

International Solidarity Report

2021-2022

A woman with dark hair, glasses, and a black face mask is holding a single white rose. A white paper sign is attached to the stem of the rose, with the text "JUNK TERROR LAW!" printed in bold black letters. She is wearing a black t-shirt with white text that includes "FUGGLE" and "&". In the background, other protesters are visible, some holding signs with text like "PAL" and "MAI".

JUNK TERROR LAW!

COVER PHOTO: ALLIANCE OF CONCERNED TEACHERS – PHILIPPINES MEMBERS TAKE PART IN A DECEMBER 2021 GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION PROTESTING THE ONGOING KILLING AND “RED-TAGGING” OF UNION ORGANIZERS AS TERRORISTS.

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The strength of our solidarity

The 2021-2022 edition of CUPE’s annual International Solidarity Report offers a snapshot of some of the most pressing issues in the world today, and how trade unions and social movements are responding. It captures the courage of our friends, allies and comrades around the world. They are at the heart of our collective struggle to face the global pandemic, respond to climate change, and ensure the rights and respect every worker and community member deserves.

There is much about the state of the world that is concerning. We are all feeling the impact of war and occupation in many parts of the world, including Ukraine, Burma, Yemen, Syria and Palestine. As rich nations including Canada begin to emerge from the pandemic with high vaccination rates and access to COVID-19 testing and treatment, corporate greed has meant many people, particularly those in poor countries, still cannot access vaccines and lifesaving treatments. In addition, the 2022 International Panel on Climate Change report issued a dire warning, sounding a global alarm that our time on this planet is limited if we do not act now. And activists and communities defending land rights, democracy and justice are being forced to fight for their lives and liberation. These are enormous struggles. But they are not insurmountable.

This report shows the strength of our solidarity. Through our work with trade unions, human rights defenders and communities around the world, we see our power as workers and how our collective strength can change the world. When we stand with activists resisting far-right governments and corporate power, we have an impact.

We are deeply inspired and proud to stand in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples, women’s groups, young people and unions who are joining forces and fighting back. People are organizing and resisting in profound and significant ways to challenge repressive power and to demand genuine democracy and justice.

It will always be a privilege to struggle alongside these workers and community members in our collective fight for human and labour rights, decent work, strong public services, land rights, peace and climate justice.



Mark Hancock,
CUPE National President



Candace Rennick,
CUPE National
Secretary-Treasurer

Global Justice Fund in action

This year, CUPE continued to work in solidarity with workers and community allies in many countries, strengthening long-term partnerships through our Global Justice Fund. The fund is one way our union supports global movements for human rights, labour protection, peace, and justice.

In 2021-2022, CUPE's Global Justice Fund supported workers and community allies in Burma, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Philippines.

BURMA

When the military seized power in Burma in February 2021, overturning the successful November 2020 election of the National League for Democracy (NLD), CUPE and others feared the military would target our partner organization the Tavoyan Women's Union (TWU) because of their political work promoting women's rights.

TWU activists scrambled to protect vital information before the political crisis forced them to close their office and to stop doing advocacy

A FEBRUARY 2021 PROTEST IN BURMA AGAINST THE MILITARY COUP. INSPIRING PROTEST ACTIONS AND RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS EMERGED AFTER THE MILITARY SEIZED POWER, ALONG WITH A VIOLENT CRACKDOWN ON PEACEFUL PROTESTERS.



Photo: MgHla (aka) Htin Linn Aye/CC BY-SA 4.0

work as they had in the past. Until the coup, TWU was based in the southern Tanintharyi region of Burma. The union supports women becoming political leaders in their communities and building networks with women from different regions, and trains women to fight gender-based violence and discrimination. TWU's goal is to build "a society of peace, justice, freedom and equality in Burma."

Activists and civil society organizations, including TWU, found creative and courageous ways to avoid the violent and traumatizing military crackdown. As of March 2022, over 1,700 activists have been killed and 10,000 people have been detained. People resisting the coup formed working groups to prevent organizations being identified by their formal names. Communities and villages operated under collective leadership so individual leaders could not be targeted, and activists moved around frequently, often changing where they slept every few days.

Nationwide protests united in a civil disobedience movement that sustained peaceful and nonviolent mobilizations for months including labour strikes, public demonstrations, civil disobedience, boycotts, a pot-banging movement, and a red ribbon campaign in solidarity with the NLD.

It took CUPE a few months to reconnect with TWU members and confirm their safety. We are staying in contact and sharing our support and solidarity as they navigate volatile political conditions. TWU leaders are confident their work will resume in the future.

CANADA

CUPE partner Migrante supports migrant workers advocating for change in Canada. In 2021, their work focused on policy change, as well as rights-based education and capacity-building workshops with temporary foreign workers, especially in underserved communities. Discussion sessions with undocumented/non-status workers gave insight into their experiences and guidance on how to support their advocacy and share their stories without putting them at risk.

This project recognizes CUPE members may have experiences as migrant workers or have family members with the same issues the project seeks to address. They may have a friend or acquaintance who is, or knows of,

MIGRANTE CANADA ORGANIZED VISITS WITH MIGRANT FARMWORKERS IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA IN THE FALL OF 2021, BEFORE THEY RETURNED TO MEXICO.



Photo: Migrante Canada



Photo: NOMADESC



Photo: NOMADESC

"OUR STRUGGLE IS FOR LIFE" READS A FLYER DISTRIBUTED DURING THE 2021 NATIONAL STRIKE THAT BROUGHT HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE INTO THE STREETS IN COLOMBIA AND LASTED FOR MONTHS.

an undocumented/non-status migrant worker. Members may not be equipped to react to negative narratives of non-status migrants or know how to help. Worker-to-worker solidarity will create deeper understanding of the issues and challenges undocumented/non-status migrants face, and help CUPE locals work for change and support full immigration status for all.

The Canadian government continues to expand its Temporary Foreign Worker Program to import cheap and disposable labour through "migration management." This deeply affects migrant workers and their wellbeing. Canada signed and is championing the United Nations-initiated Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). The GCM promotes migration management that serves employers and regulates migration for rich countries by ensuring access to the most skilled workers while restricting entry for less skilled workers. Meanwhile, the GCM ensures that for countries

BANNER READING "CALI, CAPITAL OF THE RESISTANCE." NOMADESC AND SINTRACUAVALLE WERE PART OF THE NATIONAL STRIKE MOBILIZATION IN CALI, COLOMBIA. THE CITY HAS BEEN A CENTRE OF YOUTH-LED ORGANIZING, AND OF BRUTAL POLICE AND MILITARY REPRESSION. NOMADESC IS BASED IN CALI.

of origin, usually poorer countries, migration becomes institutionalized with "official" labour export channels that charge fees to workers, creating a network of migration-related businesses.

Migrante plans to expand its education campaign on full immigration status for all undocumented workers, against trafficking, and exposing the GCM and Canada's role in it.

COLOMBIA

CUPE partners organizing in Colombia face the debilitating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a failed peace agreement, political violence targeting social leaders and human rights defenders, as well as attacks on people defending Indigenous, land, and environmental rights.

In the spring of 2021, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in a national strike. The strike was a mass mobilization against regressive tax reforms and health care privatization, as well as against state, military and police corruption and violence. The city of Cali has been a centre of youth-led organizing, and of brutal police and military repression. Dozens of young people have been assassinated. In 2021 alone, 169 social leaders and 48 peace signatories were assassinated in Colombia, and there were 92 mass killings.

Attacks on activists during the 2021 national strike have raised growing concern about violence during critical parliamentary and presidential elections in 2022. This fear is founded in grim statistics: in 2020, more human rights defenders were assassinated in Colombia than in the rest of the world combined.

Progressive social movements, including CUPE partners NOMADESC (the Association for Research and Social Action) and SINTRACUAVALLE (the union representing workers at Colombia's only public water provider) are organizing to ensure legal and fair elections in the face of these serious threats.

Students in NOMADESC's Intercultural University of the Peoples (IUP), an alternative popular education university run by and for social movements, are also confronting violence in the Cordillera Occidental de Nariño, and Pacifico Vallecaucano regions of the province of Cauca. Over half of IUP students come from the area, and they are experienced a worrying escalation of the armed conflict.

NOMADESC continues to focus on providing human rights monitoring and accompaniment, documenting human rights violations related to the elections, and exposing these violations through their international solidarity partnerships.

SINTRACUAVALLE is working to improve municipal water systems in the province of Valle de Cauca, and to resist massive state and corporate pressure to privatize water. In addition to political turmoil, SINTRACUAVALLE members are confronting the compound crises of the pandemic, the worsening climate, and the state of the domestic and global economy. The situation inspired rural young people in Valle del Cauca to join the national strike. SINTRACUAVALLE is working with young people in the region to address a chronic lack of employment opportunities.

SINTRACUAVALLE has published a book documenting the national strike, looking at the historic uprising's origins, growth, and spread. The book celebrates the democratic expression of the Colombian people and trade union movement against the neoliberal model that is spreading poverty and social inequity across Colombia.

GUATEMALA

Guatemala faces growing neglect and repression from what CUPE partners describe as a corrupt and oppressive right-wing government. More than a year after two massive hurricanes ravaged the country, affected communities are still waiting for government support they need to recover. Most of the affected families are Indigenous and peasant people who continue to live in subhuman conditions, worsening already severe conditions of poverty and malnutrition. Sixty-five per cent of rural children have chronic malnutrition.

Wealthy landowners are evicting Indigenous communities from their lands, and the Guatemalan government is criminalizing resistance to these land grabs. Communities are facing the threat of violence and are having their crops destroyed and houses burnt down. CUPE supports the work of the Campesino Committee of the Highlands (CCDA) for agrarian justice. Landowners and governments are collaborating to deny the land rights of Indigenous farmers.

SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE ARMED CONFLICT IN GUATEMALA IN THE 1980S SPEAK OUT ABOUT THEIR SEARCH FOR JUSTICE. A LANDMARK CASE FINALLY WENT TO TRIAL IN JANUARY 2022. JUSTICE HAS BEEN LONG DELAYED FOR 36 MAYA ACHI WOMEN, WHO FIRST TESTIFIED IN 2011.



Photo: Lisa Rankin/Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network



Photo: Stylepam Photography

But the CCDA has anthropological and historical studies debunking these claims and proving Indigenous farming communities have land rights.

The stakes in this struggle are high. Six CCDA members have been imprisoned and 26 have received eviction orders. The CCDA continues to courageously resist state repression of peasants. The organization celebrated its 40th anniversary with a national assembly in March 2022.

CUPE partner the Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network has reported on other troubling developments. Civil society groups are condemning the 2022 “NGO Law.” They warn it has enormous repercussions for social organizations, Guatemalan society, democracy and the rule of law because it limits free expression and organization. The Guatemala Human Rights Commission says the law allows the government, “to intimidate organizations and to be able to act as it pleases in a marked effort to promote impunity, corruption and concentrate its power.”

On International Women’s Day 2022, the Guatemalan Congress passed a regressive law criminalizing abortion with severe penalties, prohibiting same-sex marriage and unions, outlawing education about 2SLGBTQ+ people, and defining a family to include only a father, mother, and children.

MEMBERS OF THE “GROUP OF ENGAGED NURSES” CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY ON MARCH 8, 2022 IN MANICHE, A COMMUNE IN LES CAYES ARRONDISSEMENT, IN SOUTHERN HAITI. THE GATHERING WAS ORGANIZED BY THE CONFÉDÉRATION DES TRAVAILLEURS ET TRAVAILLEUSES DES SECTEURS PUBLIC ET PRIVÉ (CTSP).

Human rights defenders continue to resist the Guatemalan government’s discrimination and attacks on people from marginalized communities, including Indigenous people and peasants. Activists are proposing alternatives and calling for dialogue instead of further repression and criminalization.

HAITI

Civil society members, including trade unions, are working to support the construction of a new government that reflects the will of the people, after the assassination of the Haitian president in July 2021. They are persisting under tremendously difficult conditions including escalating gang violence, the global pandemic, and a dramatic rise in the cost of living.

In January 2022, a coalition of trade unions including CUPE’s partner in Haiti, the Confédération des Travailleurs et Travailleuses des Secteurs Public et Privé (CTSP), sent an open letter to the government requesting a wage increase to address the rise in the cost of basic goods and services such as food, transportation, health care and education. The coalition says workers need three to four times their current wage to survive.

When the government ignored their demands, garment factory workers held rotating strikes calling for higher wages. The government responded to the pressure and started negotiating on issues including wages for several sectors. However, in a shocking turn of events the police opened fire on striking workers in February 2022, killing a journalist.

The violence raises troubling questions about whether recent Canadian government support for the Haitian National Police will improve security and peace. In January 2022, the government announced \$15 million for “essential training and increased efficiency” and to increase the number of women police officers.

CUPE supports CTSP’s organizing efforts in the education sector. Union activities are being revived and activists are mobilizing again after months of social and political unrest and pandemic challenges.

HONDURAS

Honduras is facing a major political transformation with the 2022 election of a progressive president, Xiomara Castro. Despite hope for positive change, CUPE’s partner CODEMUH (the Honduran Women’s Collective) and the communities it works with are confronting immense challenges. CODEMUH works to address the root causes of women’s and labour rights violations by advocating for stronger labour legislation and organizing workers in the maquila, or sweatshop, sector.

The previous Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández is awaiting extradition to the United States on drug trafficking and weapons charges. Hernández’s corrupt and antidemocratic administration relied on the illegal drug trade, stole public funds, weakened public institutions, and did everything possible to sabotage the new government.

CODEMUH President María Luisa Regalado says spikes in overall violence and violence against women are a product of organized crime that Hernández encouraged to make Honduras ungovernable. Hernández is also accused of stacking the courts with judges who hold positions until the end of 2022, and who tend to side with maquila operators and owners. This judicial bias discourages maquila workers and dissuades them from filing court cases confronting labour malpractice.

CUPE supports CODEMUH’s health and safety work with garment factory workers, who are mostly women. This includes training shop floor health and safety advocates, campaigning to improve working conditions, and pressing the government to enforce the labour code. CODEMUH also represents workers in cases of wrongful dismissal, denial of reasonable accommodation, and barriers to accessing medical treatment.

THE CAMPESINO COMMITTEE OF THE HIGHLANDS (CCDA) HELD ITS THIRD NATIONAL AGRARIAN CONGRESS ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, NOVEMBER 25, 2021. THOUSANDS OF INDIGENOUS AND PEASANT FAMILIES ANALYZED, DISCUSSED, DEBATED AND PROPOSED ACTIONS TO ADVANCE PEASANT STRUGGLES IN GUATEMALA.



Photo: CCDA

NICARAGUA

The past two years have been among the most challenging for CUPE’s partner the María Elena Cuadra Movement of Employed and Unemployed Women (MEC). MEC was forced to close in early 2022, after facing political persecution including police surveillance, government stonewalling, and other tactics designed to obstruct and intimidate – simply for engaging in community organizing and advocacy for women maquila workers’ labour and human rights.

MEC works with Nicaraguan maquila workers, who are mostly women. Garment factory workers assemble clothing for export to North America and Europe, including for Canadian manufacturer Gildan Activewear. MEC’s work includes training shop floor advocates, legal accompaniment for workers who file labour tribunal complaints, and a free legal clinic for women in marginalized communities. MEC is explicitly feminist in its labour and community organizing.

Sustained political attacks led to MEC’s forced closure by the Ortega government on February 11, 2022. For more than four years, the

government refused to accept tax filings and other documents required to maintain MEC’s legal standing. Government officials provided limited communication and instruction. MEC is among many domestic and international social justice and human rights organizations, especially women’s rights groups, that have been dissolved or expelled from the country after government claims of irregular documentation and illegal operations. Since 2018, the regime has shuttered 99 non-governmental organizations, 56 of which were domestic civil society organizations.

Well-documented threats to national sovereignty and foreign interference, particularly from the US, have had a profound impact on Latin American countries. Nicaragua’s history is marred by these struggles, which are still visible today in the 2020 “Foreign Agents Law” being used to attack MEC. The government argues the law protects the country against foreign influence. The law is unfortunately being used to target

AN IMAGE OF THE LAST TRAINING WORKSHOP THE MARÍA ELENA CUADRA MOVEMENT OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED WOMEN (MEC) HELD IN NICARAGUA BEFORE BEING STRIPPED OF ITS LEGAL STATUS AS AN ORGANIZATION IN FEBRUARY 2022.



Photo: MEC

civil society organizations that disagree with the government. Any organization that receives foreign funding and fails to register with the state as a “foreign agent” can be fined, have their assets confiscated, and be stripped of their legal standing. MEC attempted to register but was refused. MEC staff are committed to continuing their important work despite the obstacles.

PHILIPPINES

Over the past year, union activists and leaders in the Philippines have faced two major challenges to public sector union organizing. Caution over COVID-19 restricted their activities. At the same time, the government clamped down on protests, including through red-tagging organizers as “terrorists,” harassment, disaffiliation campaigns, illegal arrests and the laying of trumped-up charges.

Public sector unions in the Philippines have persevered despite many difficulties. CUPE’s partners are the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), a national federation of education unions, and the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (COURAGE), which unites many of the country’s public sector unions. They have not stopped organizing and continue to strengthen connections with Filipino people’s broader struggle for social justice and democracy.

In 2021, COURAGE launched a campaign for government employees that galvanized workers and shook the government. The campaign demands free mass COVID-19 testing and treatment, hazard pay for all, a national minimum wage of P16,000 (CDN \$380/month), no more mass layoffs or precarious work, as well as an end to government corruption and political repression of activists and trade unionists.

At the time of this report, the Philippines is the only country in the world that has not reopened schools. The Duterte government has twice postponed plans to pilot face-to-face classes, blaming the emergence of new COVID-19



Photo: COURAGE

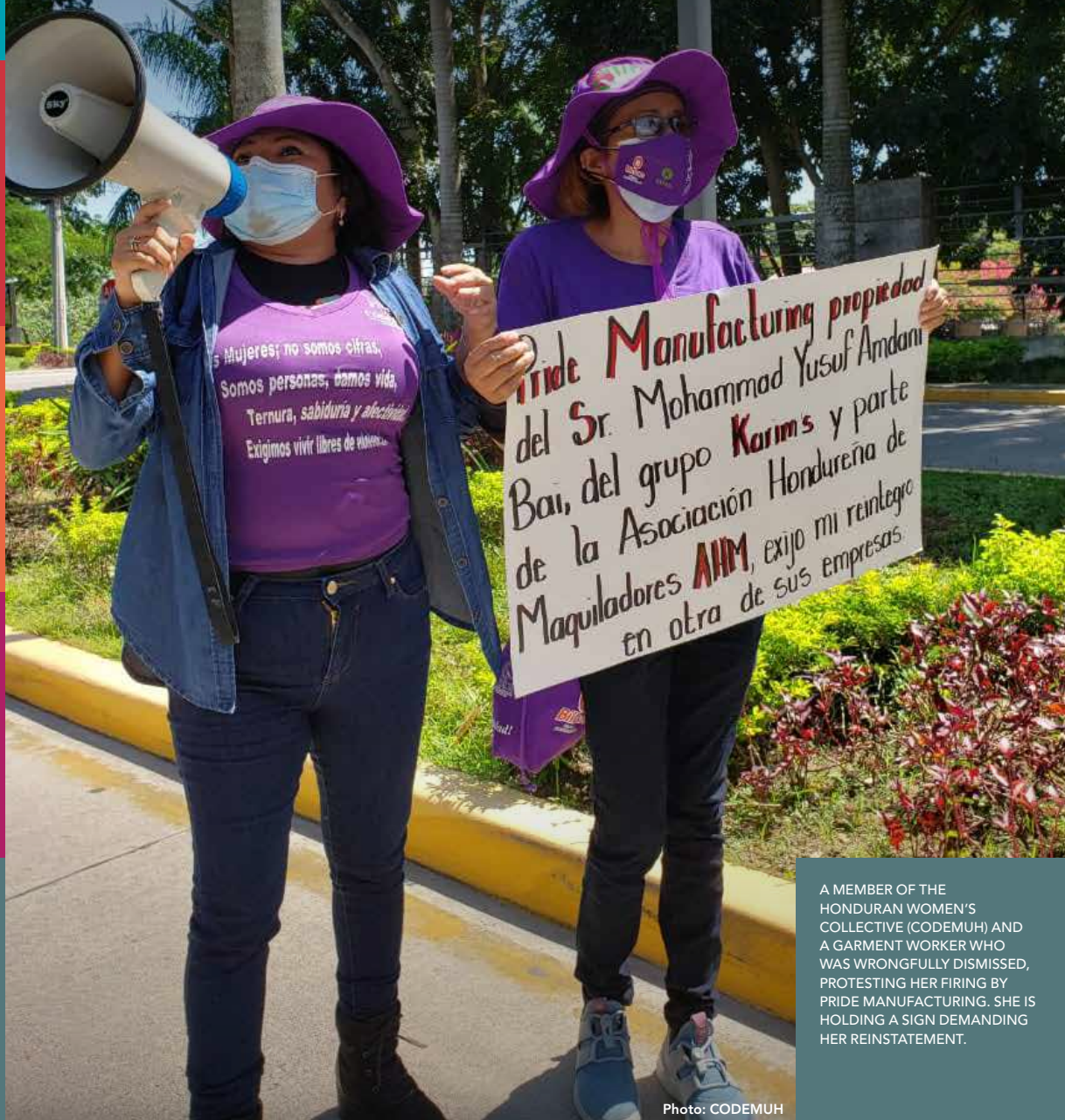
COURAGE MEMBERS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE POLITICAL REPRESSION OF UNION ACTIVISTS, FEBRUARY 2022. THEIR BANNER CALLS FOR THE SCRAPPING OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 70, WHICH HAS BEEN USED TO FALSELY ACCUSE UNION ORGANIZERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS OF TERRORISM.

variants. ACT and its allies say the government’s failure to enact school pandemic safety measures is the real reason. Sustained pressure forced some movement, but only 277 public and 20 private elementary and secondary schools out of almost 50,000 schools nationwide are slated to open. According to a UNICEF risk assessment, close to 10,000 schools could be opened.

As ACT struggled for safe school reopenings, attacks against their leaders and members continued, including through posters in the main streets of Quezon City accusing ACT leaders Raymond Basilio, Vladimer Quetua and France Castro of being “terrorist” recruiters. Several government departments waged a media campaign targeting ACT and other public sector unions as terrorist organizations. One department also ordered its field offices to monitor the activities of these so-called terrorist organizations.

These intimidation tactics are being used on trade unionists, political opponents, human rights defenders, faith-based leaders and other government critics. Many of those targeted are later arrested or the victims of state violence, including several ACT and COURAGE leaders. This violence increased before the spring 2022 presidential elections.

Worker-to-worker solidarity



Mujeres; no somos cifras.
Somos personas, damos vida,
Ternura, sabiduría y afectividad.
Exigimos vivir libres de violencia.

Pride Manufacturing propiedad
del Sr. Mohammad Yusuf Amdani
Bai, del grupo Karims y parte
de la Asociación Hondureña de
Maquiladores AHM, exijo mi reintegro
en otra de sus empresas.

A MEMBER OF THE HONDURAN WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE (CODEMUH) AND A GARMENT WORKER WHO WAS WRONGFULLY DISMISSED, PROTESTING HER FIRING BY PRIDE MANUFACTURING. SHE IS HOLDING A SIGN DEMANDING HER REINSTATEMENT.

Photo: CODEMUH

MEXICO

CUPE is part of a coalition of Canadian and Mexican unions supporting labour rights and better working conditions in Mexico. The project builds on recent progress in the country, aiming to strengthen Mexico's authentic, democratic, transparent, and accountable labour unions, and increase their capacity to protect labour rights, advance worker interests, and implement labour reform.

Until recently, Mexico was one of a few countries that did not guarantee workers' collective bargaining rights. The country had not ratified ILO Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collectively Bargain. Instead of independently organizing and voting on collective agreements, workers had "protection contracts" imposed on them after employers and government-aligned unions made agreements behind closed doors.

A 2019 labour reform law granted Mexican workers the right to elect union officials by secret ballot and to ratify negotiated collective agreements. This new labour regime could radically change labour relations in Mexico. Workers can organize themselves into independent unions that serve their interests. The reform also created an independent federal agency to oversee union elections and established specialized labour courts.

In addition, when Canada, the US and Mexico renegotiated NAFTA and adopted the CUSMA in 2020, the main text included a labour chapter. According to the Maquila Solidarity Network, this change symbolically elevated the protection of labour rights as equal to the enforcement of commercial and investment rights. It also opened all labour disputes to the treaty's formal dispute resolution process.

The trade union coalition CUPE belongs to has Canadian government funding, and is a joint initiative with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the United Steelworkers and the Centre international de solidarité ouvrière, along with four labour organizations in Mexico: the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo, Red de Mujeres Sindicalistas, Comité Fronterizo de Obreras and Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalúrgicos, Siderúrgicos y Similares de la República Mexicana.



Photo and art: Lapiztola Collective

MURAL ENTITLED "CORN FOR THE CHICKEN" IN OAXACA, MEXICO. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE CORN, THE BANDANA, AND THE YOUNG INDIGENOUS GIRL IS RICH IN THE LAYERS OF REBELLION AND RESISTANCE IN MODERN-DAY OAXACA, WHERE STREET ART IS A WELL-KNOWN FORM OF PROTEST.

WORKING TO FREE POLITICAL PRISONERS

Some governments are using legislation and the prison system to repress and silence progressive movements and activists who criticize government policies and actions. A vague accusation of “terrorism” is often used to detain activists with impunity. Two CUPE members have experienced this repression firsthand, facing politically-motivated detention while on personal visits home.

CUPE 4600 member Cihan Erdal was conditionally released from prison in his home country of Turkey in June 2021, but still can’t return to Canada. On September 25, 2020, he was swept up in a mass arrest of politicians, activists, and academics in Istanbul, and later formally charged along with more than 100 other prisoners. The accusations against Erdal and other prisoners stem from their public support for a Kurdish community under attack from ISIS in 2014. Erdal is still defending himself against unfounded charges based on two Facebook posts he shared in 2014 and his former membership in the People’s Democratic Party (HDP), Turkey’s third-largest political party. Erdal is a Canadian permanent resident and has applied for Canadian citizenship.

Lazhar Zouaïmia is a CUPE 957 member who was arrested on February 19, 2022 in Algeria after a 20-day stay in his hometown of Sedrata. A dual citizen of Canada and Algeria, Zouaïmia demonstrated peacefully alongside hundreds of fellow Algerian diaspora members in Montreal in support of a citizen movement known as the “Hirak.” The movement is demanding democratic change without violence in Algeria. Zouaïmia is now one of dozens of peaceful citizens in Algeria facing trumped-up charges of terrorism. He and others are victims of repeated violations of their rights and freedoms for criticizing the Algerian government or its practices. For months, non-governmental organizations and United Nations human rights bodies have been warning of the intensification of arbitrary repression in Algeria as the government uses baseless accusations of “terrorism” to repress public freedoms.



Photo: CUPE



Photo: Amnistie Internationale Canada Francophone



Photo: Justice for Hassan Diab

CUPE SUPPORTS CAMPAIGNS DEMANDING FREEDOM AND JUSTICE FOR (FROM TOP TO BOTTOM) CIHAN ERDAL, LAZHAR ZOUAÏMIA AND HASSAN DIAB. ALL THREE FACE UNFOUNDED CHARGES OUTSIDE CANADA.

Zouaïmia returned to Canada in early May, but still faces charges. CUPE will keep advocating for justice in their cases. CUPE is also concerned about the ongoing case of Dr. Hassan Diab, who was a CUPE 4600 member when he was arrested on unfounded terrorism charges in 2008. Nearly 14 years later, he faces extradition to France for a second time, highlighting the urgent need to reform Canadian extradition laws. We join the call to release all political prisoners in Algeria, Turkey and elsewhere around the world.

SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE

Workers are always on the frontline in times of crisis like war and natural disasters. They are in the communities that are most affected, and they are the first responders providing safety and security to those in need.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, CUPE joined the global response. We supported the global trade union call for support to unions that were ensuring food and water, medical supplies and hygiene items were reaching people injured and displaced by the violence. We requested that funds go to Black, racialized and other marginalized people facing discrimination as they tried to flee the violence.

CUPE condemns Russia's military invasion, and we call on the Canadian government to make every effort to de-escalate this situation. The most effective way to end this humanitarian crisis and ensure the safety and security of innocent civilians is for all Russian forces to leave Ukraine immediately. We support and encourage diplomatic non-military solutions leading to peace.

Today, Ukraine is one of several countries experiencing the violence of war and occupation, and we join activists around the world calling on all governments, particularly those in the West, to end all support for war and militarism.



Photo: GoToVan/Flickr CC BY-SA 4.0

A DEMONSTRATOR AT A VANCOUVER ANTI-WAR RALLY HOLDS A SIGN SAYING "NO WAR." THE EVENT WAS ONE OF MANY IN CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD OPPOSING RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE IN FEBRUARY 2022.

Working with our allies



REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CAMPESINO COMMITTEE OF THE HIGHLANDS (CCDA) HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE OUTSIDE THE PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE IN GUATEMALA CITY.

Photo: CCDA

A PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL DEMONSTRATION OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA, PART OF A NOVEMBER 2021 WORLDWIDE DAY OF ACTION CALLING FOR AN END TO BIG PHARMA'S MONOPOLY ON COVID-19 VACCINES. CUPE CONTINUES TO CAMPAIGN FOR GLOBAL AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO VACCINES.



Photo: PSI

PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

CUPE is a member of Public Services International (PSI), the global trade union federation representing more than 30 million public sector workers in 154 countries around the world. To mark a Global Day of Action for Care organized by global unions in October 2021, CUPE took part in a PSI webinar entitled: *Unions Defending Care Workers in COVID-19 Times*. The event featured frontline care workers and unionists from all regions of the world sharing stories of the challenges they have faced, their battles for decent work, and their victories.

Around the world, health care and other care workers have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. Governments have applauded them, but PSI was clear that applause is not enough. As they battle the virus and save lives, workers have also needed to fight for appropriate personal protective equipment and other workplace safety measures, improved staffing levels and remuneration, and in many cases, even the right to organize and bargain collectively. CUPE's presentation highlighted that quality care requires well-qualified staff who are properly qualified and adequately paid, and that the pandemic has opened new opportunities to re-imagine long-term care in Canada.

CUPE also participated in an October 2021 PSI Local and Regional Government (LRG) sector meeting on the topic of *Gender and Intersectionality in LRG Services and Workplaces*. CUPE's presentation traced the historical role municipal sector workers played at the forefront of CUPE's early efforts to enshrine 2SLGBTQ+ rights in collective agreements (referred to as gay rights at the time), up to today and the integration of this work in all our union activities.

The PSI LRG session emphasized that the fight for gender equity and non-discrimination is central to union work. Women represent the largest share of workers in many local and regional government jobs. Together with workers with disabilities and elderly, 2SLGBTQ+, racialized, migrant, refugee, and Indigenous workers they face multiple, overlapping layers of discrimination (reflected in the concept of intersectionality) and bear the brunt of the precarity and poor working conditions of many municipal jobs.

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

CUPE delegates and many other trade union women participated virtually in the 66th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2022. This annual gathering is a priority for our union. This year the CSW focused on “achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes.”

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK CITY. THE ONGOING PANDEMIC MEANT CUPE DELEGATES AND MANY OTHER TRADE UNION WOMEN PARTICIPATED VIRTUALLY TO PUSH FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE AND GENDER EQUITY AT THE 66TH UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN MARCH 2022.



Photo: Gareth Lowndes/Getty Images

The CSW took place against a backdrop of gender inequality and a worsening climate crisis. CUPE delegates joined feminist and labour activists from around the world to push for global policies that aim to fight a looming climate catastrophe and empower women and girls, including public investments in care work.

We heard from international labour leaders, climate advocates, Indigenous land defenders, and feminists on topics from just transition to the link between climate change and gender-based violence.

PSI and the Canadian Labour Congress delegation led the way in lobbying governments to recognize that decent work for women is critical for a just and equitable transition away from high-emitting industries. Public investment in the care economy is central to this transition, including safe, unionized jobs in long-term care, health care and child care.

However, the fight continues. The Agreed Conclusions fell short in recognizing the need for wealthier, high-emitting countries (including Canada) to compensate countries most affected by climate change for loss and damage. The conclusions are also silent on the need for disarmament and to reinvest military funding into public services and renewable energy. As PSI General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli put it, “bombs are not green.”

COP26 AND TRADE UNIONS FOR ENERGY DEMOCRACY

In 2021, CUPE joined more than 30 unions in a global trade union task force. The Trade Union Program for a Public Low-Carbon Energy Future was launched in Glasgow, Scotland at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), to rally international trade union movement support for a fundamental shift in climate and energy policy. This has been a remarkable effort to clearly outline the shift needed to correct market model failures and ensure the energy transition required to address the climate crisis is socially just, economically viable, and effective in reaching climate goals.

The task force was initiated by Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED), a network formed 10 years ago to develop an independent, trade union and working-class approach to energy transition, climate protection, and related issues. CUPE has been a member since its founding. TUED helps unions organize and advocate for public ownership of energy to address climate change and energy poverty, and to address worker concerns about the energy transition.

During COP26, TUED union members based in the global South worked to provide alternatives to “green structural adjustment” policies. These policies are endorsed and promoted by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, European Commission, World Economic Forum and other supporters of market-based policies. CUPE is supporting TUED’s work and the effort to shift attention to South-led alternatives to the current neoliberal energy transition.

A DEMONSTRATOR AT A RALLY DURING THE COP26 IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND HOLDS A SIGN SAYING "CLIMATE REFUGEES WELCOME. FIGHT RACISM AND CLIMATE CHAOS."



Photo: Stephen and Helen Jones/Flickr CC BY-SA 4.0

The COP26 negotiations were largely deemed a failure, with civil society organizations walking out in protest over the degree of corporate control of governments. Those who walked out joined social movements, including the trade union movement, who had stayed outside the official negotiations and were working to develop the plans and programs necessary to address the climate crisis we face.

It is not surprising that rich nations and the corporate fossil fuel sector lacked the political will and incentive to meaningfully address the climate crisis. Their promotion of market-based solutions and commitment to land grabbing and profit at the expense of the planet are what created the climate crisis.

As disappointing as the actions of government leaders and the COP26 outcome may have been, there is a silver lining. More and more people understand that governments under the current economic system are unable to address the climate crisis. It's becoming clear, particularly to young people, that decarbonisation, energy efficiency and the replacement of fossil fuels with clean energy sources can only happen outside of markets. The legitimacy of exerting pressure through mass actions and in unity with Indigenous and vulnerable communities in the global South is also growing.

Mobilizing for a better world

The rise of far-right movements, the ongoing pandemic and the state of our planet's health can feed despair. But these immense challenges are also the fuel for profound and hopeful transformations. As workers we can, and we must, keep building our collective power and mobilizing for a better world for all.

Our union will continue to work with allies at home and around the world to advance workers' rights and human rights, and to challenge growing corporate power and rising inequality. Over the past year, our partners have highlighted patterns of violence, harassment, criminalization, and imprisonment they experience as trade union organizers and human rights defenders. We are concerned by and will speak out against a new wave of repression and persecution that uses legislation and the legal system to shut down social movement organizations.

Our solidarity is vital to push back against attacks designed to stifle opposition voices as well as movements defending workers' rights. We will continue to support these global movements through worker-to-worker connections and CUPE's Global Justice Fund.

International solidarity and worker-to-worker exchanges connect CUPE members with people on the frontlines of vital struggles. We learn important lessons and make the links between what we are confronting at home and around the globe. CUPE stands united with workers around the world challenging privatization, poverty, racism, austerity, colonialism, imperialism and war. We will keep resisting these same forces in Canada.

If your local is interested in supporting the CUPE National Global Justice Fund and our union's international solidarity work, visit cupe.ca/international-solidarity or contact International Solidarity Officer Kelti Cameron at kcameron@cupe.ca.



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- CUPE Nova Scotia
- CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador
- Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)
- CUPE staff
- CUPE 40 – Calgary Board of Education workers, Calgary, AB
- CUPE 382 – Greater Victoria School District workers, Victoria, BC
- CUPE 606 – Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District #68 workers, Nanaimo, BC
- CUPE 4791 – Southern Alberta Community Living Association workers, Lethbridge, AB
- CUPE 8443 – Board of Education of Saskatoon School Division No. 13 workers, Saskatoon, SK
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- CUPE 1244 – Employé(e)s de l'université de Montréal, Montréal, QC
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- CUPE 8920 – Nova Scotia Acute Care workers, Amherst, NS
- CUPE 3067 – New Dawn Guest Home workers, Sydney, NS
- CUPE 1876 – Northside Community Guest Home workers, Sydney, NS



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