

Who's MAWO?

Mobilization Against War and Occupation is a coalition of over 50 endorsing organizations and also individual members, most of which are working class organizations, student groups, grassroots organizations, and ethnic communities. This is including Indigenous activists and groups from the third world as well as women, youth and elder fighters for social justice and against war and occupation. We are the people in struggle because we are people that suffer at the hands of imperialism. We have the energy, drive and will for change because it is in our interest to make this change in order to create a better world for all of humanity!

Get involved



with MAWO!

Meetings & Forums

Tuesdays - 7:00PM

For location, please visit our web-site:

mawovancouver.org

e. **info@mawovancouver.org**

t. **604-322-1764**

f. **604-322-1763**

* Upcoming Organizing Meetings *

TUESDAY August 15 & August 28

7 pm

**Britannia Community Center - Learning Resource Centre
1661 Napier Street**

MAWO Newsletter #39 Created by:
Janine Solanki, Azza Rojbi and Ali Yerevani

MONTHLY ANTIWAR RALLY & PETITION CAMPAIGN

stop the war! stop the occupations!

www.mawovancouver.org

MAWO 39
newsletter

August 2012

mobilization against war & occupation

Statement of Veterans For Peace in the U.S. on Syria

July 27, 2012

<http://www.veteransforpeace.org/>

We are once again on the verge of another disastrous war in the Middle East. The United States and its allies in Europe and the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar, are consciously pushing Syria toward a destructive civil war. The objective is to bring down the Assad regime, an ally of the Iranian government, as a stepping-stone toward further isolation of Iran and preparation of the ground for a military attack on that country.

At the same time, the United States, European Union and Israel are using Iran's civilian nuclear program as an excuse to impose devastating economic sanctions against the people of Iran. According to various sources, the sanctions have already wreaked havoc on the Iranian economy, leading to inflation rates of 50 to 100 percent, youth unemployment rate of over 22 percent, drastic reduction of Iran's domestic production to 40 percent of its capacity, massive closure of economic enterprises and widespread layoffs, and 40 percent drop in the Iranian oil exports during 2012, resulting in a loss of \$32 billion in oil income since last year alone. It is expected that the new round of expanded sanctions, which started on July 1st of this year, will further reduce the Iranian oil exports to a mere 1.5 million barrels a day, thus pushing Iran into a fatal economic crisis.

This is nothing but a clear declaration of economic war on Iran. These devastating sanctions are not an "alternative" to war; they are part and parcel of a war aimed at forcing a regime change in Iran as an integral part of the US plan for a "Greater Middle East." Let us not forget the case of Iraq. There, too, a decade of devastating sanctions was used as a "softening period" that would weaken Iraq's economic infrastructure; make the population desperate enough to welcome any foreign intervention; and reduce Iraq's military capability to resist an invasion — i.e., making Iraq an easy military target. Now the same scenario is being repeated with Iran.

All this is being done in the name of re-

moving the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East. But this is just a cover. Iran is already surrounded by the US and Israeli nuclear weapons. The very forces that are threatening Iran over its civil nuclear program are themselves responsible for nuclear weapons proliferation in the Middle East. A US/Israeli military attack on Iran will have disastrous, unpredictable consequences for the peoples of the Middle East region and the world, and will be a serious threat to peace and security of all nations.

The real solution lies not in selective targeting of Iran with sanctions and threats of war, but in complete removal of

all nuclear weapons from the Middle East region. The Middle East, like Latin America and Africa, must be declared as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) calls for both the liquidation of nuclear weapons by states and the discouragement of non-nuclear states from obtaining or developing nuclear weapons; and the UN General Assembly has repeatedly called for the establishment of a Nuclear-Free Zone in the Middle East. As an urgent response to the nuclear crisis in the Middle East, the 2010 NPT Conference has called for the convening of a Conference in December 2012, in Helsinki, Finland, for the establishment of a WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East. This initiative must be supported and its success must be guaranteed.

Recognizing the critical nature of the present situation in the Middle East and the threat of an imminent war, Veterans For Peace,

- Calls for immediate lifting of all economic sanctions against Iran
- Demands immediate cessation of US and Israeli military threats against Iran;
- Declares its solidarity with the Iranian people in their just struggle for freedom, justice and peace;
- Demands immediate cessation of all foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Syria, including an immediate end to the illegal arming of sur-

...continued on page 2



Who is Bradley Manning "Soldier of Humanity"?

To find out more about the case of whistleblower Bradley Manning, pick up a brochure from a MAWO info table or download one from our website at: <http://www.mawovancouver.org/materials/brochures/MAWO-BradleyManning-brochure.pdf>

...continued from page 1
Veterans for Peace Statement

rogate forces fighting the government; establishment of an immediate ceasefire on all sides; and allowing the peaceful people of Syria to decide their destiny democratically and independently;

— Calls for recognition of the Middle East as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone by all parties involved, including the US, Israel and Iran, and the removal of all nuclear weapons from the Middle East region;

— Urges all VFP Chapters and the broader peace movement to press the US government to support the Helsinki Conference and the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East as a concrete and logical solution to the present crisis in the region.

Veterans For Peace was founded in 1985 and has approximately 5,000 members in 150 chapters located in every U.S. state and several countries. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) by the United Nations, and is the only national veterans' organization calling for the abolishment of war.

Bahrain: The Struggle Continues

Protesters in Bahrain have been holding peaceful demonstrations across the country since mid-February 2011, calling for an end to the Al Khalifa dynasty's over-40-year rule. As their struggle for human rights and democracy continues, the government has escalated its brutal repression.

According to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, at least 79 people have been killed since the protests began. Thousands more have been detained, including Ali Hasan, an 11-year-old Bahraini boy accused of taking part in anti-government protests. Hasan had spent a month behind bars before being released on June 11 under the condition that he must be monitored by social worker for a year.

Despite the government's attempts to crush the protest movement, the brave Bahraini people continue protesting daily in the streets.

On July 20, thousands took to the street in several cities across the country, calling on the government to release all political prisoners and denouncing the government's plans to limit oppositional marches. Immediately, government forces responded brutally with riot police firing massive amounts of tear gas at the peaceful protesters. Following the government crackdown, clashes and street battles erupted across the small Gulf Kingdom.

Meanwhile the Bahraini Interior Minister Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa held a series of meetings with United States top officials and members of the Senate, as well as congressmen, during an official two-day visit to the US. He also met with CIA director-general David Petraeus and FBI director Robert Mueller.

During the meetings, Shaikh Rashid expressed Bahrain's eagerness in reinforcing security, co-operation, and expertise exchanges, with the US.

According to Bahrain News Agency, the US officials praised the King's reforms project and highlighted the importance of Bahrain as a strong ally and friend of the US, expressing sincere appreciation to the Kingdom for hosting the US Fifth Fleet.



The United States is not just turning a blind eye to the repressive practices of the Bahraini government but also providing the Al Khalifa regime with full

political support and military expertise. In fact the US is working in complete complicity with the Bahraini regime in its crackdown on its people, while at the same time preaching to the Syrian government on human rights.

It becomes clear that the United States and its allies like Saudi Arabia, which on March 14, 2011 sent 1,200 troops to assist the Bahraini government in suppressing the protests, have no real interest in promoting democracy or human rights in North Africa or the Middle East. The hypocritical position of these regimes is only driven by the economic and strategic interest of their imperialist masters.

As peace loving people around the world we must agree that the United States and other imperialist countries have no right in imposing their will on weaker and poor nations, and we must demand the right of all oppressed nations to self-determination. Liberation from the yoke of colonial powers is the true step for independence and dignity for all oppressed nations. We must demand US out of the Middle East and North Africa!

Educate! Organize! Mobilize!

MAWO activists discuss and organize against imperialist intervention in the Middle East

"Educate! Organize! Mobilize!" Throughout the decades, these three words have outlined the tasks of social movements the world over. In Vancouver's antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO) these are three words that can be seen in action throughout MAWO's ongoing work to oppose this new era of war and occupation that we are living in. Right now the center of this war drive is the Middle East, where the U.S. is using their military might to try to gain complete hegemony over the region. Two countries, Iran and Syria, stand in the way of complete U.S. domination, as countries with independent governments that do not follow the dictates of the U.S. government. Iran and Syria are heavily targeted by imperialist forces right now – and therefore two countries which the antiwar movement must defend from sanctions, covert operations, and military intervention.

Educate!

The actions of the U.S., Canada and other imperialist countries are criminal, unjust and inhuman – the sanctions that cripple economies and effect peoples ability to access food, medicines and other essentials; the directing, funding and supplying of weapons to forces inside other countries in efforts to overthrow a sovereign government; and finally the direct military intervention that kills indiscriminately with missiles and bombs. However how this is portrayed in the all pervasive mainstream media is that this is all against a evil dictator and to protect the human rights of people that U.S. politicians claim to care so much about.

Antiwar events that aim to educate with not only information but by opening the floor to discussion, and yes, debate, are essential. How can an antiwar organization have any demands, without informed activists that are put to the test of debate? MAWO organizes bi-monthly free public forums for this aim, the most recent titled "State of War in Syria! U.S., E.U, NATO Hands Off Syria!" At this forum on Tuesday July 10th, MAWO co-chair and forum MC Alison Bodine started the forum with a section of news clips that showed alternative media's coverage of events in Syria. This exposed the blatant lies and manipulation being touted in the mainstream news, and the heavy hand that the U.S. and their allies play in the rebel actions in Syria. The video clips were followed by speakers Janine Solanki, MAWO co-chair, and Ali Yerevani, political editor of the Fire

This Time newspaper and participant in the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The speakers provided more analysis and history to the current targeting of Syria, as well as an overview of the world situation that this imperialist offensive is taking place in. After the speakers the floor was opened to discussion, which centered not only on the facts of what is happening in Syria, but also what we as antiwar activists can do to oppose the war drive against Syria.

Organize – then Mobilize!

The forum finished with participants being invited to join MAWO's next event – the monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign – to take the information and arguments that had just been discussed to the streets. Every month MAWO holds rally and petition campaigns in down-

town Vancouver in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery, and on Saturday July 21st the demands focused on "Hands Off Iran and Syria!" and "Free Bradley Manning Now!" (to learn more about MAWO's Free Bradley Manning Campaign, see page **). Teams of petitioners hit the streets and interrupted the flow of a busy downtown Saturday afternoon to ask passer-by's "would you like to sign a petition against sanctions and war on Syria?" "sign your name to demand no sanctions on Iran!" and "sign the petition – free Bradley Manning!" which resulted in petition signatures but also good discussions and hundreds of leaflets, newsletters and brochures distributed. An informational table was set up with banners reflecting the demands of the petition campaign, and was the source of much attraction as people stopped to get more information, sign petitions, and to discuss and debate with MAWO organizers. These MAWO rally and petition drives serve to mobilize on the streets against war and occupation, but also to educate on a broader scale as activists reach out to the public and engage new people in the struggle against war and occupation.

While forums and rally and petition campaigns are part of MAWO's consistent monthly antiwar events, MAWO also holds organizational meetings, conferences, pickets, the annual MAWO Hip Hop Festival for Peace and Film Festival for Peace. To find out about MAWO's next event or get more information, visit www.mawovancouver.org



UNITED NATIONAL ANTIWAR COALITION (UNAC)

statement on NATO claim of "progress" for women and girls in Afghanistan

The United National Anti-War Coalition (UNAC) calls on people and organizations everywhere to immediately and energetically refute the absurd claim that Afghan women have made "progress" during ten years of NATO military occupation. In fact, the conditions of women in Afghanistan have deteriorated under occupation and the Obama administration has made it clear, the U.S./NATO intends to stay there, at least through 2024, if not indefinitely.

UNAC asserts as false this statement signed by several heads of state of NATO at their summit in Chicago in May, 2012: In the ten years of our partnership the lives of Afghan men, women and children, have improved significantly in terms of security, education, health care, economic opportunity and the assurance of rights and freedoms. There is more to be done, but we are resolved to work together to preserve the substantial progress we have made during the past decade.

Recent facts to the contrary include:

- Afghan women have an average life expectancy of 51 years. According to UNICEF,

68% of children under five suffer from either stunting or wasting due to malnutrition. Afghanistan ranks last in both maternal mortality and infant mortality as compared with other nations of the world.

- Immediately after the fall of the Taliban there was short term improvement in the area of women's inclusion in government and of education for girls. However, especially since President Obama ordered the surge of troops in Afghanistan in 2006, security for women has deteriorated.

- Current abuses against women by the regime include jailing women for adultery who are victims of rape, as well as Parliament passing and President Karzai signing legislation giving husbands the power to coerce sex and withhold food from their wives at their discretion. Women's groups in Afghanistan cite the root cause as the presence of warlords who abuse women being seated in the national and provincial governments.

- Women's organizations working to reduce poverty and empower women and girls say they receive little or no funding from their government. For example, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) stated

position is that "There has been no improvement in lives of this, the most miserable and ill-fated portion of Afghan society, since the establishment of transitional government." Samira Sayed-Rahman of Afghans for Peace said, "They claim they're sending little girls to school." There are buildings with "no teachers, no books, no supplies."

In a statement to the NATO protestors May 20 in Chicago, Malalai Joya, the former Parliamentarian who faced assassination attempts for denouncing the occupation and warlords, wrote, "We have many problems in Afghanistan — fundamentalism, warlords, the Taliban. But we will have a better chance to solve them if we have our self-determination, our freedom, our independence. NATO's bombs will never deliver democracy and justice to Afghanistan or any other country".

We call for the immediate withdrawal of NATO troops and bases from Afghanistan and for the redirection of all funding to those Afghan organizations actually providing food, healthcare, infrastructure repair, and education.

<http://nepajac.org/syria.htm>

RELEASE ANTONIO, FERNANDO, GERARDO & RAMÓN FROM US PRISONS!
LET RENÉ GONZÁLEZ RETURN TO CUBA PERMANENTLY!
GRANT VISAS TO OLGA SALANUEVA & ADRIANA PEREZ NOW!

82ND MONTHLY PICKET ACTION!

FREE

THE CUBAN 5

NOW!

2012

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 5TH - 4^{PM}

U.S. CONSULATE 1075 WEST PENDER STREET

FREE THE CUBAN 5 COMMITTEE VANCOUVER

WWW.FREETHE5VANCOUVER.CA

2 www.mawovancouver.org

www.mawovancouver.org 3