

International Solidarity Report

2020-2021



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CUPE's International Solidarity Report 2020-2021 is published by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, 1375 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa, ON, K1G 0Z7.

Union printed using vegetable oil-based inks on recycled paper that is 30 per cent post-consumer waste, recyclable and biodegradable, elemental chlorine-free and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

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ISSN# 1920-1443

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Photo credits: Alliance of Concerned Teachers - Philippines (p. 7); Bangladesh Center for Workers' Solidarity (cover, p. 9, 10); CCDA/ Campesino Committee of the Highlands (p. 5); Cihan Erdal/Omer Ongun (p. 17); CODEMUH/ Honduran Women's Collective (p. 6); COURAGE (p. 8); "Wells Fargo_DefundLine3_IMG_0481-1" by Peg Hunter/Flickr – licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic [CC BY-NC 2.0] (p. 20); CTSP/ Confédération des Travailleurs et Travailleuses des Secteurs Public et Privé (p. 11); Migrant Canada (p. 12); NOMADESC/Association for Research and Social Action (p. 3 top); Ben Powless (p. 19); Public Services International (p. 14, 18); SINTRACUAVALLE/Valle de Cauca water workers' union (p. 3 bottom); SNTAP/ National Union of Public Administration Workers (p. 4); Tavoyan Women's Union (p. 2).

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Solidarity and resistance during a global crisis

The 2020-2021 edition of our annual report on CUPE's international solidarity work is focused on the impact and implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. It tells the story of some very difficult situations for our friends, allies and comrades, and reminds us why CUPE's commitment to the global labour movement is so important.

The global pandemic is a significant moment in history. COVID-19 has brutally exposed the many ways that the dominant economic model and current public policies have failed to meet people's needs around the world. We feel the urgency of this moment, and the possibilities it presents us as workers and trade unionists. The labour movement must keep working with our allies to push for a just and equitable global recovery that transforms our society, instead of simply returning to business as usual.

The pandemic has also emphasized how deeply connected we all are. Whether it's advocating for universal access to vaccines, defending free collective bargaining, standing in solidarity with Indigenous peoples or fighting privatization, our actions as CUPE members connect us with a global movement of workers and allies who are resisting the same powerful forces and fighting for the same shared vision of a better world.

Our union is proud to stand with activists resisting right-wing governments and corporations. We've clearly seen the power of the people over the past year. Popular movements made up of Indigenous peoples, women's groups, young people and unions have taken to the streets in many countries. The incredible courage of workers and social movements in countries like Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Haiti, India, Palestine and the Philippines inspires us and calls us to action.

In Canada and around the world, people are organizing and resisting in profound and significant ways as they challenge power and demand genuine democracy and justice. It is a privilege to struggle alongside these workers and community members in our collective fight for human and labour rights, decent work, strong public services, peace and climate justice.



Mark Hancock,
CUPE National President



Charles Fleury,
CUPE National
Secretary-Treasurer

Global Justice Fund in action

In 2020-2021, CUPE's Global Justice Fund supported workers and community allies in Burma, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. COVID-19 has highlighted the critical importance of our collective work advocating for peace, advancing labour and gender rights, defending human rights, building trade union capacity, fighting water privatization and promoting public services. The pandemic also made this work much more challenging.

BURMA

When the military seized power in Burma/ Myanmar through a coup in February 2021, trade unions, social movements and individuals mobilized in what became a large civil disobedience movement. The coup returned the country to military rule after several years of democratic progress.

The people of Burma have courageously resisted, showing how trade unions and collective power are critical in defending and advancing democracy. Trade union strikes closed public

TAVOYAN WOMEN'S UNION MEMBERS MARK INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021 IN BURMA.



GRADUATES FROM NOMADESC'S 2021 INTERCULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLES IN COLOMBIA.



transit, mines, factories and government offices. Students, youth, farmers, workers and community organizations joined demonstrations, showing the world that the country is united against the military regime. The military responded with lethal force. Hundreds of protesters have been murdered, and thousands more have been arrested.

The Burmese people's demands include an end to military rule and for the results of the November 2020 elections to be upheld, as well as the release of all political prisoners with all charges dropped.

The Tavoyan Women's Union (TWU) in the Tanitharyi region is CUPE's partner in Burma. Their work focuses on breaking down the barriers to freedom experienced by women living in a patriarchal society, including political, social, and economic inequality. Increasing women's capacity to show leadership and participate in their political and social lives is central to the TWU's goal of building "a society of peace, justice, freedom and equality in Burma." These objectives are rooted in the experiences and historic struggles of their members.

Our solidarity with the people of Burma is critical right now. CUPE condemns the coup, and we are concerned about the safety and security of everyone resisting the military takeover, including the members of our partner organization. The international community must continue to exert pressure on the military to end the state of emergency, immediately release all political prisoners, respect the Burmese people's right to choose their leaders, and remove limits on freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

COLOMBIA

During the pandemic, Colombia had the unfortunate record of the third highest COVID-19 infection rate in the Americas, after the USA and Brazil. The rising violence that Colombia had been experiencing since the December 2016 peace accords increased considerably after the pandemic began, as did the resistance of the population.

Police used enforcement of a curfew lockdown as a cover to target activists. Death squads began to hunt rights defenders down in their homes, knowing they could not take their usual precautions. Social leaders and human rights defenders were targeted, as well as former combatants of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC).

SINTRACUAVALLE MEMBERS DEMONSTRATING ON MAY DAY 2021 DURING A NATIONAL STRIKE IN COLOMBIA.





SNTAP MEMBERS CELEBRATE MAY DAY 2021 IN HAVANA, CUBA. THE SIGN SAYS "DON'T MESS WITH MY REVOLUTION."

In 2020-2021, CUPE partner NOMADESC, the Association for Research and Social Action, launched its "New Normality" campaign to expose the increase in human rights violations during the pandemic. This campaign and the work of other rights organizations helped galvanize Colombian society. In late 2020 and early 2021, large demonstrations erupted across the country against harmful policy reforms, police and paramilitary violence, and corruption in the government of President Ivan Duque. Disenfranchised youth were on the front line of the mobilizations that forced the government to retreat on planned health and social policy reforms. Over a hundred were killed and thousands wounded by state and paramilitary forces.

In January 2021, the Colombian government's National Protection Unit withdrew security measures it had been providing Margarita Lopez, president of SINTRACUAVALLE. The union represents water workers in the province of Valle de Cauca and is a long-time CUPE partner. Lopez has been the target of death threats and

harassment by paramilitary groups because of her labour activism. This did not prevent her or the union from participating in the nationwide mobilizations. International solidarity helped to expose government violence and the regressive reforms have since been withdrawn, although the violence continues.

CUBA

Cuba's strong public health system has played an important role in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country has fared much better than most of its Latin American neighbours. Within weeks of the World Health Organization declaring COVID-19 a global pandemic in early 2020, the Cuban government sent 3,000 doctors to help prevent the spread of the virus in 28 countries and three territories. The government quickly shifted the island's extensive biomedical industry towards research on solutions to the pandemic. Cuba is the only Latin American country to develop vaccines against the virus.

Cuba's ability to mass produce doses is being hampered by the tightened US trade embargo against the country, which makes it difficult to get materials to make and administer vaccines. In addition to prohibiting US companies from trading with Cuba, the six-decade long embargo also punishes businesses from other countries that do so. United Nations General Assembly resolutions have had no effect on US foreign policy towards Cuba. For the 29th year in a row, 184 countries supported a June 2021 resolution demanding an end to the blockade, with only the United States and Israel voting in opposition.

Cuban trade unions report that between April 2019 and March 2020 the embargo inflicted

losses of approximately US\$5.6 billion, a notable increase from the previous year, making life more difficult in communities and for workers in health care, agriculture, education and public services.

Our union has a decades-long partnership with the Cuban National Union of Public Administration Workers (SNTAP). In 2020-2021, CoDevelopment Canada was planning to ship a container of goods on CUPE's behalf to SNTAP. The collection of supplies was slow to begin because of pandemic restrictions and the shift to working remotely in Cuba and Canada. However, the process is underway and now includes items for ensuring the health and safety of Havana municipal workers during the pandemic.

GUATEMALA

In many ways, the situation in Guatemala has remained the same or even worsened over the past year, with land grabs and human rights violations on the rise. The pandemic has had enormous social, health and economic impacts on vulnerable rural families. The devastation caused by the massive hurricanes that swept through the region in November 2020 has made life unbearable for many. Many have chosen to migrate to escape extreme poverty and state violence. At the same time, thousands of migrants are arriving in caravans from Honduras.

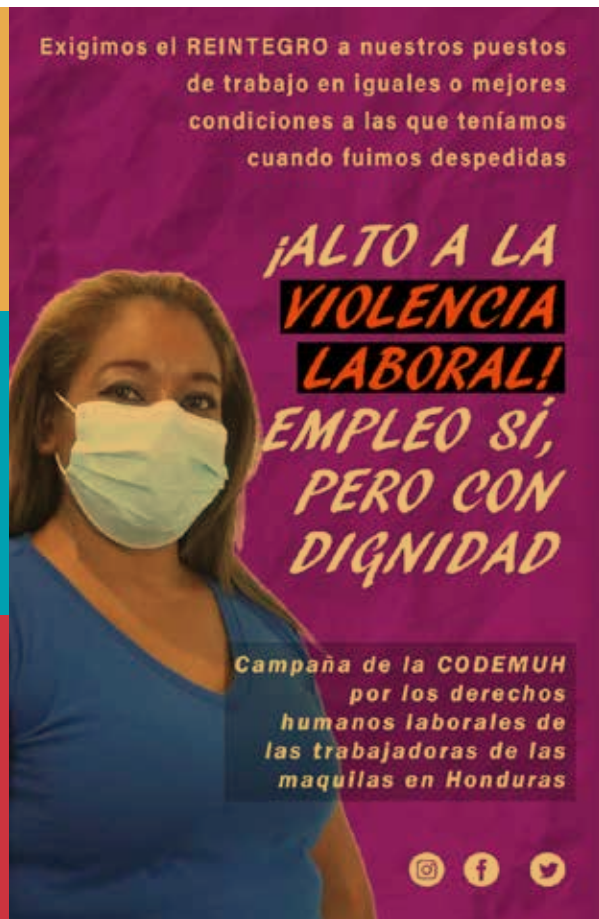
Landlords and corporations took advantage of the pandemic's temporary shutdown of public institutions to execute extrajudicial evictions using private paramilitary organizations, targeting community members defending their land rights and titles. These irregular forces have attacked the communities with firearms, destroyed crops and burned homes. Local authorities have also

misused the criminal code to criminalize human rights defenders, traditional authorities, and community leaders.

In January 2021, Xinka community leader Julio González survived an assassination attempt. González has been engaged in peaceful resistance to the Escobal mine, owned by Canadian company Pan American Silver. The Xinka and campesino communities in southeastern Guatemala have peacefully opposed the Escobal silver mine since 2011 when it was imposed without their consent. Pan American Silver has owned the mine since 2019. Sadly, this attack highlights the urgent need for the Canadian government to hold Canadian mining companies to account for the repression and harm imposed on communities where they operate.

CCDA REPRESENTATIVE LEOCADIO JURACÁN SALOMÉ WITH THE ACTION PLAN FROM THE FIRST CCDA NATIONAL AGRARIAN CONGRESS IN GUATEMALA.





MATERIAL FROM A CODEMUH CAMPAIGN TO REHIRE WOMEN MAQUILA WORKERS IN HONDURAS WHO WERE FIRED DURING THE PANDEMIC.

focused on dispelling myths about the virus, measures to prevent infection, and workers' rights to compensation and recall during the factory shutdowns.

As the economy reopened, CODEMUH shifted to monitoring safety conditions and supporting worker complaints in the crowded and poorly ventilated garment factories. Women maquila workers faced tremendous danger returning to work under these conditions. Many were forced to take unpaid leave because they contracted COVID-19 or had to care for sick family members. Domestic violence rates rose significantly in the country during the long lockdown periods, affecting many of the women that CODEMUH supports.

Women in the maquila zones were also among the most affected by the twin Category 5 hurricanes that hit Central America in November 2020. The garment factories are located at the estuaries of Honduras' main river systems. Many workers lost homes and belongings in the massive flooding generated by the hurricanes.

The combination of layoffs, forced unpaid sick leave, and natural disasters caused by climate change has generated unprecedented financial challenges for women working in Honduran maquilas.

CODEMUH has also been courageously documenting and exposing violence by security forces during the lockdown, and government corruption in the allocation of public health care during the pandemic.

Canadian government and embassy support for Canadian mining companies deepens the tremendous systemic injustices that continue to exist in Guatemala. The ongoing resilience and strength of social movements, mining resistance groups and communities, including CUPE's partners the Campesino Committee of the Highlands (CCDA) and Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence (BTS), is remarkable and inspiring.

HONDURAS

This is a particularly difficult time for women working in the maquilas, or export assembly zones, of northern Honduras. When COVID-19 hit in 2020, many sweatshop workers were unemployed for long periods after factories abruptly shut down. Honduran authorities imposed a strict lockdown that left thousands of garment workers out of work. Although in-person training was impossible, CUPE's partner CODEMUH, the Honduran Women's Collective, developed workshops delivered to workers on their cell phones. The workshops



NICARAGUA

When the pandemic hit, thousands of Nicaraguan garment workers were laid off as export zone factories abruptly shut down. Labour and social justice organizations quickly shifted their focus to the immediate needs of workers, such as providing emergency food aid and accompanying workers to labour tribunals to seek basic dismissal compensation from employers.

At the end of 2020, organizations supporting workers in the export zones faced new threats from Nicaraguan authorities. In one case, national police surrounded the office of CUPE's partner the María Elena Cuadra Movement of Employed and Unemployed Women (MEC), in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua, and prevented workers from entering. Although police eventually withdrew, concern remains that authorities were attempting to shut the organization down permanently. MEC was forced to install surveillance cameras outside its offices and to hire a security service to monitor the premises.

In October 2020, in an alarming effort to target activists and instill fear, the Nicaraguan government approved a law requiring staff from non-governmental organizations receiving international funding to register themselves as "foreign agents." Later that month, Nicaragua's congress approved a "cyber-crimes law," which includes jail sentences for anyone who uses the

ALLIANCE OF CONCERNED TEACHERS - PHILIPPINES MEMBERS DEMONSTRATE ON WORLD TEACHERS' DAY 2021 IN MANILA.

internet to make what the government considers to be "false criticisms." While the full implications of these new measures are not clear, there are fears the laws will significantly hamper work in support of sweatshop workers. The new measures could also stop the international community from showing concrete support and solidarity.

PHILIPPINES

In 2020-2021, the pandemic response in the Philippines failed to stop the spread of the virus, intensifying the country's human rights crisis. The government of Rodrigo Duterte used a lengthy and harsh lockdown to repress political dissent. CUPE's partners 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, were among the targets.

Instead of following public health guidance, the government chose a militaristic approach to its pandemic response. Generals governed the response, sidelining medical experts and scientists. This led to highly restrictive lockdown measures with harsh sanctions for quarantine



and curfew violations. At the same time, food and financial aid were insufficient and delayed, leading to widespread hunger. The lockdown, one of the world's longest, increased unemployment, leaving millions of Filipino people jobless.

The government used the pandemic as an opportunity to repress dissent and make deep and structural cuts. A layoff scheme for 'non-essential' contract workers at the height of the lockdown was deceptively referred to as an "enhanced community quarantine." Health care was not a priority, and hospital budgets were cut. At the same time, funding increased for infrastructure projects including water privatization, and for militarization programs under the government's 'anti-insurgency' campaign.

At the height of the pandemic in 2020, the Duterte regime passed anti-terrorism legislation, which defines terrorism in extremely broad and vague terms. The new law worsens the situation for trade unionists and opponents of the government. Activists were already vulnerable to state-sponsored harassment, given the long-standing practices of the Philippines

police and military to plant evidence and press trumped-up charges without the opportunity for bail. COURAGE has joined other organizations to hold several protests calling for the repeal of the anti-terror law, and other laws meant to silence dissent. Two of their leaders were among those arrested in a brutal crackdown in March 2021.

ACT members faced human rights violations and other government attacks during the pandemic. Several regional leaders were subjected to illegal surveillance as well as 'red-tagging,' and 'terror-tagging,' unjustly labelling them as members of terrorist groups.

Military personnel visited some leaders in their homes or at work. Other measures included withholding permits for activities such as rallies, barring unions from taking part in political activities, delaying union accreditation, and cancelling collective bargaining meetings. Union pressure eventually forced government agencies to respect teachers' right to organize.

Worker-to-worker solidarity



TWO GARMENT WORKERS ON THEIR WAY TO WORK DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH.

BANGLADESH

The Rana Plaza building collapse in 2013 in Bangladesh, one of the world's worst industrial disasters, shone a spotlight on garment workers and their dire working conditions, shocking the world. Workers had been organizing and fighting for their rights prior to this crime and they continue to mobilize during the pandemic.

Bangladesh is the world's second-largest clothing exporter, and Canada is home to companies that produce this clothing. During COVID-19, hundreds of factories closed as international and Canadian brands and retailers cancelled orders and refused to pay for orders already in production. Factories fired over a million workers and many employers refused to pay workers severance pay they had legally earned. Workers had no savings from subsistence-level wages and no access to social programs. Workers continue to face precarity and danger in this sector, and the future appears dim as the global demand for clothing remains low.

After the Rana Plaza disaster, trade unions and workers' rights organizations like CUPE's partner, the Bangladesh Center for Workers' Solidarity, fought for and won a 70 per cent minimum wage increase in the garment sector. They also successfully pressured international brands and retailers to sign the Bangladesh Accord for Building and Fire Safety and compensate victims of the Rana Plaza collapse. The Rana Plaza disaster is referred to as a homicide, not an accident, because it was entirely preventable with proper safety measures and a strong monitoring system.

Wealthy global brands have underpaid the workers who make their clothes for decades, and now garment workers are paying the price of the pandemic. CUPE has joined trade unions and labour rights organizations in a global campaign calling for full wages during the pandemic and severance for garment workers who lose their jobs. We are also calling for the legally binding Bangladesh Accord to be renewed and for global brands to renew their commitment to the agreement.



GARMENT WORKERS LEAVE THE STANDARD STITCHES LIMITED FACTORY (SUPPLYING MARK'S WORK WEARHOUSE/CANADIAN TIRE), DHAKA, BANGLADESH, NOVEMBER 2020.

The Canadian labour movement has called on the federal government to enact a law requiring companies to respect human rights in their global operations and supply chains, a move that would support workers organizing in Bangladesh and other countries. This legislation should require companies to conduct due diligence on their human rights and environmental risks, take appropriate steps to prevent and mitigate such risks and hold companies accountable in the courts if they abuse human rights.

HAITI

In February 2021, Haiti's de facto president Jovenel Moïse refused to step down, in violation of Haiti's constitution. Human rights and faith-based organizations, trade unions and senior legal experts all agreed his term had ended.

Months earlier, CUPE's partner in Haiti, the Confédération des Travailleurs et Travailleuses des Secteurs Public et Privé (CTSP), had raised the alarm about rising violence and social unrest. Moïse was acting with impunity, and his regime had stepped up a campaign of terror that targeted any opposition, including arbitrarily removing three Supreme Court judges. Moïse set up death squads and used criminal gangs and the police force to execute political opponents and activists, crack down on protests, murder journalists, and raid the homes of opposition members often at night. Trade unionists, including the CTSP, have faced systemic repression. A wave of dismissals, arbitrary arrests and death threats has targeted the few sectors where workers have been able to organize unions such as education, the public sector and export processing zones.

Moïse received political support from the Core Group, which emboldened him to act with brazen disregard for human rights. The Core Group is composed of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, the ambassadors of Brazil, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Spain, and the United States of America, as well as a representative of the Organization of American States (OAS).



ROADS AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE WERE SEVERELY DAMAGED AFTER THE SUMMER 2021 EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI.

In an international call to action, the Council of Global Unions called on their affiliated unions to urge the Core Group and other governments across the world to immediately withdraw any support and assistance to Moïse and to condemn any rollback by the regime of Haitian people's human rights and trade union rights.

CUPE called on the Canadian government to heed the calls of the Haitian people to stop supporting and enabling Moïse, and to further support the people's efforts to restore democracy, the rule of law and respect for human and trade union rights.

In July 2021, Moïse was assassinated. Civil society, including trade unions, are working hard to support the construction of a new government that reflects the will of the people. It is important that they are given the space to do this without interference from the Core Group and foreign governments, including Canada.

MIGRANT WORKERS

COVID-19 has painfully exposed many longstanding problems, particularly the inequities between classes in our society. Migrant workers were some of the most vulnerable people during the global pandemic. In Canada, migrants harvesting our food, cleaning our homes and offices, and caring for our children and elderly people experienced some of the most precarious and threatening conditions, often in isolation.

Migrant workers faced housing insecurity and were forced to live in close quarters in shared housing. The federal government's COVID-19 response included tightened border measures and increased surveillance, which threatened migrant workers' security. In addition, the need to access health care and vaccinations put many workers with precarious immigration status at greater risk of deportation.

Over the past year, CUPE has supported migrant rights organizations providing food and essential supplies to undocumented families and migrant farmworkers. In 2021-2022, our union will support migrant



A PARTICIPANT IN MIGRANTE CANADA'S JULY 2021 CONGRESS IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA.

worker advocacy for policy change, as well as initiatives to organize workshops with temporary foreign workers, especially in underserved communities. These workshops will provide rights-based education and build capacity to assert these rights.

ZIMBABWE

At the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the Zimbabwean government arrested 13 nurses who were protesting their deteriorating pay and working conditions during a strike led by the Zimbabwe Nurses Association (ZINA). They were later released on bail.

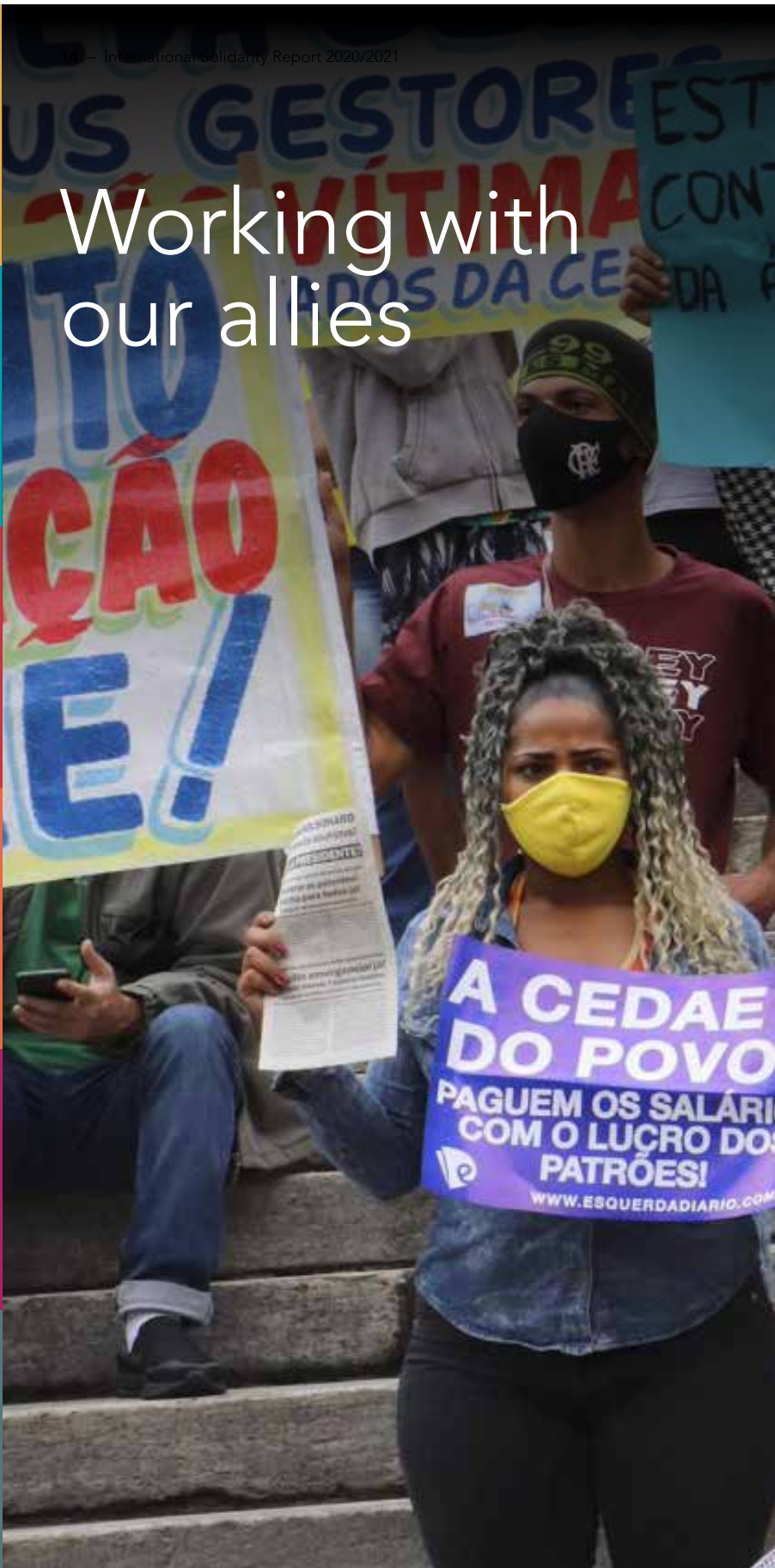
Despite the repression, ZINA stood firm in its demands for improved personal protective equipment and decent wages. They were deeply concerned about the increasing number of nurses who were testing positive for COVID-19 because of inadequate PPE.

CUPE helped financially support striking ZINA members, strengthening their ability to negotiate with the employer and explore legal and political ways to pressure the government. Workers were demanding better wages and PPE, improvements to working conditions, the reinstatement of dismissed workers and an end to employer intimidation.

The union ended the three-month strike after the minister of health committed to restructuring the ministry and improving the salaries and working conditions of health workers. Despite intimidation tactics such as the arrest of their co-workers, union members stayed strong and united on strike until the government was forced to concede.

International solidarity helped the workers stand up to government intimidation and threats during the strike. Zimbabwe's currency has lost most of its value and nurses' salaries are almost worthless. Given this situation, the small membership fees nurses pay to ZINA aren't enough for the union to properly service its members. International support ensured union leaders were able to reach out to their membership and maintain the momentum of the strike while at the same time strengthening the union's structures.

Working with our allies



P. 14-15: DEMONSTRATORS IN RIO DE JANEIRO PROTEST PARTS OF BRAZIL'S LARGEST WATER SYSTEM BEING AUCTIONED OFF TO PRIVATE BUYERS, INCLUDING THE CANADA PENSION PLAN INVESTMENT BOARD.



GLOBAL TRADE UNION ASSEMBLY

In 2020, a series of virtual trade union assemblies titled *Pandemic and Beyond: Workers Organizing for a Public Future* focused on reshaping global policies and politics. CUPE gathered with trade unions and labour organizations from around the world to discuss the implications of the COVID-19 crisis and to consider new ways of strengthening international worker solidarity.

Unions strategized about issues linked to the pandemic including public services, the climate crisis, global finance, and labour rights. The consensus was clear: we cannot return to the world that allowed the COVID-19 virus to flourish. The assembly developed proposals that would transform our post-pandemic world to centre justice, sustainability, public ownership and the redistribution of wealth.

The international trade union movement is on the front lines of tackling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers and their communities, and policy responses. The pandemic's devastation will affect families and communities for years to come. The labour movement must take the opportunity this crisis presents to organize for a public future that establishes an economy based on need instead of profit, that advances equality, and that tackles the existential dangers of climate instability and ecosystem collapse.

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS ON WOMEN

A scaled-back 65th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) took place at UN Headquarters in New York in 2021. The Canadian labour movement participated virtually with trade unions and social movement organizations from around the world. The UNCSW is the global intergovernmental body dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women.

CUPE attends the UNCSW to build coalitions with other trade unions and progressive organizations, while also exerting pressure on governments and influencing global gender equality policies. In 2021, the UN's priority theme focused on women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and the elimination of violence, highlighting these as prerequisites for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Progressive organizations in the session underscored how the pandemic exposed weaknesses in our health and care systems and deepened already existing gender and social inequalities. The discussions reinforced the need for a transformative post-COVID recovery that addresses the ongoing threats to peace, democracy and human rights, as well as economic, environmental and food crises that preceded the pandemic.

The labour movement highlighted how women, in all their diversity, are overrepresented in informal work and irregular forms of employment. Trade unions strategized to confront gender-based violence and discrimination with a clear understanding of the multiple and intersecting ways women face discrimination because of systems of oppression based on class, ethnicity, race, migration status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Global Union Federations, including Public Services International (PSI), called for the universal ratification and implementation of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190. The international treaty calls for a world of work free from gender-based violence and harassment, a new gender-equal social contract that builds resilient societies and economies, and a caring economy that recognizes the human right to care and puts more resources into creating decent jobs and strengthening the public sector. PSI is advancing this work with a global call to fundamentally rethink and value care work.

CUPE 4600 MEMBER CIHAN ERDAL WAS UNLAWFULLY AND ARBITRARILY DETAINED AS PART OF A MASS ARREST IN TURKEY IN SEPTEMBER 2020.



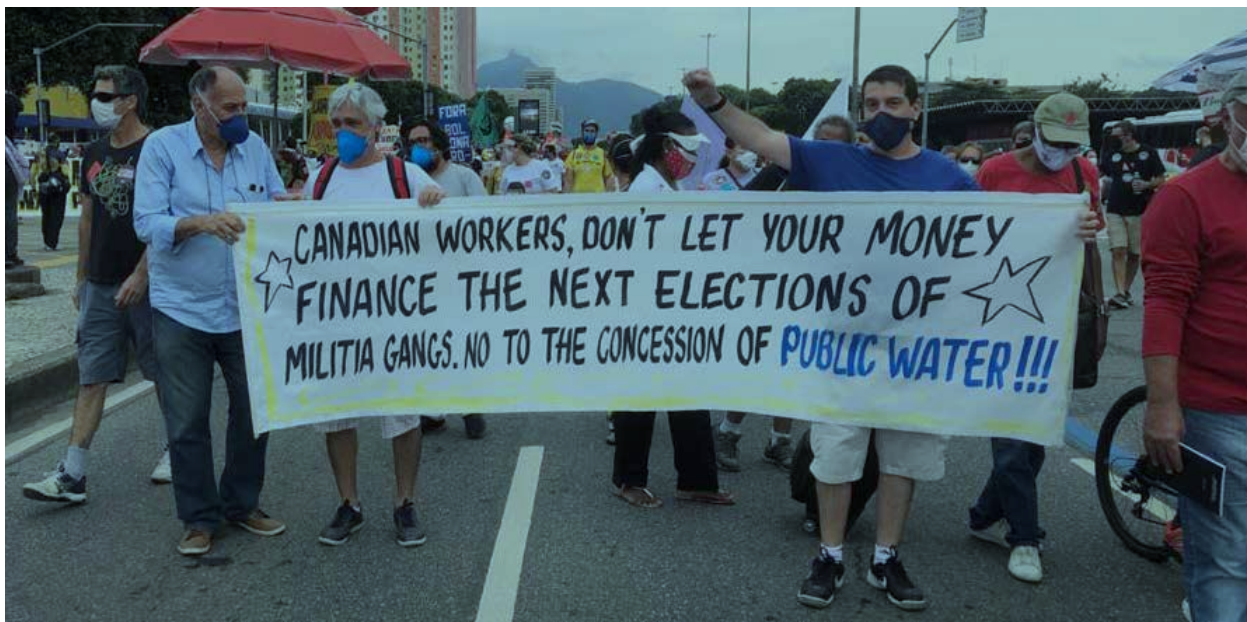
FREE CIHAN ERDAL CAMPAIGN

CUPE is a partner in the global campaign to free political prisoner and CUPE member Cihan Erdal from prison in Turkey. Erdal is a queer youth activist, PhD student and member of CUPE 4600 at Carleton University. 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. He is a Canadian permanent resident, who was in Turkey visiting family and conducting fieldwork for his doctorate when he was detained.

Erdal is 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. The accusations against Erdal and other prisoners stem from their public support for a Kurdish community under attack from ISIS in 2014.

CUPE helped organize a letter-writing campaign that drew thousands of messages calling on the Canadian government to secure Erdal's release and ensure his safe return to Canada. Our union also supported a global LabourStart campaign targeting key Turkish officials. Erdal was conditionally released on June 15 after presenting his defence. As of the time of this report, he cannot leave the country and could still face more prison time. Our union will keep advocating and building solidarity, and we look forward to the day Erdal returns to Canada.

RIO DE JANEIRO WORKERS AND RESIDENTS PROTEST THE CANADA PENSION PLAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN A WATER PRIVATIZATION DEAL, APRIL 2021.



CANADA PENSION PLAN: HANDS OFF BRAZIL'S WATER

Alongside PSI and water workers in Brazil, CUPE demanded Canada's public pension plan abandon plans to invest in a major water privatization scheme in Brazil in 2021. The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) took part in a massive selloff of public infrastructure led by far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, while the country was being ravaged by COVID-19.

The CPPIB bought a 45 per cent stake in Iguá Saneamento, a Brazilian private water and wastewater company. Iguá then used these funds to buy part of the country's largest public water system, CEDAE, when it was auctioned off in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

CUPE is deeply concerned that the CPPIB went ahead with a risky water privatization deal in Brazil, ignoring warnings from unions and others about the many economic and social dangers of the deal. Privately owned and operated water and wastewater services have a terrible track record of skyrocketing rates, plummeting access, declining quality and cuts in service and jobs.

CUPE is clear that our pension funds must not violate human rights or prey on people's need for clean drinking water and safe sewage treatment. Our union also questions why the CPP is associating itself with a deal promoted by a far-right regime and investing in an environment that can only be described as volatile.

CUPE stands in solidarity with the water workers and people of Brazil who are fighting to protect CEDAE and all public water systems in the country.



PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEAD AN OTTAWA-GATINEAU MARCH MOURNING THE DISCOVERY OF UNMARKED GRAVES AT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, ONE OF MANY ACTIONS ON JULY 1, 2021.

In June 2021, CUPE took part in a meeting of PSI affiliates from Canada and the United States. CUPE is a member of PSI, the global trade union federation representing more than 30 million public sector workers in 154 countries around the world. Participants discussed the diverse and shared struggles in our two countries, as well as important PSI campaigns to expand access to COVID-19 vaccinations, address tax havens, and tackle emerging issues related to digitalization. Affiliates also planned a meeting with PSI Colombia affiliates to strengthen our solidarity and support for their ongoing resistance to state violence and neoliberal reforms.

The participating Canadian unions drafted and presented a joint statement on the discovery of unmarked graves on residential school sites. CUPE hosted a virtual meeting of Canada and Quebec-based PSI affiliates in advance of the Canada-US meeting, which was an opportunity to update each other and renew our collective work.

The future we want

Global pandemics are among the few disasters that the entire world experiences simultaneously. It is astonishing to consider that 7.8 billion people have, in some way, been affected by COVID-19. But our experiences have been starkly different, exposing the urgent need to transform our economy and society through international solidarity. We must help mobilize a global movement to build the future we want.

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. The pandemic has shone a spotlight on just how broken our current systems are. The unequal, profit-driven global distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations is one glaring example. Our solidarity commits us to challenging the systems that privilege rich nations and wealthy individuals over the health and well being of the majority of the world's population.

During the pandemic, workers found new ways to connect and organize. We will continue to find creative ways to engage with our sisters, brothers and friends and advance our shared work. Our union will keep mobilizing to build a better world founded on climate justice and social justice. We will keep demanding fundamental change that redistributes wealth, funds public services through fair taxation, protects land and advances labour rights.

We must continue to expose the troubling global pattern of intensified repression that social movements, including trade unions and human rights defenders, are facing under COVID-19. As workers lose their jobs because of the pandemic, activists are being criminalized and illegally detained to prevent them from mobilizing protests and organizing workers into unions and associations. Our solidarity is vital to push back against attacks designed to stifle opposition and movements to defend workers' rights.

Through worker-to-worker connections, and through CUPE's Global Justice Fund, we will continue to support these global movements. CUPE stands united with workers around the world challenging privatization, poverty, racism, austerity, colonialism, imperialism and war. And 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.



SIDEWALK ART READING "SOLIDARITY - OUR SUPERPOWER" AT A 2021 WATER PROTECTORS RALLY AGAINST THE LINE 3 PIPELINE, SAN FRANCISCO.

CUPE NATIONAL GLOBAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Natalie Webber, Newfoundland and Labrador
- Serge Plourde, New Brunswick
- Jennifer LeBlanc, Prince Edward Island
- Cheryl Burbidge, Nova Scotia
- Diane Coté, Quebec
- Farid C. Partovi, Ontario
- Lisa Chetwynd, Manitoba
- Denise MacDonald, Saskatchewan
- Clayton Gordon, Alberta
- Andrew Ledger, British Columbia
- Louella Vincent, Hospital Employees' Union
- Marilou Jade Perreault, Airline Division
- Steve Stewart, CoDevelopment Canada
- Charlene Armstrong, Cuso International
- Connie Sorio, KAIROS
- Judy Henley, National Executive Board liaison
- Kelti Cameron, Staff Advisor

GLOBAL JUSTICE FUND SUPPORTERS

- CUPE National
- CUPE British Columbia
- CUPE Saskatchewan
- CUPE Ontario
- SCFP Québec
- CUPE Prince Edward Island
- CUPE Nova Scotia
- CUPE Newfoundland and Labrador
- Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)
- CUPE staff
- CUPE 40 – Calgary Board of Education Employees
- CUPE 382 – Greater Victoria School District Employees, Victoria, BC
- CUPE 606 – Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District #68 Employees, Nanaimo, BC
- CUPE 4791 – Employees of southern Alberta Community Living Association, Lethbridge, AB
- CUPE 8443 – Employees of the Board of Education of Saskatoon School Division No. 13 of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK
- CUPE 4600 – Part-Time Education Workers of Carleton University, Ottawa, ON
- CUPE 4557 – KAIROS, Ottawa, ON
- CUPE 2440 – Cuso Employees, Ottawa, ON
- CUPE 1244 – Employé(e)s de l'université de Montréal, Montréal, QC
- CUPE 3260 – PEI School Board – Provincial Teacher Assistants, Charlottetown, PEI
- CUPE 8920 – Nova Scotia Acute Care, Amherst, NS
- CUPE 3067 – New Dawn Guest Home, Sydney, NS
- CUPE 1876 – Northside Community Guest Home, Sydney, NS



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