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newsletter

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mobilization against war & occupation

MAWO STATEMENT ON THE NEW ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS & THE EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI

As the world enters a new decade, one thing above all is clear: this will be a decade of war and occupation – the bloodiest decade ever. The last decade opened with a new era of war and occupation launched by the United States. The attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001 were used to justify the invasions and ongoing wars and occupations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Palestine, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia and Pakistan. The new decade has already opened with new attacks on oppressed people and on independent and sovereign nations around the world.

Last year closed with the horrifying United Nations announcement that 2009 was the deadliest year for Afghan civilians, who have been suffering under a brutal US/Canada/NATO occupation since October 2001. The military invasion of Afghanistan has not brought peace, freedom, or security to the Afghan people. The presence of thousands of foreign troops in Afghanistan has in fact only meant tens of thousands of innocent lives lost and the absolute destruction of a country. But this ongoing bloodshed and the popular protests in Afghanistan demanding the withdrawal of all foreign troops from their country has not meant an end to the occupation. Instead, the US/Canada/NATO occupation forces have increased troop deployment and expanded their war from Afghanistan to neighbouring Pakistan. In early December 2009, US President Barack Obama announced that 33,000 more US troops would be deployed to Afghanistan in 2010. Without a doubt, this means even more killing and bloodshed of Afghan people. Ironically, while the US administration and all other imperialist ruling classes trumpet that there is no military solution to the Afghanistan crisis, they have time and again increased their troops and are accelerating the criminal war in Afghanistan.

Not very far from Afghanistan and Pakistan, the people of Yemen were welcomed into 2010 by the opening

of a new US war drive against their country. Under the pretext of stopping terrorism and al-Qaeda in Yemen, the US has begun military operations in the country, bombing and killing many civilians. One must wonder how in a mere 24 hours following an alleged attempted bombing of an American airplane, Yemen suddenly became the centre of al-Qaeda and the main exporter of terrorism to the United States. US Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Carl Levin has called for US drone plane bombings of Yemen, and Saudi Arabia has also been bombing the country with the support of the US and Israel.

With the beginning of the new decade came the announcement from US President Barack Obama of an intensified drive for war and occupation and a renewed campaign against Muslim people around the world. Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria and Cuba have all been placed on the US list of potential 'terrorist threats'. Cuba, which continues to face a 50-year-old blockade by the US government, is the only country on the list without a majority Muslim population. These countries are being singled out not only to have limitations placed on the democratic and human rights of their people by new so called US security restrictions, but also in preparation for future US military attack in the coming decade of war and occupation.

In the US and Canada, this expanding war drive has meant new 'security measures' are being enacted at airports and other public facilities specifically targeting Muslims for additional scrutiny, intimidation and humiliation. These measures are being enacted not in order to ensure public safety, but as part of a renewed fear campaign against Muslim people and attack on the human and democratic rights of Muslims living in the US, Canada and Europe in an attempt to create division and hatred between Muslims and non-Muslims.



Protest against occupation in Afghanistan. December 30, 2009.



Aftermath of the earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. January 15, 2009.

SOLIDARITY WITH HAITI AND DEMANDS ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

International Action Center Statement

The International Action Center expresses its full solidarity with the Haitian people at this time of greatest crisis following the devastating Jan.12 earthquake. In the Haitian capital, tens of thousands of lives have been lost and the lives of hundreds of thousands of additional people are at stake. It is essential that there be an all-out effort for immediate and massive humanitarian relief effort.

Tons of supplies could be parachuted to desperate people in immediate need of food and especially water. The delivery of this essential aid, plus the placement of rescue and medical teams must be the priority. Dozens of countries from all over the world, rich and poor, immediately sent hundreds of doctors and emergency medical teams and search and rescue teams and supplies.

Cuba already had 344 health workers in Haiti and is ready to send 152 more.

Because the United States is the most powerful and wealthiest country in the world and is so near to Haiti, it is almost inevitable that many will look to Washington to lead the rescue effort. And with all concerned for immediate relief for the Haitians, it will be easy to ignore the political realities both before the calamity and in its aftermath. These realities, however, will continue to affect the future of Haiti, and all of us should keep them in mind.

1. Haiti is the poorest and least developed country in the hemisphere, everyone repeats. That is true, but it is because Haiti has been occupied by U.S. imperialism again and again. Most recently a coup, planned from Washington and supported by troops from France and Canada, kidnapped and removed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004, a president democratically elected with over 75 % of the vote. The U.S. set up an occupation of Haiti under UN command. Six years of this UN occupation has done nothing to develop Haiti or improve its infrastructure. Instead it has led to still greater poverty and hunger and higher debt.

2. The Pentagon is controlling the U.S. intervention in the disaster. Its priority is not the rapid delivery of food and water, but the establishment of a beachhead of 2,200 Marines and 3,500 paratroopers to police the Haitian population. This military will have a dual role that includes delivery of aid, but this should not obscure the fact that its main role is that of repression and control, just as it is in Afghanistan, Iraq and other occupied countries.

3. President Barack Obama has appointed not only Bill Clinton but also George W.

Bush in charge of raising support for the U.S. relief effort. It was Bush -- probably the most hated of U.S. presidents worldwide -- who cynically delayed relief efforts and allowed the people of New Orleans to drown following the Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and who presided over the kidnapping of President Aristide.

4. The U.S. still prevents President Aristide from returning to Haiti from South Africa, where he is exiled.

5. From 1804, when the first successful slave revolution in history drove out the French colonialists and slavemasters,

until the present, Washington has continually intervened in an attempt to crush Haitian independence, directly occupied the country from 1915 to 1934 and again in

the last 20 years.

6. The \$100 million President Obama promised sounds like a lot of money, but it is tiny compared to the amount the rulers of France and the United States stole from Haiti and its people over centuries. It is a fraction of the \$1 billion that Haitian workers in the diaspora send home to their families every year. It is less than what the U.S. spends in 5 hours for the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq. It is far less than 1% of the \$18 billion that Goldman Sacks executives will receive in bonuses after a \$700 billion bailout of the banks.

Millions of people in solidarity with the Haitian people are making great efforts to send emergency supplies. The Haitian people themselves are organizing and gathering desperately needed supplies. Along with emergency peoples relief efforts there must be peoples' demands on the U.S. government and the powerful corporations.

In light of the above points, the International Action Center proposes the following demands:

~Immediate delivery of food, water and medical supplies;

~Allow the return of President Aristide to Haiti and restore his government,

~Reparations from the U.S., France and Canada so that Haitians can take charge of the relief effort and invite the international assistance of their choice;

~Immediate asylum for all Haitians in the United States and cancel the deportation orders on 30,000 Haitians;

~Permission for Haitian residents of the U.S. to go to Haiti to help their families and to return to the U.S.;

~Self-determination for Haiti.



Rally demanding the return of President Aristide. Port-au-Prince, Haiti, July 28, 2009.



UN soldier in Haiti, 2007.

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HAITI'S LESSON

Fidel Castro's Reflection on the Earthquake in Haiti

Two days ago, close to 6 in the evening Cuba time, already dark in Haiti due to its geographical location, the TV channels started carrying news that a violent earthquake, --of 7.3 intensity in the Richter scale-- had severely shaken Port au Prince. The seismic phenomenon had originated at a tectonic fault in the sea only 9.4 miles from the Haitian capital, a city where 80% of the population lives in fragile houses built with clay and adobe.

The news continued almost uninterrupted for hours. There were no images but it was said that many stouter constructions like public buildings, hospitals, schools and other facilities had also collapsed. I have read that a 7.3 earthquake equals the energy released by the explosion of 400,000 tons of TNT.

The descriptions were dramatic. In the streets, the wounded cried for medical help surrounded by ruins and their families buried under the debris. But, for many hours no one could broadcast any image.

The news took us all by surprise. Rather often we had heard news of hurricanes and large floods in Haiti but we did not know that our neighbor was threatened by a major earthquake. It surfaced now that 200 years ago a major earthquake had hit that city, which at the time was certainly inhabited by a few thousand people.

At midnight there was still no estimate of the number of victims. Senior UN officials and various Heads of Government spoke of the impressive event and announced that they would be sending rescue brigades. Since MINUSTAH --UN international forces-- are deployed there some Defense ministers spoke of the possibility of casualties among their personnel.

Actually, it was yesterday morning that sad news started flowing in on the high number of human casualties in the population and even such institutions as the United Nations reported that some of their buildings in that country had collapsed; a word that usually does not say much but that could mean a lot under the circumstances.

For hours increasingly dramatic news of the situation in that country continued to flow uninterrupted with reports of different numbers of deadly victims that depending on which version fluctuated between 30 thousand and 100 thousand. The images are appalling. Obviously, the catastrophic event has been widely reported all over the world and many governments, sincerely moved, are making efforts to cooperate to the extent of their capabilities.

A lot of people are sincerely touched by the tragedy, especially natural unassuming people but perhaps few stop to think on why Haiti is such a poor

country and why almost 50 percent of its population depends of family remittances. And in this context, would it not be proper to also analyze the reality leading to the current situation of Haiti and its huge suffering?

It is amazing that no one says a word on the fact that Haiti was the first country where 400 thousand Africans, enslaved and brought to this land by Europeans, rebelled against 30 thousand white owners of sugarcane and coffee plantations and succeeded in making the first great social revolution in our hemisphere. Pages of insurmountable glory were then written there where Napoleon's most outstanding general tasted defeat. Haiti is a complete product of colonialism and imperialism, of more than a century of using its human resources in the hardest labors, of military interventions and the extraction of its wealth.

Such a historic oblivion would not be so grave if it were not because Haiti is an embarrassment in our times, in a world where the exploitation and plundering of the overwhelming majority of people on the planet prevail.

Billions of people in Latin America, Africa and Asia endure similar privation although probably not all of them in such high proportion as Haiti.

No place on earth should be affected by such situations, even though there are tens of thousands of towns and villages in similar and sometimes worse conditions resulting from an unfair economic and political international order imposed worldwide. The world population is not only threatened by natural catastrophes like that of Haiti that is but a pale example of what can happen to the planet with climate change; an issue that was the target of mockery, scorn and deception in Copenhagen.

It is fair to say to every country and institution that have sustained the loss of citizens or members to the natural catastrophe in Haiti that we do not doubt that at this point they will make the greatest effort to save human lives and to alleviate the pain of that long-suffering people. They cannot be blamed for the natural phenomenon that has taken place there even though we disagree with the policy pursued towards Haiti.

But, I must say that I feel it's high time to seek true and real solutions for that fraternal people.

In the area of healthcare and others the Haitian people has received the cooperation of Cuba, even though this is a small and blockaded country. Approximately 400 doctors and healthcare workers are helping the Haitian people free of charge. Our doctors are working every day at 227 of the 337 communes of that country. On the other hand, no less than 400 young Haitians have been graduated as medical doctors in our country. They will now



Cuban doctor in Haiti.

work alongside the reinforcement that traveled there yesterday to save lives in that critical situation. Thus, up to one thousand doctors and healthcare personnel can be mobilized without any special effort; and most are already there willing to cooperate with any other State that wishes to save Haitian lives and rehabilitate the injured.

Another high number of Haitian youths are studying medicine in Cuba.

We also cooperate with the Haitian people in other areas within our capabilities. However, there is no other form of cooperation worthy of the definition but that of struggling in the field of ideas and political action to put an end to the endless tragedy endured by a great number of nations like Haiti.

The head of our medical brigade has informed that "the situation is difficult but we are already saving lives." He said this in a brief message sent a few hours after arriving in Port au Prince

yesterday with an additional group of doctors.

Late at night he said that the Cuban doctors and the Haitian doctors graduated at the ELAM (Latin American Medical School) were being deployed in the country. At Port au Prince they had cared for over one thousand patients while urgently commissioning a hospital that had not collapsed and using tents where necessary. They were also preparing to rapidly set up other first-aid centers.

We take wholesome pride in the cooperation that at this tragic hour the Cuban doctors and the young Haitian doctors trained in Cuba are giving their brothers and sisters in Haiti!

Fidel Castro Ruz
January 14, 2010

MAWO STATEMENT ON NEW ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS AND THE EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI continued from the front page...

Now, since last Tuesday's earthquake in Haiti, the US and Canada are taking advantage of the massive humanitarian crisis to reinforce and consolidate their occupation of the country. The illegal military occupation of Haiti which ousted elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide in 2004 has only kept the country in absolute poverty and social dysfunction. Today Haiti is the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. The UN occupation troops as well as US/Canada/France soldiers and advisors have killed and injured thousands of civilians in the name of bringing freedom and democracy to the country. In the wake of the terrible earthquake, Canada is sending 800 troops and the US is sending 10,000 troops to Haiti not for humanitarian assistance, but to control the country and suppress any potential opposition to the occupation and to the lack of basic good medical care especially after the tragic earthquake. This will not help the Haitian people recover from this disaster. What is needed urgently right now is doctors and humanitarian aid, not occupation troops.

The onslaught of new attacks on oppressed people around the world must be met with a campaign against this new era of war and occupation and for peace, justice and self-determination. From the Middle East to Africa to Asia, from Latin America and the Caribbean to North America and Europe, we must unite in the demands:

**ALL FOREIGN TROOPS OUT OF HAITI NOW!
SEND DOCTORS, NOT TROOPS TO HAITI NOW!
RETURN PRESIDENT ARISTIDE TO HAITI!
END THE OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN,
PALESTINE, AND HAITI!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR INDIGENOUS NATIONS,
TAMILS AND ALL OPPRESSED NATIONS!
US HANDS OFF PAKISTAN, IRAN AND YEMEN!
STOP ATTACKS ON MUSLIMS!**



FREE PUBLIC FORUM

Antiwar Activity and the Social Justice Movement: How They are Connected and How They Can Be Effective

Wednesday
January 20
6:30pm

Joe's Cafe
Large North Hall
1150 Commercial Dr.
@ William Street

Organized by:
Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)
mawovancouver.org

Protest US Troop Escalation in Afghanistan! Picket Action

Thursday
January 21
4:00pm
Canadian Forces Recruitment Center
620 Royal Ave at 6th Street
New Westminster



Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)
WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

Get involved with MAWO!

Meetings
Wednesdays - 6:30PM
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