

CAWN

central america women's network
promoting women's rights and gender equality
www.cawn.org

November 2009
ELECTRONIC BULLETIN



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1. CAWN NEWS

- **CAWN speaks at the House of Commons "Barack Obama: Good News for Latin America?"**

The book launch of 'Barack Obama: Good News for Latin America?' organised by Zed Books and Latin America Bureau on 28 Oct, provided the perfect space to discuss and analyse the election of Barack Obama, which brought cautious hope of a new era of friendship and mutual respect between the United States and Latin America. Speakers included Jeremy Corbyn MP; the Ambassador of Bolivia, Beatriz Souviron; the Ambassador of Venezuela, Samuel Moncada; Grace Livingstone, journalist and author of the book; and CAWN staff member, Katherine Ronderos, as an eyewitness from Honduras.

- **Emergency Committee against the Coup in Honduras: 14th October**

On 14th October, CAWN joined the Emergency Committee, trade union representatives, MPs and others civil society representatives to discuss the situation in Honduras and the role that those in the UK can play in working to restore democracy, which four months after the coup, still remains uncertain despite the negotiation agreement signed on 30th October.

For photos and more information please visit:
<http://committeeagainsthondurascoup.blogspot.com/2009/10/packed-meeting-demands-democracy.html>.

- **CAWN informs media about situation in Honduras**

CAWN witnessed the return of the democratically elected President Zelaya to the country through the Brazilian embassy on 21st September. Since then, CAWN has played a significant role informing the UK media and general public, with first hand up-to-date information about the struggle that is currently underway, which has not been reported. To learn of CAWN's media involvement please visit the links below:

'Eyewitness in Honduras': Morning Star (2nd Oct)
BBC Radio 4: Women's Hour (20th July)

- **CAWN welcomes their new member of the Management Committee**

CAWN gives a warm welcome to its newest Management Committee member Devanna de la Puente, who was formally introduced to the organisation on 15th October.

• Gender and Violence Seminar 2 – 4 December 2009

The international conference 'Gendering Violence - Feminist Interventions in Contemporary Research' organised by the Department of Sociology of Uppsala University (Sweden) will explore 'theories, methodologies and politics to understand and eliminate gendered violence'. CAWN has been working on a new research report: 'Feminist Debates to address Violence against Women and Poverty' and the preliminary findings will be presented at this conference.

For more information on the conference please visit <http://genderingviolence.soc.uu.se/>

2. CAWN CAMPAIGNS

• CAWN Aids Feminist Resistance in Honduras

Since the military coup on 28th June, CAWN has been actively involved in supporting the work of Feminists in Resistance against the coup and its leader Roberto Michelletti.

The regime has instated a strict curfew, repressed protestors and the press with countless human rights violations, as well as attacking many of Zelaya's more progressive steps for women's rights.

These constant attacks on women's rights include replacing the Minister of Women's Affairs with María Martha Díaz, a member of the Opus Dei, who is looking to change the National Institution for Women into an Institution for Family Affairs. On 16th Oct, three radio programmes of the women's organisations 'Centro de Derechos de Mujeres' (CDM), the 'Centro de Estudios de la Mujer-Honduras' (CEMH) and 'Movimiento de Mujeres por la Paz Visitación Padilla' were closed down. On 24th Oct, the Congress passed a law banning the use of the morning after pill –*PAE in Spanish*– which directly attacks women's sexual health and reproductive rights.

Despite of these actions, women continue to be at the forefront of the resistance movement. Feminist Resistance Movement are also campaigning on ending violence against women with messages such as "No military coup, No beating of women".

3. CAWN PUBLICATIONS

• CAWN Research 2009 'Feminist Debates to address Violence against Women and Poverty'

This research report will present and analyse some of the main theoretical discussions and feminist debates about patriarchy, gender relations, violence and the links to poverty within the current economic system. This report will be presented at the international conference 'Gendering Violence'. The official public launch will take place in London next year in March. Please visit our website for updates on this publication: <http://www.cawn.org/html/publications>.

4. CAWN EVENTS

• CAWN Seminar on Femicide in Mexico and Central America

London & Brussels: November 2009

To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, CAWN is organising an international seminar to discuss this extreme form of social violence against women in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras.

We will explore the nature of femicide -the violent killing of women- as an extreme form of gender-based violence (GBV) linked to discrimination, poverty and a "backlash" against women, in a climate of total state impunity.

Speakers:

- **Mirta Kennedy**, Director, Centre of Women's Studies Honduras (CEM-H)
- **Walda Barrios**, Lecturer of San Carlos University, President of the National Union of Guatemalan Women (UNAMG), Guatemala
- **Julia Monárrez**, Lecturer and researcher, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua

Brussels:

- **18 Nov**, 7pm: Dinner Debate, Violence against Women
- **19 Nov**, 9am-5pm: Seminar and workshops at the European Parliament

London:

- **25 Nov**, 4–6pm: Panel Debate. Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House, House of Commons
- **26 Nov**, 7.30pm: Film screening, followed by Q&A "Killer's Paradise: Women Victims of Violence in Guatemala". Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way, London, W1T 5DL
- **27 Nov**, 3-6pm: International seminar followed by a drinks reception. Woburn House Conference Centre, 20 Tavistock Square, London, WC1 9HQ

Free events, RSVP by email to info@cawn.org
Please visit our website (www.cawn.org) for further information.

5. CENTRAL AMERICA NEWS UPDATES

• Rigoberta Menchú joins mediation committee for Honduras:

Rigoberta Menchú was invited by the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) to join a committee to analyse possible solutions and pathways for mediating the conflict in Honduras. In a

press conference, Menchú urged for the United States and United Nations Security Council to play a strong role in resolving the conflict.

Menchú was awarded the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to protect the rights of indigenous people during the Guatemalan Civil War (1960–1996). Only 12 women have received the Nobel Peace Prize in its more than 100 year history.

• **6th November: Hearing before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights to denounce violations of Human Labour Rights in Central America:**

The network, the Regional Campaign against the Flexibility of Labour Rights, composed of over 70 Central American organisations received an invitation to a hearing before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), to denounce the deterioration of labour rights in Central America due to the implementation of labour flexibility, the obstacles that confront the workers when they call for their rights, and lack of effective answers on the part of the official authorities of the Central American countries.

The IACHR, located in Washington D.C., is processing over 800 cases in which violations of the American Convention on Human Rights and/or the American Declaration were committed by or not prevented by the State.

The Campaign noted in a press release that this was the third time that the Campaign applied for a hearing before the IACHR and the first time that the request was granted. For more information please see: <http://www.laboralred.net/>.

• **UK universities boycott Fruit of the Loom for shutting down unionized Honduran factory:**

The NGO, People and Planet, prompted UK universities to boycott Fruit of the Loom products, after a Fruit of the Loom subsidiary (a Russell Corporation factory) decided to close after its workers unionized. Over 300 workers have been fired and a total of 1,800 jobs will be lost.

Fruit of the Loom products are bought by many universities, therefore students have led their schools in severing ties with the company in protest of the worker's rights abuses. Eight universities in the UK have now committed to passing student union motions on a boycott. United States' universities have also joined the boycott.

For more information please see: <http://peopleandplanet.org/corporatePower/news/boycottfruitoftheloom>.

• **Mercedes Sosa:**

Argentine revolutionary folk singer Mercedes Sosa died on 4th Oct.

Her songs, such as Solo Le Pide a Dios and Como la Cigarra, calling for resistance against repression and

for peace, led to her exile from Argentina during the late 1970s by the military regime and made her part of the symbol of revolutionary movements in Nicaragua, Chile, Bolivia, and many other countries in Latin America.

For full article see:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/obituaries/la-mew-mercedes-sosa5-2009oct05.0.5593730.story>.

6. OTHER PUBLICATIONS

• **Nicaragua's complete ban on abortions declared human rights violation by Amnesty International**

Source: Amnesty International (Jul 09)

In a recent report, Amnesty International warns that the complete ban on abortions imposed since 2006 in Nicaragua compounds 'physical pain, fear, depression and stigma'. Not only does the Penal Code criminalise women and young girls for having abortions under the circumstances of incest, rape, or when a woman has a fatal illness requiring medication that would harm the foetus but also criminalises doctors who unintentionally harm the foetus. Miscarriages can also be subject to punishment under this Penal Code.

Amnesty reports that since this change of law, pregnant teenage suicides as well as those who died during pregnancy have both increased. For full article see:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/shocking-abortion-ban-denies-life-saving-treatment-girls-women-nicaragua-20090727>.

• **What can brands do to support freedom of association in Mexico?**

Source: Maquila Solidarity Network (Oct 09)

Mexican workers face many barriers to their freedom of association. Blacklists, structural government barriers, lack of transparency, and 'protection contracts' are but a few of the challenges faced by Mexican trade unions. This report outlines a number of proactive steps that brands with Mexican based factories can do to support the freedom of association and collective bargaining of their workers.

Suggestions for brands include taking steps to prevent union favouritism, ensuring that secret ballots remain safe, and discouraging 'exclusion clauses' which makes being in a union mandatory for all workers. Finally, the report also notes that brands must play a role in monitoring the freedom of association in their own factories.

For full report please see:

<http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/sites/maquilasolidarity.org/files/MSN-FOAinMexico-2009-10.pdf>.

7. UPCOMING EVENTS & CONFERENCES

Birds Eye View Film Festival looking for Women Making Films in Developing Countries **Deadline November 16th**

Birds Eye View is a film festival devoted entirely to celebrating international female filmmakers. The 2010 London based Film Festival will open with a special gala screening of short films on March 4th at the BFI Southbank, for which they are now looking for submissions from talented women all over the globe. They are especially interested in finding women who are making films from within developing countries, or against adversity. We are willing to waive the submission cost if a filmmaker is unable to pay the fee.

For more information please visit
www.birds-eye-view.co.uk.

• The Ugly Truth: Threats to Women in Political Spaces

November 9th, 1:00 – 5:00pm, The Institute for the Study of the Americas, Chancellor's Hall, First Floor, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1

This event will bring together councillors from Bolivia with UK policy makers, political parties, local government representatives, interested scholars, civil society organisations and students to learn about the Bolivian experience, share experience and strategies for tackling the threats to women in political spaces and to identify how to transform political processes here in the UK, so that political space is less threatening and more accessible for women.

Please register early to avoid disappointment as we have limited spaces. To book a place on the event, please contact Olga Jimenez at
Olga.Jimenez@sas.ac.uk.

• International Conference on CEDAW (the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)

November 11th, 9:00am – 4:30pm, Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Yard Inn, London, EC2A

This year marks the 30th anniversary of CEDAW, the Global Bill of Rights for Women. Womankind Worldwide and One World Action and their partners around the world believe that the principles set out in CEDAW remain as relevant today as they did 30 years.

For more information on the conference, please get in touch with Marie at mbirchall@oneworldaction.org or 020 78337 311. Also see
<http://www.oneworldaction.org/>

• Shared Planet, Tour of Trade Unionists, Fruit of the Loom Boycott **November 20th – 30th**

People and Planet has a number of events throughout November.

Shared Planet is an opportunity to join hundreds of young people to get informed, learn skills and share ideas to tackle the problems facing our generation. This weekend event includes inspiring speakers, practical and informative workshops, debates, films, stalls and fun. Keep checking out
<http://peopleandplanet.org/shared-planet-09> for more details. Tickets can be booked online.

• The United Nations Women's Agenda

The programme on the day will cover the Commission on the Status of Women 53rd Session which took place in March this year and preparations for the 54th session in 2010, and a session on the Beijing Platform for Action which is entering its 15th year in 2010. The day will also cover the CEDAW process and the Government's One Year On report to the CEDAW committee as a follow-up to their report in 2008.

Nov 6 Newcastle

Nov 10 Cardiff

Nov 26 Glasgow

Dec 1 Belfast

Dec 14 London

For more information see: <http://www.thewnc.org.uk/>.

• Latin America 2009 Facing the Challenges

December 5th, 9:30am – 5:00pm, Congress House, Great Russell St, London, WC2

This event is open to all those wishing to find out about recent developments and offer support to the people of Latin America in their struggles for self determination and social justice. This year we will focus the struggle for democracy in Honduras, Cuba's fight against the US blockade, deepening the revolution in Venezuela, ALBA, women in Latin American and resistance to neoliberal agendas and debt.

To place a stall contact 020 8800 0155 or
office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk

To register call 020 8800 0155 or register online at
www.latinamerica2009.org.uk

www.cawn.org