

Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO

Invitation

The media would have us believe that wars always happen elsewhere, that there is nothing we can do to prevent them; that no-one is to blame, and even if someone is, they will never have to answer for them.

But the truth is that in a globalized world no-one is unaffected by war. We the peoples are morally bound to bear witness, and as Bertrand Russell said of the Vietnam war, *"Our task is to make mankind bear witness to these terrible crimes and to unite humanity on the side of justice"* (Second Session of the International War Crimes Tribunal, November 1967)

Ignorance is no justification for remaining passive when there are more than 31 ongoing conflicts today. Since the Second World War, wars have caused 16 million deaths, 90% of them civilians, 75% of which have been women and children. The year 2014 ended with a record score of 51.3 million displaced persons.

The plain fact is that it is the Western countries and coalitions that have caused this global war and today pose the principal threat to peace.

The Forum against imperialist war and NATO began as an initiative of the Alliance of Anti-imperialist Intellectuals for the purpose of organizing debate and analysis around war, so as to help generate awareness and mobilize society against the NATO military manoeuvres—the most important since the Second World War—scheduled to take place in Gibraltar in October 2015.

After a year of work involving intellectuals, militants and political and social organizations, the people taking part in the Forum have decided to call a first constituent meeting of the Permanent Tribunal against imperialist war and NATO.

We are persuaded that war is neither a matter of chance nor of fate; it is the result of a predatory and unjust economic system based on exploitation and extermination towards which no-one should remain indifferent.

We call on all social and collective organizations and all persons wishing to participate in the drafting of a declaration against war and in favour of a war-free culture from various different spheres and viewpoints and invite them to assist in the creation and development of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO.

The first constituent sessions of the Tribunal will take place in Madrid on 6, 7 and 8 November 2015. They will commence with a denunciation of the NATO manoeuvres scheduled to be held in Gibraltar on those dates.

Agenda: 1.- Objectives

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO is intended to serve as an observatory on war and on its causes, consequences and culprits. It will also serve as a channel for the creation of an archive to record the memory and the resistance of peoples against the barbarity of war.

In the conviction that war is not only a matter of armed intervention but of forcible subjugation by economic and political means that violates the right of peoples to exercise their sovereignty, the Tribunal seeks to embody and disseminate social and political condemnation of the situation created by military interventions.

Its specific goals are:

- To bring together as many people from social, political and labour organizations, and social movements, in a condemnation of war and its instruments.
- To document and contribute to the promotion of such legal actions as may be undertaken to put an end to the impunity of those responsible for war.
- To contribute to the growth of an anti-war social conscience.
- To demonstrate that war, like other great issues that vitally affect us, is screened from public debate and decision-making.
- To alert to the constant warlike escalation, the increasing numbers of wars and their victims, to their cruelty, and to the suffering caused to the most vulnerable.
- To help mobilize peoples against imperialist wars and their consequences.

2.- Who is invited:

All persons belonging to social and collective organizations who wish to participate in the drafting of a declaration against war and in favour of an anti-war culture in a variety of areas and from different points of view.

All persons wishing to bear witness and attest to war crimes.

3.- Registration and modes of participation in the first sessions of the Permanent Tribunal:

- The Tribunal will be organized in work groups by subject. Members may participate in person, by video conference or by means of communications.
- Interested organisations and persons should contact the Tribunal's organisation at the following email address tribunalcontralaguerra@gmail.com
- Interested organisations and persons can send proposals, stating the subject area or areas they wish to take part in, how they wish to participate and whether they wish to extend any subject area or propose a new one.

- The proposal for participation must specifically state the mode in which it is desired to take part: in person, by video conference or by means of a communication, in writing or audio or video. It should also state availability to take part in any of the Work Groups.
 - The deadline for receipt of proposals for participation in the Work Groups (from 1 to 3 pages) and for new subject areas is 19 October.
- The definitive list of Work Groups will be published on the 26 October.
- There is a Secretary's Office to deal with information, reception of proposals, formation of Work Groups by subject area, allocation of tasks and proposals to the various groups, coordination and organisation of logistics, and conduct of the meeting.
- Information on subject areas and creation of work groups will be published in the Blog of the Forum Against Imperialist War and NATO (<https://forocontralaguerra.wordpress.com/>), as from 26 October.
- All participants will receive all the texts that are to be put forward and discussed in each Work Group several days prior to the formation of the Tribunal.

4.- Subject areas proposed to date

- 1.- Economics and military interventions.
- 2.- War and the media.
- 3.- War and violence.
- 4.- War and laws.
- 5.- Violence against women—a weapon of war.
- 6.- The role of finance capital in the unleashing of conflicts.
- 7.- Different spheres and modes of resistance.
- 8.- The drama of displaced persons; the suffering of peoples.
- 9.- Art and culture in the resistance to war.
- 10.- NATO

5.- Conduct of the Tribunal sessions on 6, 7 and 8 November.

- The Tribunal Secretary's Office, which will have organized the various Panels for the Plenary Sessions and the sessions of each Work Group, will furnish members with all the relevant documentation.
- In each Work Group there will be one or two people in charge of distributing the information and contacting the group members. A Rapporteur will be appointed to summarize the discussions in his/her group in the Plenary Session.
- The opening session and formation of the Panels will be held on the afternoon of the 6th, by Work and Plenary Groups.
- The afternoon of the 6th and the morning of the 7th will be reserved for the sessions of the various Work Groups or thematic panels. Each Work Group will draw up a

summary of its session, with conclusions in the form of a diagnosis and proposals, which the Rapporteur will submit to the Plenary Session on the afternoon of the 7th.

- The object of the first plenary session on the afternoon of the 7th will be to collate the different diagnoses put forward by the Work Groups. The result of the First Plenary Session will constitute the first of the documents that the Tribunal will be issuing as Grounds for the Final Declaration.
- On the morning of the 8th, the Plenary panel and the Rapporteurs from the different Work Groups will draw up a document summarizing the conclusions of the First Plenary Session and present it to a Second Plenary Session for final approval. This last document will constitute the Final Declaration of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO.

6. Dissemination of the conclusions of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO

- Personalities and organizations will be invited to endorse the Tribunal's Final Declaration.
- All documentation containing information relevant to war, and all the documents contributed and generated during the sessions of the Tribunal will be incorporated in a documentary data base freely available for use in the blog of the Forum against imperialist war and NATO (<https://forocontralaguerra.wordpress.com/>).