

SOLIDARITY WITH THE MAPUCHE AND ARGENTINIAN RESISTANCE

TOUR IN WESTERN EUROPE
APRIL 18TH TO MAY 3RD 2024

ORLANDO CARRIQUEO, WERKEN MAPUCHE

MARIANA KATZ, HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER (SERPAJ)

CAROLINA LLORENS, LA VIA CAMPESINA ARGENTINA



BreakFree
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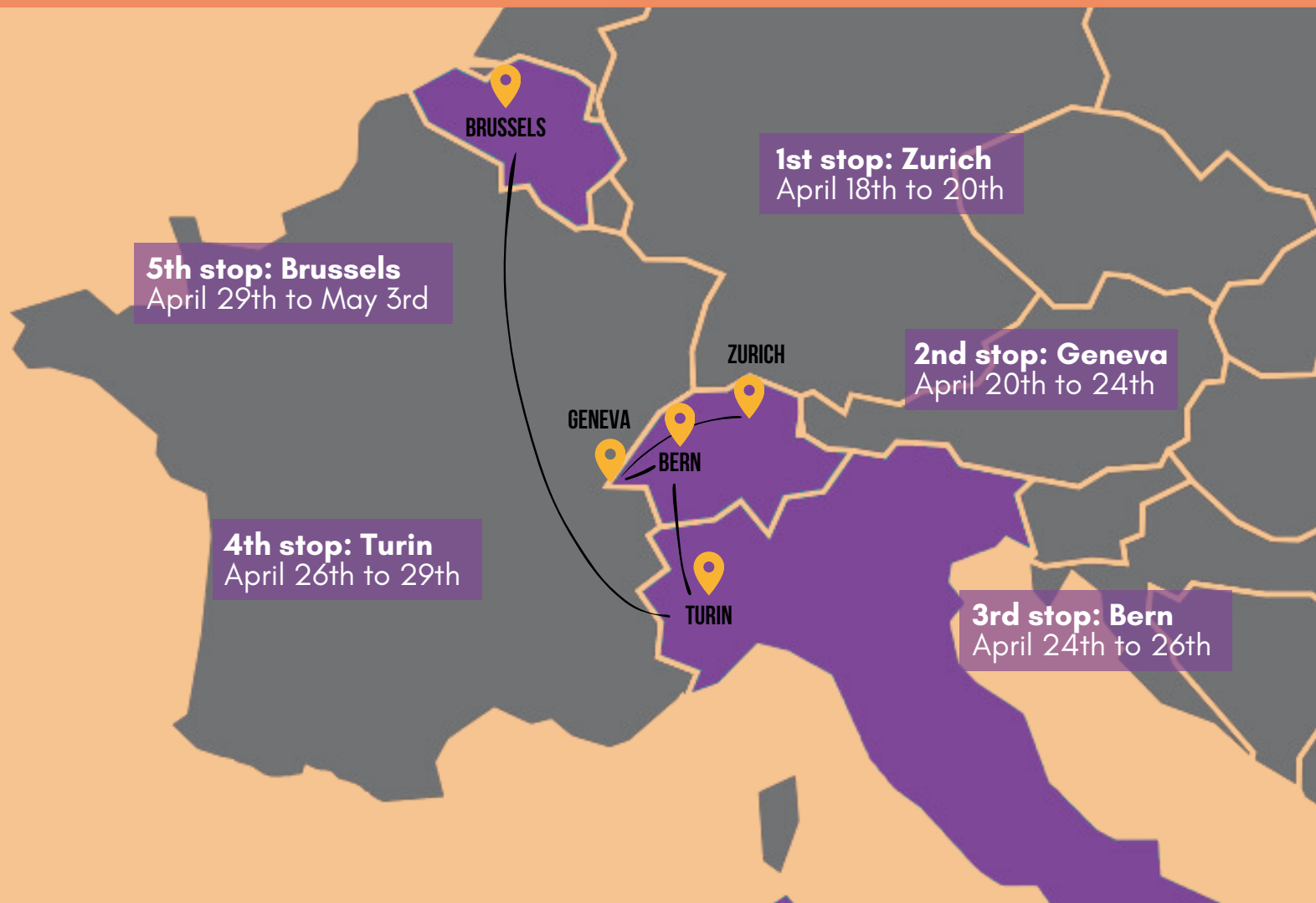
A 14 days tour by 3 key representatives from the front lines of resistance in Argentina and Pwemapu: members of the Mapuche resistance, the farmers' union, and the ecological and ecofeminist movement, traveling through Switzerland, Italy and Belgium.

OBJECTIVES

- Support the indigenous and non-indigenous movements in Argentina and Pwemapu fighting for ecosystem preservation, environmental justice, and human rights vs the far right surge in league with fossil fuel and land grabbing industry.
- Stop finance support to fracking industry and demand regulation of fossil fuel finance.
- Generate support for the resistance of the Mapuche people.



THE TOUR



ORLANDO JAVIER CARRIQUEO

Orlando Carriqueo Pignen is Werken (messenger) of the Coordination of the Tehuelche Parliament of Rio Negro. He is originally from the Elel Quimun Mapuche community, currently located in Fiske Menuco, known today as General Roca, but was born in Valcheta, which was Argentina's first concentration camp on Mapuche territory during the "Desert Campaign" in 1879. The Coordination of the Mapuche-Tehuelche Parliament of Rio Negro is an organization representing the communities of the province of Rio Negro, which includes some 164 communities. A large number of these communities meet annually in a Parliament that appoints leaders and representatives to carry out their functions. The Parliament's Coordination Office, divided into 4 regions, comprises eighteen members, including 16 political representatives and 2 werken.



MARIANA KATZ



Mariana Katz is a lawyer with a doctorate from the Universidad Nacional del Sur, a degree in Climate Change Management from the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes and a law degree from the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). Since 2009, she has been working with indigenous peoples within SERPAJ Argentina (Le Servicio Paz y Justicia), an organization founded by Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. She represents the people of Andalgalá in their fight against a mega-mine, and advises similar organizations in the province of Catamarca. She also teaches international relations and human rights at the Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda (UNDAV), and participates in research projects on critical pedagogy and human rights at UNS. She is a specialist in the inter-American human rights protection system and has been a guest lecturer at Mercosur's interdisciplinary course on human rights.

MARIA CAROLINA LLORENS

María Carolina Llorens coordinates the MNCI Somos Tierra feminist team and is a member of the Vía Campesina Argentina coordination committee. She is an activist with the Mouvement Paysan de Córdoba. Within the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Latin America and the Caribbean, she is a member of the Women's School coordination team. Social activist in human rights and social ecology organizations since her youth, she was one of the founders of H.I.J.O.S. (Red Nacional Hijos e Hijas por la Identidad y la Justicia), a network formed by the children of people who disappeared during the dictatorship.



THE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA



In Argentina, 27 million people (57.4% of the population) are under the poverty limit. The minimum wage (USD\$ 200) has been reduced 14.8% in Jan. 2024. In January the price of the food rose by 26%. According to La Via Campesina Argentina : «20.6% suffer from food insecurity, while consumers have paid 5.2 times more than the price paid to the producers » explaining « The method of advancement of this anarco-capitalist far right expression tries to provoke chaos to put forward their financial agenda. »The government, led by Javier Milei, advocates for an anarcho-capitalist ideology that aims to dismantle the state and deregulate the economy entirely. Milei's policies include criminalizing protests, denying the state terrorism of the military dictatorship, and implementing economic deregulation measures.

Farmers situation under Milei's government

The Emergency Decree 70/2023 bypasses Congress, benefiting select business interests and undermining democratic institutions.

Some key points of the decree are:

- Derogation of the Law of the Rural Lands that jeopardizes the soil and the water resources that can be hoarded by transnational companies and the vulture funds.
- Derogation of the Law of Fire, that also paves the way to the land hoarding and it also represents a big setback of in terms of the impacts occurring in forests, grasslands and wetlands, in the middle of a clear climate crisis.
- We reject the criteria used to add new retentions and to add new taxes to the importations. We consider that the retentions and taxes must be segmented and differentiated. The countryside has a wide range of actors that must be treated differently.
- Food market deregulation: derogation of the Law of Shelves 27545, Law of supply and observation of prices.

In response, the National Confederation of Workers, Autonomous Workers' Central, and Workers' Central organized a national strike on January 24th, joined by millions. Despite opposition and lacking an effective economic plan, the Milei government persists, ignoring proposals for legislation promoting food sovereignty and national development.



VACA MUERTA

Located in Argentina's Neuquén Basin, the Vaca Muerta extraction area accounts for 39% of Argentina's oil production and 52% of its natural gas. The deposit of Vaca-Muerta is one of the largest fossil gas deposit of the world. The production contains 250,000 oil barrels and about 91 million cubic meters of gas a day. To enable the production of one billion oil barrels a day by 2028, the Argentine State & YPF intend to build a 600 km long pipeline from the province of Neuquén to a new export port at Punta Colorada, crossing a protected area and the territory of the Mapuche-Tehuelche people of Río Negro, who have publicly expressed their opposition.

Milei now is supporting the oil and gas rush at any cost, while investing little in energy efficiency or community owned renewables. In this he exacerbates the extractive policies of former authorities such as president Kirchner who passed the so-called "Chevron decree" allowing companies that extracted and exported oil & gas from Vaca Muerta to do so without paying taxes.



image: vacamuertainfo.com

THE RESISTANCE

The environmental, social and human rights cost of the exploitation is extremely high. When the fracking projects were made public in August 2013, the Argentinian government put down the resistance of the Mapuches with heavy police violence. « The measurement of poverty in Neuquén, the province where most of the non-conventional oil movement is based, shows, according to the measurement of the year 2023, 40% of poverty. The only spill that reaches us all is the spill of the contamination of the Negro, Limay, Neuquén and Colorado Rivers. » explained Orlando Cariqueo. The Mapuche has suffered and resisted against colonial domination for centuries (Pairican & Urrutia, 2021). Indigenous peoples in Argentina are subject to segregation (HRW, 2022).



The resistance of the Mapuche against the extractivism in Vaca-Muerta is only one example. At multiple places the local communities are resisting against multinational concerns and against Milei's regime. Mariana Katz is one of the lawyers of the assembly "El Algarrobo". It is located in Andalgalá, where the local society is protesting peacefully against mining projects, which are taking place since 1997. Despite legal victories such as a 2016 Supreme Court ruling declaring the Agua Rica mining activity detrimental to the environment and society, the Municipality of Andalgalá's attempt to prohibit mining through Ordinance 029/2016 was overturned in December 2020 by the provincial Supreme Court, citing constitutional concerns.

A few days ago, Andalgalá's demand for the right to live in a healthy environment was received by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), as residents have ongoing legal proceedings before the courts of Catamarca, other provincial courts, and the Federal Judiciary. Therefore, in the presentation made by lawyer, Dr. Mariana A. Katz (on behalf of more than 100 residents), accompanied by the Yopoy Collective (Juan Pablo Vismara, Gabriel Bicinskas, and Marcos Filardi) and endorsed by one of the members of the El Algarrobo Assembly, 248 residents of Andalgalá have been presented as victims of violent actions and human rights violations by the Argentine State and the actions of the Catamarca State, which have been proven in 44 judicial cases.

THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

The key extracting corporations involved are YPF, Pan American Energy and Shell (UK). They are backed by commercial banks such as HSBC (UK), Santander (Spain), JPMorgan Chase (USA), or Société Générale (France) and asset managers banking groups such as UBS/Credit Suisse (CH), and the Swiss National Bank. According to Climate Alliance Switzerland, the SNB invested 4.9 billion in six companies involved in oil/gas extraction or transportation in Vaca Muerta, even though it's not supposed to invest in companies "that significantly harm biodiversity or systematically poison water" (SNB, 2023). According to the Global Oil & Gas Exit List UBS/Credit Suisse have invested 4,472 Billion + 1,335 Billion into Shell, making it the 4th largest investor (Urgewald Jan. 2023).

The UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights CESCR warned in 2017 that the Vaca Muerta project expansion will « threaten to release enormous amounts of greenhouse gases, exacerbating climate destabilization ». The complete extraction of reserves in Vaca Muerta would significantly reduce the remaining global carbon budget to achieve the Paris Agreement. The Environment and Natural Resources Foundation (FARN) shown that the fracking industry provoked more than 400 hundred earthquakes during the last ten years.



PARTNERS OF THE TOUR

- Global Coalition of Peoples facing Extractivism**
- Asamblea Permanente del Comahue de Allen**
- Coordination Climat Justice Sociale**
- Mapuche Parliament of Rio Negro**
- Swiss National Bank Coalition**
- Collectif BreakFree Suisse**
- Via Campesina Argentina**
- MNCI Somos Tierra**
- Quinto Suyo Suiza**
- SERPAJ Argentina**
- Colectivo Jaguar**
- SunRise Project**
- Red Whiphalas**
- Klima Allianz**
- Campax**
- AGEH**
- Intal**



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