



Cueva de las Manos
(Cave of Hands)

who we are

In the last years hundreds of organisations and movements have been engaged in struggles, activities, and various kinds of work to defend and promote the right of people to Food Sovereignty around the world. Many of these organisations were present in the *International Nyéléni Forum 2007* and feel part of a broader **Food Sovereignty Movement**, that considers the Nyéléni 2007 declaration as its political platform. **The Nyéléni Newsletter wants to be the voice of this international movement.**

Organisations involved: Development Fund, ETC Group, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for food sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Oxfam Solidarity, Real World Radio, Roppa, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, VSF-Justicia Alimentaria Global.

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editorial: rights and repression

Eleven peasants and six policemen killed. 13 peasants prosecuted, and more than 50 incriminated in the course of one of the most violent land conflicts in Paraguay's recent history. Fisherwomen, men and children who have been deprived of their access to Lake Victoria in Uganda are threatened with being shot by private security guards if they cross the borders established by investors who claim to have bought the lake. Female workers of big food retailers who are put under surveillance, sexually harassed at their workplace and underpaid in the U.S. Pastoralists who are trying to survive the consequences of the destruction of their habitat due to mining activities in Mongolia... These are but a few of the testimonies of human rights' violations and abuses that this issue of the Nyéléni Newsletter has collected.

They all demonstrate the increasing criminalization of social movements defending food sovereignty all over the world. We can not know the true scope of this situation, as much abuse and many conflicts and human rights' violations committed throughout the existing food systems remain invisible and go undetected. However even this sparse and scattered information has been enough for UN monitoring bodies and defenders - such as the *Special Rapporteur on Human Rights* - to state that the second most vulnerable group of human rights' defenders are those working on land, natural resources and environmental issues. The *International Labour Organization* has also reported that the incidence of bonded and slave labour is particularly high in certain workplaces in the food chain - such as big plantations, industrial slaughterhouses and trawlers. **The increasing criminalization of active practitioners within the food sovereignty movement is one of the major threats that we are currently facing.** Depending on the context, the criminalization may be promoted by an authoritarian State that does not allow people to organize autonomously; or by the erosion of the institutions and human rights' culture of countries that previously had a high degree of protection of human rights; or by non-State actors such as companies and the media who promote laws that impair or make the economic activities of pastoralists, fishing communities, peasants and gatherers illegal; or deprive these groups of access to natural resources; or dismantle labour rights' protection, and environmental and sanitary regulations.

Our movements and organizations need to develop and improve their strategies to face the threat of increasing criminalization. This Newsletter collects some of our experiences and current strategic initiatives in this regard: We recall how the struggle of Indigenous Peoples for the recognition of their collective rights to their lands and territories, to their traditional knowledge, to free, prior and informed consent and to a self-determined economic, social and cultural development in international and national law has proven to be a forerunner of the food sovereignty movement. Other rural constituencies such as peasants and fishing communities are also reclaiming the recognition of their distinctive rights to natural resources, and to self-determination of their own food systems and economic activities. The current process of drafting a *UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants* and other people working in rural areas and the *FAO Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries* are two initiatives aimed at empowering peasants and fishers, and building legal frameworks that support small-scale food producers and public welfare.

We also need to deepen our alliance with the human rights movement to defend achievements in the field of the human rights, to fill the gaps and further develop and strengthen human rights law so that it really has primacy over commercial and investment law. **We also need to continue enlarging our movement and building unity in our cross-constituency alliances: none of our constituencies alone will be able to defend their rights and effectively overcome the threats that lie ahead.**

Sofia Monsalve, *FIAN International*

How can we have fish without water?

Namaganda Rehema Bavuma
World Forum of Fish Harvesters
and Fish Workers (WFF),
Uganda.

It should be common knowledge that fishing communities depend on fish not only for food but also for employment and incomes: all their lives rotate around fish and fishing-related activities. While men go to fish, both for sale and for family consumption, women stay at home to take care of the children, but also to engage actively in fish smoking, sun drying of silver fish, and other processing of fish products. This is the day-to-day life of the fisher people in Mpunge landing site in Mukono district. It is the same as other fishing communities around the world. At this particular landing site, life is changing rapidly. Women, men and children are losing access to the water (Lake Victoria) which has been the sole source of their livelihoods, as they fish daily in the lake's waters. *They have witnessed what they have referred to as "selling of the lake".* In this area, individuals, in the name of "investors" from foreign countries, have taken over large parts of the lake, and they have established boundaries using "red flags" and big poles. *Fishermen are threatened that the moment they cross those boundaries, they will be "shot dead", or their boats cut into pieces!* The so-called investors have also posted guards to ensure that no fisherman or woman carries out fishing in these particular areas! The families have often been convinced by the "investors" to abandon their households, in exchange of a payment of 30.000 UG SHS (approximately 11 US dollars) to find another place to live! This very unacceptable behaviour has greatly affected the people in the community. *There is very little space left for them to fish, and the circumstances are very risky.* When the weather changes during fishing, fishermen should be free to escape by sailing to any part of the lake that they think is safer. With boundaries and guards, the fishermen's lives are endangered! We are now left with few questions that have not yet been answered. *Can one have fisher's rights without access to the water bodies where the fish is found? Who gives authority to such "investors"? And what plans do they have for the local communities that depend on this resource? And furthermore, where are the access rights for fisher communities?*

in the spotlight

1

Criminalization of food sovereignty defenders: old and new trends¹

Recent years have seen a sharp increase in the tendency to persecute, punish and criminalize social protest activities and the legitimate claims of those who promote food sovereignty and defend connected human rights, especially in cases related to large-scale economic investment. According to the former UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Ms Hina Jilani, and the current Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Ms Margaret Sekaggya, the second most vulnerable group of human rights' defenders are those working on land, natural resources and environmental issues (see UN Doc A/HRC/4/37 and A/HRC/19/55).

Criminalization of food sovereignty activists can be defined as *the increasingly systematic and recurrent way in which baseless criminal actions – or criminal actions based on laws which do not comply with human rights and/or are discriminatory and biased in favour of powerful actors– are brought against people and social movements claiming food sovereignty and connected human rights, such as the right to adequate food, to land and territory, to water, and to freedom of assembly and association.*

Members of social movements rallying for food sovereignty often face legal action based on ambiguous definitions of crimes (such as charges for supposed offenses affecting the honour or reputation of public servants), which in many cases are contrary to the law. As shown in the testimonies presented later in this issue, a number of irregularities are often observed during criminal proceedings, namely, arbitrary arrests, the excessive extension of pre-trial detention and unreasonable lengthening of criminal proceedings.

Criminalization can also be accompanied by **harassment, intimidation, physical and psychological assault and in particular by the use of public defamation** and other methods to discredit the defence of human rights. In cases of defamation the aim is to harm the public image of small-scale food producers, of food sovereignty activists and their supporters. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders has expressed concern that "the multitude of arrests and detentions of defenders also **contributes to their stigmatization**, since they are depicted and perceived as troublemakers by the population." Among other things, food sovereignty social movements have reported accusations made against them as being "against development and/or dialogue", "terrorists", "drug dealers" and "troublemakers".

Those who are persecuted for defending rights are often subjected to high legal costs that many cannot afford. Criminalization can lead to the loss of work for the incriminated leaders. People's organizations suffer isolation, discouragement and a serious weakening of their capacity to continue organizing for food sovereignty. Ultimately **criminalization is used to intimidate and deter people who mobilize** for access to and control of food producing resources and of food systems.

Members of food sovereignty social movements and their supporters can also be subject to criminalization via the direct or indirect actions of non-State actors such as companies, communications' media, private security agencies and others. This is particularly the case when large-scale investment projects such as mining, hydroelectric dams, forestry and agribusiness are at stake. *The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights* mentions this fact in its 2012 report: "Often, the owners who manage these megaprojects or the staff who work on them are the ones lodging criminal complaints against defenders for the purpose of reducing their activities of defence of their rights."²

The food sovereignty movement and their supporters need to redouble efforts for upholding the rights of women, indigenous peoples, peasants, fishing communities, workers throughout the food chain, pastoralists and all communities wanting to exercise their food sovereignty. **Better organization, solidarity across constituencies and movements, fair legal frameworks and the strengthening of the human rights regime are key factors** to face the threats that an increasing criminalization poses.

1 - This article was largely written on the basis of the position paper "The criminalization of human rights defenders in Latin America - An assessment from international organisations and European networks". APRODEV, CIDSE, CIFCA, FIAN, OBS (OMCT & FIDH), Oidhaco, pbi, Plataforma Holandesa contra la Impunidad. June 2012. Available at <http://www.fian.org/en/library/publication/detail/the-criminalization-of-human-rights-defenders-in-latin-america-recommendations-for-the-eu-and-the/>

2 - IACHR Second Report of the IACHR on human rights defenders, March 2012.



The struggle of Indigenous Peoples for their rights

According to the United Nations, there are more than 370 million indigenous peoples who represent some 5,000 cultures and live in 70 different countries throughout the world. In spite of the disparity between continents, languages and cultures, their problems and their demands are often similar. **Indigenous peoples continue to be the most numerous among the poor, illiterate and unemployed.** While representing only 5% of the world's population, they make up 15% of the world's poor, especially in rural areas¹.

The struggle of indigenous peoples for the recognition of their rights, especially their right to land and territory, to safeguard their traditional knowledge linked to a specific territory and their freedom to define their own social and economic system, all contributed to making indigenous peoples pioneers in defending and demanding Food Sovereignty. In this context we should bear in mind that for indigenous peoples "land" is not just a productive resource, but is a basis for their social organization, economic system and culture. Land is part of a more extensive ancestral "territory" which includes not just the ground, but also the natural spaces, water, forests, minerals, air and other productive resources.

As early as 1996, during the *World Food Summit*, Chief Wilton Liclechild of the Ermineskin Cree Nation declared to the United Nations: "Our ancestors in some places managed to ensure their forms of traditional life and food systems in their treaties. These international conventions specify that they remain valid "while the sun shines, the rivers flow and the grass grows". In 2002 the *Declaration of Atitlán*² reiterated the 1st Article of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* which recognize that all people **have the right to self determination and can establish and implement their own economic, social and cultural development, and development strategies based on their own vision.** In addition "in no instance can a people be deprived of their own means of subsistence."

For indigenous peoples, their right to land, water and territory, as well as that to self-determination are vital to realizing their own development and food sovereignty. The indigenous peoples' understanding of the right to food is also collective: it is based on their spiritual relationship with Mother Earth, their land and territories, environment and natural resources that provide them with traditional foods. In this context the means of subsistence of the Indigenous Peoples also provide them with culture, language, social life, cosmovision and a distinct relationship with Mother Earth.

In the *Declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*³ (approved after many years of struggle in September 2007, with four States voting against: Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States); it recognized many rights that are fundamental to Food Sovereignty. An example is article 31: "The right to maintain, control, protect and develop cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, including genetic resources, seeds and medicines."

At the same time there are still many obstacles that continue to endanger Indigenous Rights and Food Sovereignty. **The first of these is the expulsion from or restricted access to traditional territories.** There are also threats posed by development projects that include deforestation, mining, drilling and building of dams and the resulting contamination of ecosystems. Other threats include: the introduction of transgenic food and seeds together with industrial agriculture; the impacts of climate change and "false" solutions such as agrifuels, the loss of languages, cultural practices and ways of transmitting traditional knowledge to new generations, and the impacts of the world economic system regulated by Free Trade Agreements⁴.

1 - http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP_fact_sheets_ES.pdf

2 - *Declaration of the Indigenous Peoples' Consultation on the Right to Food: A Global Consultation.* Atitlán, Sololá, Guatemala, April 17 - 19, 2002 - http://www.treatycouncil.org/new_page_5241223.htm

3 - *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People,* http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

4 - http://www.treatycouncil.org/PDF/FoodSovereigntyES_101509WEB.pdf



The Curuguaty massacre

Perla Álvarez Brites,
CONAMURI, Paraguay.

The 15th of June this year was the first anniversary of the Curuguaty massacre, *the most significant land dispute of recent times.* People died as a result of the conflict, something unprecedented in the social history of our nation. 11 peasants and six police officers were killed at the time of the incident, and one leader linked to the events was later murdered by a hired assassin. A young person, legally a minor, has been convicted. In addition, 13 people have been charged by public prosecutors for trespassing, criminal association and attempted murder. Of the 13 accused, seven are under house arrest: three men and one woman who have been on hunger strike for 58 days, a minor, one woman who has just given birth, and another who is about to do so. Two men have been on hunger strike for 50 days in support of these women. Of the remaining five accused, three have been detained at the Coronel Oviedo penitentiary, one is in Tacumbú prison in Asunción, and one has been released. *All of the accused were victims of arbitrariness, torture and mistreatment when taken into custody.* In addition, around 50 people accused of having been involved (a mix of men and women, mostly young) are currently evading the authorities. *Families and communities have been torn apart, women's lives have been affected, and children have been orphaned.* Poverty, fear, desperation, mistrust, and not one police officer detained or investigated. **The incident represents an abuse of our right to access land, our right to food, and our right to a decent life.** It is clear that the massacre was a plot to create political instability and to find a reason to start impeachment proceedings against the President. These proceedings started just eight days after the atrocities. The events of that terrible day are still fresh in our minds. *It was a massacre arranged to overthrow the government, orchestrated in order to give greater impunity to agribusiness and other damaging practices, which will deprive the country of what little it has left in natural resources.* The aim is to get rid of the indigenous communities and the peasants who are fighting for their existence against this criminal aggression. However, people united for a cause are strong and will not give up. In particular, peasant and indigenous women will strive to bring together all popular movements to fight for food sovereignty and our territorial and cultural heritage.

Voices from the Field 3

Working in a warehouse

Uylonda Dickerson, Warehouse
Workers for Justice and Food
Chain Workers' Alliance, U.S.

Wal-Mart - the name is synonymous with low prices and exploitation of workers around the world. Whether it's a burning building in Bangladesh, or warehouse workers in the US working in unsafe workplaces, Wal-Mart can be found as the culprit. I was one of those warehouse workers. My name is Uylonda Dickerson. I worked at a Wal-Mart warehouse outside of Chicago, Illinois from 2009-2010. I loaded and unloaded trucks filled with merchandise. My schedule varied frequently, it all depended on how much merchandise was on that truck. I worked anywhere from 4-12 hours a day. While working there, I never made more than \$200 a week. On top of that, I was the only female in the warehouse, and my co-workers made comments about my body and made sexual advances on me. I was also constantly being watched by my supervisor. He would stand outside the bathroom and time how long I was in there. It got so bad that I stopped using the bathroom, and then I got a really bad bladder infection. I got tired of harassment and surveillance. I left the warehouse and began to organize with Warehouse Workers for Justice (WWJ), a worker center. I realized that there were many warehouse workers suffering the same injustices and that we could stand together to change it all. As a member of WWJ, I participated in a worker leaders' retreat with the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA), an organization bringing together workers across the food system. At this retreat, I was able to hear the stories of other workers and learned that we all have the same struggle. To me, the FCWA is important because it is bringing workers together from different workplaces and helping them join together to challenge and change our current food system.

The Jakarta Call!

Call of the VI Conference of La Via Campesina – Egidio Brunetto (June 9-13, 2013)

<http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/our-conferences-mainmenu-28/6-jakarta-2013/resolutions-and-declarations/1428-the-jakarta-call>

in the spotlight

3

The right of peasants to uphold food sovereignty: taking power!

The struggle for food sovereignty means the fight for land, water and productive agrarian resources in order to produce healthy and nutritious food. This struggle has been fought by peasant farmers. And to be able to continue the struggle, they need power - power they haven't had for a long time.

History reminds us of persistent discrimination against peasants in many parts of the world, and leads us to contemporary challenges: growing conflicts over land, water, food speculation and climate crises. It is time to ask the important question: *How to reclaim "power" for peasants - the main food producers of our planet?*

Because there can be no food sovereignty without guaranteed access to land, water, seeds or fair prices. Or a guarantee to uphold and respect their traditional knowledge. Or for the preservation of Mother Earth.

Food sovereignty cannot exist without giving peasants the power, the very basic rights to be able to produce food and preserve the planet. *It is in this context that peasant organizations are pursuing the recognition and further protection of the human rights of peasants.* All over the world, peasant organizations are participating in decision-making processes: in many countries they have been successful in winning the ratification of laws to protect some of their rights. *Their daily work is promoting food sovereignty: creating alternative markets, direct connections between producers and consumers, cooperatives, and agroecology practices to cool down the planet.* Regardless of this, they still see the process of recognition by the United Nations as vitally important, as the issues of peasants' rights and food sovereignty are important for all nations.

A recent study by the United Nations Human Rights Council Advisory Committee (2012) concluded that **current existing instruments are still scattered, and even if they were better implemented, they still remain insufficient to fully protect the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.** When the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a resolution hinting at a **new instrument** for the rights of the world's estimated 1.2 billion peasants and other people working in rural areas, it marked a historic moment for their struggle. The resolution (A/HRC/21/19) is crucial, as it sheds light on peasants' key role in food production. **This also means that now the UN recognises peasants - and other people working in rural areas - as actors and parties with human rights to defend themselves.** The complete recognition covers smallholder farmers, agricultural workers, indigenous people, peasant women and landless people worldwide, fisher communities, different groups working in rural areas, and in particular peasant farmers, small landholders, landless workers, fishers, hunters and gatherers.

Hunger, like poverty, is still predominantly a rural problem, and in the rural population, it those who produce food who often suffer disproportionately - particularly in developing countries. **The key to ending this is to empower them by recognizing and further protecting peasants' basic rights.** The struggle continues for peasant organizations - through direct action in the field, and also to build international cooperation.

For further reading: Final study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the advancement of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, A/HRC/19/75, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-75_en.pdf

**one does not sell the earth upon which
the people walk**

Tashunka Witko, 1840 -1877



The FAO Guidelines for Small-Scale Fisheries

Behind the serene, even romantic picture of a small boat silhouetted against the setting sun, there are often some very harsh realities — a daily struggle for survival and to be heard by the powers that be. **Small-scale fishing communities often face precarious living and working conditions** due to reasons such as insecure rights to land and fisheries resources, competition from industrial fleets, inadequate returns for their labour, poor access to markets and basic services, pollution and degradation of natural habitats, and vulnerability to natural disaster and climate change. Increasingly, their lives and livelihoods are challenged by other, more powerful sectors, such as tourism and oil and gas, that are competing for use of aquatic habitats and oceanic spaces - a process that has been referred to as “*ocean grabbing*”. **Small-scale fisheries account for over half the world’s marine and inland fish catch, almost all of which is destined for direct human consumption.** The sub-sector employs more than 90 per cent of the world’s 35 million capture fishers, and supports another 84 million people employed in jobs associated with fish processing, distribution and marketing. Almost half of the people employed in the primary and secondary sectors associated with small-scale fisheries are women. Given the important contribution that the sub-sector makes to food security, employment, the economy and the sustainable use of resources, the need to support it cannot be overemphasized.

The decision by the 29th session of the *Committee on Fisheries* (COFI) of the *Food and Agriculture Organization* (FAO), held in February 2011, to approve the development of a **new international instrument on small-scale fisheries**, was therefore widely welcomed, especially by fishworkers and support groups. *The need for such guidelines and for other interventions to support small-scale fisheries has long been a demand.* Civil society organizations (CSOs) actively engaged with the process of developing the small-scale fisheries (SSF) Guidelines. They organized 20 national-level workshops spanning Asia, Africa and Latin America, two regional workshops in Africa, as well as consultations among small-scale fishers and fishworkers in the EU and Canada in the period between September 2011 and December 2012. More than 2,300 people participated in these consultations and shared their aspirations and proposals in relation to the Guidelines. The proposals that emerged were compiled into a synthesis document. *The entire process was intensive, bottom-up and highly participatory.* It was co-ordinated by the *World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers* (WFF), the *World Forum of Fisher Peoples* (WFFP), the *International Collective in Support of Fishworkers* (ICSF), and the *International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty* (IPC). Drawing on this consultative process, CSOs have consistently emphasized that the Guidelines should overtly promote a **human rights-based approach** to fisheries, and that they should focus primarily on **vulnerable and marginalized groups** within small-scale fisheries including women, towards achieving food security and poverty eradication. They have also stressed that the Guidelines should be **binding** (not voluntary), especially as they are consistent with and draw on relevant provisions in existing international law. Moreover, the Guidelines should be global in scope, that is, they should apply to marginalized and vulnerable groups within small-scale fisheries in all countries and regions at all stages of economic development. Many concrete proposals have been made on steps needed to secure lives and livelihoods of small-scale fishers and fishworkers, **particularly women.**

These were also the issues for which CSOs advocated during the FAO’s *Technical Consultation* that was held from 20 to 24 May 2013 in Rome, Italy, aimed at negotiating the final text of the *International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*. Several proposals, however, were not satisfactorily addressed. **There was reluctance** on the part of some States to recognize the rights of small-scale fishers and fishworkers to participate in the governance of aquatic resources; and indeed *to the term governance itself.* The recognition of the need for prior informed consent of indigenous communities on matters of fundamental importance for their rights, survival, dignity and wellbeing, as a Guiding Principle, consistent with the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), **was not forthcoming from some States.** The issue of recognition of *customary rights and systems*, and of the *territories* of small-scale fishing communities, as well as of their right to be consulted prior to any “development” of these territories, was also problematic. There was unwillingness on the part of some States to keep the focus on “marginalized and vulnerable groups” within small-scale fisheries. In addition, some States objected to the term “informal economy” equating it with the “illegal economy”, though significant small-scale fisheries, particularly in the developing world, can be considered to be part of the informal economy. References to many of the above issues remains in brackets. **Negotiations could not be completed** during the week, and another *Technical Consultation* will be organized towards the end of 2013. Civil Society is hopeful that their proposals will be fully supported by States in the next round. **Only then will justice be done to the realities and aspirations of fishers, fishworkers and fishing communities across the world,** as identified during the participatory process that led to these Guidelines being drawn up.

For further information read the *Zero draft of the International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*, May 2012
ftp://ftp.fao.org/Fi/DOCUMENT/ssf/SSF_guidelines/ZeroDraftSSFGuidelines_MAY2012.pdf

Voices from the

Impact of mining on nature, animal and human-being

Field 4

Mrs. Ariunaa, pastoralist woman of Gurvan Tes village, Southgobi province, Mongolia.

Before the mining operation started, this territory was full of wildlife such as kulan-Wild ass, gazelle, Gobi bears and Bactrian camel. Due to the operations of three mining companies here for 14 years, those wild animals have disappeared. This has been caused by hundreds of trucks carrying mineral resources, particularly coal - that have contaminated water-springs, streams and soil. The springs have already dried up. If more mines are opened now in the core area of this village, it will threaten the current habitat of wild goat-ibex, argali-wild sheep, snow leopard, Pallas cat, lynx and Wild cat. As well as this being the main water source for water for feeding humans and animals, plants in the Gobi desert including saxaul, poplar, aspen and elm trees are also threatened by extinction. Due to mining operations there has been an increase in animal health problems, particularly lung problems. The people whose main food comes from livestock, meat and milk, also face health problems. Many young pastoralists are abandoning their traditional livestock grazing and have started working for the mines. When the mineral resources are exhausted, the future of these young people is uncertain. The village is not developed and the mining companies have never contributed to its development. As a pastoralist woman from this area for the survival of nature, animals and the people we should:

- *Close the current mining operations of companies, which have the licenses for exploration and extraction;*
- *Stop the government issuing more mining licenses;*
- *Develop other ways for generating income based on traditional animal husbandry.*

the world in words

After a two-decade occupation, MST families win land rights

After twenty years of struggle and waiting, the families camping in the municipality of Prado (in the extreme south of Brazil's Bahia state) finally received the legal title deeds to their land. The roughly 5,025 acres of farmland has the capacity to settle about 280 families. For members of the *Landless Workers Movement* (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra - MST), the Rosa Prado land symbolizes much more than the deeds to this land. It represents twenty years of struggle and resistance by families who endured many hardships during this period. The encampment at Rose Meadow began with the first occupation of Rose Meadow Farm on August 16, 1993. Since then, the families have suffered 19 eviction injunctions. Even with all the difficulties – such as living in the makeshift shacks and scarce food – they continued to resist and finally they won. To read the full article <http://grassrootsonline.org/news/blog/after-two-decade-occupation-mst-families-win-land-rights>

European bees heave a sigh of relief

Despite fierce lobbying by the chemicals industry and opposition by some countries, 15 of the 27 member states voted (four nations abstained) for a *two-year restriction on neonicotinoid insecticides, as of December 1*. The moratorium will restrict the use of imidacloprid and clothianidin, produced by the German company Bayer, and thiamethoxam, produced by the Swiss company Syngenta. More than 30 separate scientific studies have found a link between the neonicotinoids, which attack insects' nervous systems, and have caused significant decline in bee populations. The proposal by European Commission - the EU's legislative body - to ban the insecticides was based on a study by the *European Food Safety Authority*, which found in January that the pesticides did pose a risk to bees' health. The ban that will restrict the use these three pesticides from being used on seeds and plants that are attractive to bees, as well as grains, will remain in place throughout the EU for two years, unless compelling scientific evidence to the contrary becomes available. To read the full article <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/nature/victory-for-bees-as-european-union-bans-neonicotinoid-pesticides-blamed-for-destroying-bee-population-8595408.html>

Day of action against Monsanto

On May 25, millions of people marched against the transnational corporation Monsanto in protests held in 52 countries and more than 430 cities worldwide (www.march-against-monsanto.com). The U.S. biotech giant controls much of the world's food supply – through GMO's seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, and its aggressive policies. Monsanto is responsible for the production of many hazardous products, such as Agent Orange, a chemical invented in the 1960s and used during the Vietnam War; the herbicide Round-Up created ten years later; the Bovine Growth Hormone,

a genetically modified hormone which is injected into dairy cows to produce more milk, and since the beginning of the 1990s, Genetically Modified Crops. Here an interesting list of the products <http://fracturedparadigm.com/2013/04/15/monsantos-dirty-dozen-the-12-most-awful-products-made-by-monsanto/>

The 'Big Potato Swap'

On May 29th 2011, hundreds of activists decontaminated a GM potato field trial in Wetteren (BE). They pulled up genetically modified potatoes and replaced them with organic varieties, which are naturally blight resistant. The 'Big Potato Swap' was a public and non-violent action of civil disobedience. The Catholic University of Leuven sacked a researcher because of her participation in the 'Big Potato Swap'. On February 12th 2013, the Judge handed down a verdict of guilty to 11 activists by default for having created a gang. *This verdict is a dangerous precedent that will have an impact on all kinds of civil action.* With this verdict, the Belgian court has fundamentally undermined the right of citizens to freedom of speech and is criminalizing activism. *What can you do?* <http://www.fieldliberation.org/courtcase/>

Despite historic conviction, genocide continues in Guatemala *

On May 10th, the Guatemalan Court of Justice convicted the ex-dictator General Ríos Montt to 80 years in prison for the massacres of indigenous people during the 1980s. Many Guatemalans hope that the judicial process against the criminals of the country's "dirty war" will continue. But while the Guatemalan people celebrate the conviction, the processes of genocide initiated 30 years ago by Ríos Montt's massacres still continue using other means. In the last decade, the expansion of oil palm plantations and sugarcane production for ethanol in Northern Guatemala has displaced hundreds of Maya-Q'eqchi' peasant families, thereby increasing poverty, hunger, unemployment and landlessness in the region (...). There is a tremendous contradiction here: at the same time that the ex-General Ríos Montt is convicted for genocide, *the state allows the oligarchy, allied with extractive industries, to displace entire populations without taking the human cost into account, and in many cases, resulting in the murder and imprisonment of rural people who resist the assault.* The genocide against the indigenous peasant population in Guatemala no longer has the face of a military dictatorship supported by the United States.... Now it is the corporations, the oligarchy and the World Bank who are pushing peasants off their land. To read the full article <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/Genocide+continues+in+Guatemala#.UZQ0nyjYN6c.facebook>

* The 20th of May, the constitutional court annulled Ríos Montt's genocide conviction. Everything that has happened in the trial since 19 April, when Gen Ríos Montt was briefly left without a defence lawyer, will need to be repeated.

To read, listen, watch and share

If you want to follow the 2nd World Conference on Human Rights that will be held in Vienna check the website <http://viennaplus20.wordpress.com/> Civil Society networks from around the world are currently working on a *Vienna+20 Civil Society Declaration* to strengthen the global human rights' movement and to support emerging issues such as the rights of peasants.

On 11 October 2012, the *Human Rights Council* adopted resolution 21/19 whereby it decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group with the mandate of negotiating, finalizing and submitting a draft *United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas*. The first session of the Working Group will take place on 15 – 19 July, 2013. For further information: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RuralAreas/Pages/WGRuralAreasIndex.aspx>.

- *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders*, Margaret Sekaggya, 2012, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>
- *Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders*, Ms. Hina Jilani, 2007, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>
- IACHR, *Second Report of the IACHR on human rights defenders*, March 2012, http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2012/025.asp
- The Peasants' struggle in sounds, images and music, *ViacampesinaTV* the new open hub from the Food Sovereignty movement, <http://tv.viacampesina.org/?lang=en>
- *Do we really need industrial agriculture to feed the world?*, watch the video at <http://foodmyths.org/myths/hunger-food-security/> and find more in the website of *Food Mythbusters*

