



## **SECOND RESOLUTION OF THE PERMANENT PEOPLES' TRIBUNAL AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR AND NATO**

**Second session of the TPPCGIO – 18 and 19 June 2016, in Madrid**

### **Preamble**

The TPPCGIO held its second ordinary session in Madrid on 18 and 19 June 2015, with over 50 registered participants. Four panels were assembled on a "war scenarios" basis, three of these geographical (Venezuela-Latin America, Palestine-Middle East and Ukraine-Eastern Europe) and one social (Victims and Resistance). The panels worked with the materials prepared by the work groups during the interval between the first and second sessions of the Tribunal, and with the contributions of the participants. The findings of each panel were presented at the first plenary session. The specific resolutions can be found in the relevant annex. Also, a "Report on US imperialism and Obama's visit to Spain" was presented at the plenary session. This included an annex which prompted a special resolution. This Second Resolution of the TPPCGIO was prepared and presented for discussion on the basis of the debate at the first plenary session.

### **Preamble**

We are witnessing a constant proliferation of wars of all kinds and the construction of a war-torn future whose consequences for humankind promise to be catastrophic. In the meantime, the populations of the powers responsible for this escalation stand remote from these events. They view them as if they were mere anecdotes, unable to grasp the risk to which they too are exposed by a world that is socially unjust, ecologically destructive and politically perverse—a world sustained by perpetual war.

The driving force behind this war is imperialism: "The domination by one country of the political, economic, or cultural life of another country". In times past hegemony was disputed by different empires, but today there is only one imperial hegemon, the USA, to which the other countries in the bloc of developed Western countries lend support from positions of subordination.

The strength of imperialist war lies in its structural and systemic nature; in other words this war is part and parcel of the system that produces it and of the dynamics and interrelationships that regulate its functioning. Imperialist war is thus not an option but part of a form of social, political, economic and cultural organization that is called capitalism.

This system is defined by economic accumulation and the build-up of the power and relations necessary for its self-perpetuation, and it prevails both in subject territories and within the empire itself. This explains why war is spreading all over the planet. At the same time, this system of plunder and exploitation inevitably produces resistance, and to overcome this the empire must resort to force.

Imperialist war is necessary for the survival of the system prevailing in the world today, which is why it is ever-expanding, with constant growth of war-making capacity and development of new methods of domination. Any element of whatever nature will be used if it is deemed effective; anyone opposing or even getting in the way of its goals will be viewed as an enemy and treated accordingly.

The structural, systemic nature of imperialist war is not on open display—it must remain hidden, hence the tremendous efforts devoted to media warfare and the resort to falsification and manipulation to try and invert the perception of cause and effect. The empire never admits to attacking. It always acts in self-defence to ward off a threat, and it never admits that it subjugates; it always acts in defence of freedom, human rights and democracy. The normal procedure for constructing this fiction operates in three stages: criminalization, isolation and destruction. First an enemy is fabricated, then he is weakened, and finally he is eliminated or subjugated.

Just as war is ever-expanding, so are its instruments: military budgets grow and major centres of power call for progressive increases in the future. The grand military alliance NATO includes ever more member countries. It is establishing permanent bases over broad territorial areas and enhancing its warlike potential, always under US command.

This expansion has been accompanied by a process of diversification and specialization and the combination of different forms of war, as well as local, regional and continental strategies. The media open hostilities and continue to attack throughout the process. Economic warfare is combined with direct or indirect military action—armies may be regular forces, proxy countries, mercenaries, religion-based... External and internal actions are combined to create conflicts that may culminate in coups d'état or even civil wars. Indeed, imperialist warmongers have produced some new ways of taking power—the so-called 'colour revolutions', the Arab Springs, parliamentary coups (as in Paraguay and Brazil), etc.

The product of imperialist war betrays all the features of a war of domination. On one side we have the victims, whole peoples are despoiled of their lands, their goods, their culture, parts of their bodies, or their lives, the vast majority civilians and the most vulnerable—children, etc. On the other side we have an ever more powerful empire, with greater capacity to dominate, ever more bloated corporations, the military-industrial complex, the exploitation of conquered territories, the reconstruction racket, overexploitation of the victims ...

In spite of all this, people, groups, organizations and whole populations refuse to give in and stoutly resist the imperialist drive.

The overriding goal of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO is to support these resistance movements through the denunciation and the moral and political condemnation of the persons responsible for imperialist war as the basis for a movement of radical opposition to this barbarity.

What the Tribunal seeks is to show that the imperialist dynamic always entails making war against anyone resisting domination, and that in this war the empire selects its strategies according to the particular scenario, although all present common features.

### **Summary of the work done by the panels and presented at the plenary session**

As expected, **the panel on Venezuela and Latin America** focused on the case of Venezuela. They drew attention to the role played by the United States, through the NED and USAID, and via the US embassy in Caracas, in support of the anti-democratic, pro-coup opposition; mention was also made of the involvement of the European Union (particularly Spain) and Colombia in this permanent campaign of destabilization, criminalization and isolation based essentially on political-economic interference (although there have also been direct interventions and aggressions), whose ultimate aim is to pave the way for a coup d'état. This panel also addressed the media war being waged against Venezuela, with a constant stream of fabricated or distorted news. On the subject of economic warfare, the panel discussed the issue of speculation and hoarding as weapons used by the Venezuelan bourgeoisie in their exercise of class violence. The panel also noted the specific role played by the Zionist lobby as an essential adjunct to imperialist ambitions in the region.

**The panel on Palestine and the Middle East** founded its analysis on the fact that Palestine is one of the most significant examples of how imperialism operates in the Middle East, as the backbone of expansionist designs in the region. Palestine presents all the features of a decolonization process that never got off the ground, with systematic violation of human rights, crimes against humanity that go unpunished, and the infliction of serious ecological damage as an instrument of ethnic cleansing. At the same time, Palestinian resistance is a good example of steadfast opposition to the new imperialist order. The panel's analysis addressed five areas of the Palestinian question. First, the right of return. The panel concluded that in practice the Zionist entity does not respect the right of the Palestinian people to return to the lands from which they were expelled, nor is that right defended by international organizations. The second aspect was the criminalization of Palestinian resistance. In this case the panel observed that the Palestinian people are entitled to resist Israel's colonialist occupation by all means at their disposal, and noted the evidence that generally speaking that right of resistance is not duly recognized or defended by the self-styled "international community", which to the contrary maintains a guilty silence. The third aspect is the definition of the Israeli political order as an apartheid regime, which is completely at odds with the Zionist discourse that presents Israel as "the only democracy in the Middle East", with Israel's cultural and academic cooperation policies, and with the status of preferential partner awarded by the EU. The fourth element are the campaigns of solidarity with the Palestinian cause and the boycott, disinvestment and sanctions initiatives, which have gained an enormous amount of ground in recent years and are being met with a counter-attack by the Zionist lobby, which seeks to present them as xenophobic campaigns that violate fundamental rights. There is systematic resort to the accusation of anti-semitism (falsely conflated with Jew-hating) as a way of dismissing anti-Zionist denunciations. The fifth aspect is media warfare, which distorts the real situation of the Palestinian people and promotes complicity with the Israeli occupation.

**The panel on victims and resistance movements** based its discussions on the observation that imperialism grows by ousting others, establishing relations of domination, bending sovereign peoples to its will, resorting to blockades, coups d'état and wars, and that this leaves a trail of destruction and suffering the price of which is paid by the victims. It addressed the need for a proactive attitude that encompasses humanitarian action but also political work that involves drawing attention to the victims, listening to what they have to say, exposing the strategies and interests that have led to their dispossession, and challenging the imperialist logic that drives this devastation. Living conditions of peoples, regions and even entire continents have altered drastically through the operation of spurious interests. From the standpoint of the victims, these interests share a common denominator—large-scale despoliation of millions of people, prompting a process of dispossession whose effects are felt most by the weakest population groups (the poor, children, women, the elderly...). This panel underlined some figures, for instance that there are currently 70 million people forcibly displaced as a consequence of war; that in 2015 there were conflicts in 46 countries and 2700 million people at risk from war; or that the imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan alone have produced over four million deaths. But at the same time it noted that despite everything the victims are resisting these vectors of oppression. The panel denounced the huge numbers of victims produced by the most recent wars, the inhumanity of the fact that the victimized populations are also the most vulnerable, and the imperialist dynamic of dispossession of these victims. In the same vein, the panel stressed the fact that in the so-called "war against terror" the number of innocent victims has multiplied by a factor of 32. The panel also acknowledged and expressed its support for the movements of resistance of victims and peoples against imperialism, which collectively absorb the experience they have lived through, building a common basis for harmony, linking their struggles to internationalist movements, seeking greater self-organization and participation, and claiming their right to sovereignty.

**The panel on Ukraine–Eastern Europe** concluded that the Ukrainian crisis has been deliberately fomented by the USA (with EU support) in response first and foremost to Russia's refusal to countenance their strategy of destruction of Syria and the Russian proposal of economic union with the EU. Examples of such criminal interference include the financing, arming and training of paramilitary groups. Instead of mediating in the political crisis, Western governments backed the perpetrators of the coup as a legitimate way of achieving power. The provisional government unleashed a wave of genocidal repression against ethnic minorities and opponents of the coup. In response, autonomous movements took form in Crimea and Donbass in acts of legitimate self-defence. The new Kiev government has consistently operated in connivance with the Banderist (nazi) groups which have perpetrated crimes of all kinds, among them the slaughters at Odessa and Mariupol. The war in Donbass has already claimed over 9000 lives. The West has taken advantage of the Ukrainian crisis to issue sanctions against Russia as the alleged culprit of all that has happened. The strategy of racking up tension with Russia serves the US determination to tighten the noose around what is its only rival in the field of nuclear weaponry. The panel noted the efforts of Western governments to rewrite history, concealing the central role played by the Soviet army in defeating the Nazis. The panel denounced Spain's role as an unswerving follower of the policies dictated by the USA and as a supplier of major military resources for attrition against Russia, a nation with whom the Spanish people have no quarrel.

## **Special resolution of the TPPCGIO on US imperialism and the presence of Obama in Spain**

In a plenary session held in Madrid on 19 June 2016, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO, in light of the "Report on US imperialism and the presence of Obama in Spain" prepared by members of the Tribunal, resolved to draw up and approve the following special resolution, based on the content of that report:

The USA has been an imperial power throughout its history—in other words, it has imposed its will on other nations by means of military, political and economic force. The USA has intervened in over 200 acts of interference, destabilization and military aggression. It has founded its empire on military supremacy; it has between 700 and 1000 military bases distributed about 100 countries on all five continents; it has weapons and troops to take large-scale action anywhere in the world, and its military budget is 41% of the world total. Moreover, under NATO rules it wields supreme command, which translates as military command over 28 countries, among them the most developed in the world.

US imperialist policy is extraordinarily pragmatic. It has alliances with states and other organization that violate the principles that it supposedly espouses (Israel—a key element in US imperialist dominance—Saudi Arabia, paramilitary forces, fascist groups, etc.) and at the same time criminalizes and assails others which really do share these principles, for instance Russia, all solely in pursuit of its own interests.

It was in this general context that Barack Obama acceded to the US Presidency in January 2009, a position including supreme command of the US armed forces and of NATO. The presidential team includes prominent hawks and proclaims the need for "a renewed effort to sustain America's position in the world". Despite all this, that same year he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on the strength of a mere declaration of intentions, having promised in his first months in office to dismantle the Guantanamo prison and pursue a programme of rapprochement with the Arab countries.

And yet Obama's two terms have been characterized by rearmament and constantly escalating interference. The US has enhanced NATO's military capability, its territorial reach and its budgets; it has made intensive, and virtually unsupervised, use of drones to carry out extra-judicial executions (each individually approved by Obama) on an arbitrary basis and with absolute impunity, with growing numbers of non-combatant victims; it has augmented its interference, economic and media warfare and soft coups, with the use of proxy armies in all war theatres; it has devised and implemented regional destabilization strategies to acquire control and dominion over wide territories, continents even, and strategies of attrition to overcome any resistance to its supremacy.

What this amounts to is the abandonment of the logic of dissuasion and the initiation of an arms race. What is more, numerous specialists have cast doubt on the effectiveness of such a race, despite which we face all the risks posed by this militarist escalation and we are asked to accept the curtailment of freedoms and democratic rights that it entails, while society as a whole is confronted with the lack of transparency and the

arbitrariness characteristic of the military sphere, and the system costs billions of dollars. It is therefore plain to see that the Obama presidency, like those of his predecessors, is a war machine serving the interests of the US empire and has increased human suffering and the risk to life worldwide.

At the present moment, Spain's geostrategic situation and its dual link to the USA/NATO make it a vital piece in the imperialist strategy of the US and its allies. This can be seen in the growth of the US/NATO military structure in Spain, particularly the bases at Torrejón (CAOC), Rota (anti-missile shield), Morón (rapid reaction force and AFRICOM) and Bétera (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force). It is also worth recalling the Trident Juncture manoeuvres that were held in October and November 2015, the largest to date, which took place mostly on Spanish soil.

None of this addresses any national interest of Spain; it serves solely the interests of the US empire. We are in a situation of dependence and subjection, and our national security and sovereignty are being surrendered without the slightest resistance. This passivity is in contrast with the strong resistance that US imperialism is meeting elsewhere in the world; and yet the attitude adopted by the media and our politicians in practice minimizes its importance and conceals both the consequences of imperialism and the fact of resistance in order to achieve the passive acquiescence of the population.

The TPPCGIO calls on other organizations, groups and individuals to publicize and support its resolution, and to join in any acts of protest that are organized against submission to the dictates of the United States. It further reminds the Governments and Authorities concerned, should they be tempted to resort to repression, that they are bound to respect and guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms, and in particular freedom of expression and rights of assembly and association.

## **Conclusions**

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO, assembled in Madrid on 18 and 19 June 2016

## **CONDEMNS**

1. The political destabilization manoeuvres that are one of the tools currently used in imperialist aggression, especially those involving the funding of pro-coup, reactionary or fascist groups. We can see this kind of manoeuvre in Venezuela, in Ukraine and in the Middle East.
2. The political hypocrisy of the imperialist powers, which maintain solid alliances with regimes and organizations whose actions violate the most basic principles of current international law. Complicity with the Zionist entity is a particularly flagrant, but by no means the only, example.
3. Persecution, imprisonment and criminalization of those legitimately organizing resistance against imperialism, and attempts to alter, conceal and distort this history and their memory.

4. Practices of transnational corporations and oligopolies that foster interventionism for financial gain (be it by provoking conflicts or by promoting international treaties).
5. The willingness of Western governments, especially the US, to interfere in the free play of politics in third countries, prompting them to promote or tolerate coups d'état, and to support governments illegitimately acquiring power by such means.
6. Reductionist discourses which present the victims of imperialist aggression as victims of humanitarian emergencies unconnected with the political forces that created the situation. These discourses make it all the harder for the victims to escape from the critical situation they find themselves in, and further favour the reproduction of the same situation in the future.
7. The unparalleled contribution of Barack Obama to the spread of warfare and his interventionist policy, which have put the world at risk with hundreds of thousands of victims.
8. Cooperation with US imperialism—enthusiastic sometimes—by Spanish authorities, which has led to militarization of Spain and the country's complete integration in the US military deployment in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean.
9. The specific role played by Zionism as an instrument of imperialist domination in the Middle East and other parts of the world, and its infiltration in international organizations of all kinds, including those that seek to protect the very human rights that Zionism systematically violates.

#### SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES

Struggle by all people resisting imperialism. and also efforts by anyone interested in understanding, publicizing and defending such resistance.

#### AND THEREFORE

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Against Imperialist War and NATO calls on social and political movements and organizations to endorse this resolution and mobilize to confront and defeat imperialist domination.