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United Nations Human Rights Council: Social Movements support a binding treaty that will create obligations for transnational corporations to respect human rights

The Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity – a coalition of 190 social movements, networks and organizations from around the world – along with the Treaty Alliance and Swiss social movements have organized a week of mobilization in Geneva (6-10 July) to coincide with the first meeting of the intergovernmental working group of the United Nations Human Rights Council; which will begin the task of creating a binding treaty to establish obligations for transnational corporations to respect human rights.

The scope of yesterday's referendum in Greece shows that the demands of social movements from around the world prioritize the defense of human rights before the interests of transnational corporations.

The five days of mobilization kicked off this morning in the square in front of the Palais des Nations with a public event that featured representatives from the European Parliament, global social movements and civil society organizations. The panelists expressed the urgent need for a UN treaty on TNCs and discussed their experience with the systematic violations of human rights by transnational corporations, the impact of austerity measures in Europe, the hoarding of natural resources worldwide and the use of Free Trade Agreements and Bilateral Investment Treaties to protect the violations committed by TNCs.

To close the opening event, representatives of social movements, networks and organizations in Geneva marched symbolically inside the Palais des Nations in order to follow and participate in the sessions of the Intergovernmental Working Group. The Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity has also contributed an official written submission to the Intergovernmental Working Group.

Quotes:

Lola Sanchez - Member of European Parliament, PODEMOS, Spain

"We need a revolution in the scale of current values in order to reposition Human Rights as higher principals that must be respected by all, without exception. A shift that puts the dignity of the people at the center of all policies."

Goodwin Ojo - Representative of Friends of the Earth International, Nigeria:

"The systematic and systemic right violation by oil companies in Nigeria are leading ecosystems to death and the climate to chaos. A new binding human rights treaty should prevent such injustices in the future and control corporate abuses. Shareholders and banks, who are the most important financiers of multinational corporations, may also be subject to binding rules in respect to human rights."

Melik Özden - Director of Centre Europe-Tiers Monde (CETIM)

“We are here to close a gap in international law that allows major transnational corporations to violate human rights and destroy the environment with complete impunity, in particular in countries of the Global South.”

Brid Brennan - Representative of the Transnational Institute (TNI)

“For decades, free trade and investment agreements – like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) that is subject to a vote this week in the European Parliament – have ensured that transnational corporations can continue to act with impunity, devastating communities and the environment. This treaty is a historic step forward towards providing effective access to justice for the victims of human rights abuses at the hands of transnational corporations.”

Participating social movements strongly re-state their call to dismantle the forces that facilitate the corporate capture of the public interest. As a result, they are urging all governments to participate in the historic process launched by the United Nations.

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Resources

Program for the Week of Mobilization: http://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/geneva_programEN-2.pdf

Brochure for the Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity: http://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CampaignBrochure_mar2015-ES.pdf

Written submission to the Intergovernmental Working Group from the Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity (June 2015)
<http://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/?p=6707&lang=es>

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