of the 2010 World Cup. The government dumped us here." This sentiment was echoed across Blikkiesdorp, many of whose residents have spent years on a government waiting list for decent housing, a right guaranteed under South Africa's constitution.

Known as 'Tin Can Town' among residents, the conditions in Blikkiesdorp are appalling. The homes are cramped and overcrowded, and it is common for several generations to live together under one roof. Raymond and others living in Blikkiesdorp describe having to share toilets and water taps with several other families. The homes

themselves were built on the cheap, consisting of sand floors and corrugated tin roofs. Sheltered only by paper-thin walls, residents of the camp face blistering heat or extreme cold depending on the season.

The remote location of Blikkiesdorp makes earning a living almost impossible for many families, all of whom are poor. The 20-mile journey to Cape Town can only be made by taxi, which few in the camp can afford. The camp also lacks basic facilities and community institutions, adding to residents' sense of isolation. As one person living in Blikkiesdorp asked, "Why can't they build the houses near the facilities in Athlone, where the shops and schools for the children are?"

The residents of Blikkiesdorp face an uphill battle. But, led by War on Want's grassroots partners, the campaign for the rights of the poor is growing stronger by the day. Our partner the Anti-Eviction Campaign works directly in Blikkiesdorp. The organisation aims not only to prevent the relocation of more families to the camp, but also to improve conditions for those already living there.



An overhead view of Blikkiesdorp, known among residents as 'Tin Can Town'

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War on Want relies on the generosity of its supporters to continue its work empowering poor people around the world. Every pound counts in our fight against injustice and inequality and we are grateful for your support.

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NEWS

Making a gift in your Will is one of the best ways you can help us fight the root causes of poverty. Whether big or small, a legacy to War on Want could help change lives. If you'd like to find out more, you can request a free copy of our guide to making a Will by ticking the box on the donation form, by calling Stefanie on 020 7549 0566 or visiting www.waronwant.org/legacy

War on Want congratulates Gareth Kingdon, winner of the 2010 Document Photography Award. The award, which was co-organised by War on Want and Bond and Coyne Associates, tasked photography students with capturing images of poverty across the globe. Kingdon took the top prize for his vivid photographs inside the slum of Kibera, Kenya, one of the most densely populated places in the world. In March, Kingdon joined War on Want staff on their visit to our partners in South Africa. His photographs from the trip were featured on the front page of *The Guardian*, and some are shown in this edition of Up Front.

We are truly grateful to everyone who has generously donated towards our Kenya appeal. Thanks to you we can now offer grants to more street traders, helping them and their children break free from the crushing cycle of poverty. We now also have more resources to help fight for better working conditions for traders to ensure they have access to safe drinking water and toilets. If you haven't yet made a donation, there is still time for you to help fight poverty in Kenya. You can send in a donation using the enclosed envelope, or call us on 020 7549 0555. You can also donate online at www.waronwant.org/kenya-appeal.

The National Garment Workers' Federation (NGWF), a Bangladeshi trade union and War on Want partner organisation, is leading calls for the fair compensation of the victims of a deadly factory fire. The blaze at the Garib & Garib factory in Gazipur, Bangladesh, killed 21 garment workers in February. The NGWF is also demanding that the factory owner be brought to justice for the deplorable conditions that caused the tragedy. War on Want expresses its solidarity with the families and colleagues of the workers who died in the fire. We have also been working alongside the NGWF to hold to account those responsible for the workers' deaths.

In March, War on Want occupied a London branch of Waitrose to protest against the supermarket's sale of goods from illegal Israeli settlements. Thousands of War on Want supporters have also written to the CEOs of Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose demanding that they stop selling products from these settlements. Visit our website to see a video of the protest and to find out how you can support our campaign against supermarkets' complicity in Israel's occupation of Palestine.



War on Want's John Hilary at a London Waitrose teach-in against the sale of products from illegal settlements

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