



**La Via Campesina** share this newsletter of **February 2015**, which is the collective effort of organizations that are part of our movement worldwide. Subscribe [HERE](#).

**HIGHLIGHTED ARTICLE**

**[Joint Statement: 2nd session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on a UN declaration on rights of peasants](#)**

**Joint Statement**

*La Via Campesina, The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), The World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP), International Indian Treaty Alliance (IITF), Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements (FIMARC), Centre Europe - Tiers Monde Cetim (CETIM), FIAN International, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS).* To the second session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on a United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas: *Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XX: 02 – 06 February 2015* We are representatives of peasants, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fishers and rural workers from around the globe, between us representing many millions of rural people, along with CETIM, FIAN International and other human rights organizations. We have been constructively engaging in this process of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, from the field, pasture, our workplaces around the world and here in Geneva for many years. We are happy to see the on-going process and the constructive contributions from many states and civil society organizations. The UN Human Rights Council resolution 26/26 in 2014 gave the mandate to this intergovernmental working group to negotiate, finalize, and submit to the Council a draft UN declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. The mandate calls for existing human rights to be clarified and consolidated with a view to promoting and protecting the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. [Read more...](#)

**ARTICLES FROM THE REGIONS**

**[Mali: "Agroecology is in our hands! We are building it further together!" - Opening of the International Agroecology Forum](#)**



Sélingué, 24 February 2015 – Today, the sun has risen brighter than ever in Mali to warm the more than 250 delegates of the first International Forum on Agroecology hosted by [Confederation of Peasants Organizations](#) of Mali (CNOP) and [La Via Campesina](#), at the Nyéléni Center in Sélingué, south Mali. There are women and men, from diverse constituencies, among them farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous people, pastoralists and urban consumers from all corners of the world, arrived to the center in buses from Bamako and other regions of Mali ([See photos on tvCampesina](#)).

"I decided to come here because we are building a necessary movement that will claim back what was always ours: our peasant knowledge of doing agriculture", said a woman farmer from Mali, as she was running to attend the women caucus, this afternoon.

Over the next four days, the women and men of the conference will debate, share experiences and celebrate agroecology with the view to reinforcing a common vision and principles, as well as deciding on a common strategy to claim back the concept of agroecology, "beyond just the scientific aspect, to encompass its social, economic and political elements", as Gilberto Schneider, from the [Movimento dos Pequenos Agricultores](#) (MPA) in Brazil, pointed out. [Read more...](#)

**[Mali: La Via Campesina and allies host an International Agroecology Forum to address Food Sovereignty](#)**

**MEDIA ADVISORY: La Via Campesina**

(Bamako, 19 February 2015) – More than 200 delegates, among them peasants, family farmers, fisher folk,



pastoralists, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers, consumers, urban poor organizations, NGOs, academics and other social movements will be at the Nyéléni Centre in Mali from 24 to 27 February, to take part in the first International Forum on Agroecology. This forum takes places at a time where the world is facing economic crisis, the climate is changing, and the Mother Earth is being aggressively exploited by the corporate model of death and land grabbing.

According to [La Via Campesina](#), agroecology is essential to humanity, since it builds autonomy and a better life for small scale food producers, produces more healthy food, provides a strong base for food sovereignty, and allows rural peoples to live in harmony with and take care of our Mother Earth. Peasant and small scale food producers' agroecology is considered to be the model of life, of farms with farmers, of food producers with productive resources, of rural communities with families, of countryside with trees and forests. [Read more...](#)

**[Statement of Assembly of the Poor Condemns violence](#)**

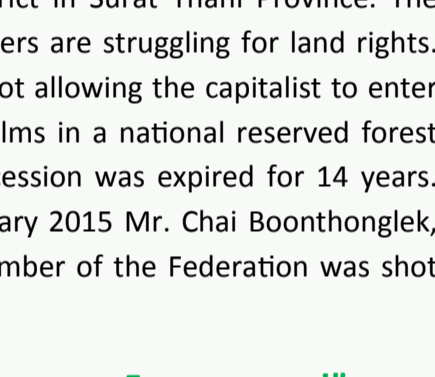


*Condemning the Use of Violence against the Poor to Protect the Capitalists' Interests*

(Thailand, February 14, 2015) On 3 February 2015 Mr. Pianrat Boonrit, the president of an agricultural cooperative, a member of Southern Peasant Federation of Thailand, was summoned by the military for attitude adjustment and detained in a jail in Vibhavadiangit Military Camp in Surat Thani Province until 5 February 2015. On the same evening the military demolished Permsab Community (a member of the agricultural cooperative, the Southern Peasant Federation of Thailand). The community locates in Chaiyaburi District in Surat Thani Province. The community members are struggling for land rights. They held a vigil not allowing the capitalist to enter and harvest oil palms in a national reserved forest of which the concession was expired for 14 years. Later on 11 February 2015 Mr. Chai Boonthonglek, age 61, also a member of the Federation was shot dead. [Read more...](#)

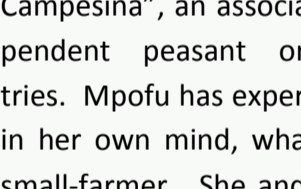
**["Be Proud to Become a Farmwoman!" say Elizabeth Mpofu](#)**

(Germany, Teisendorf, January 21, 2014)(al) It is certainly not an everyday occurrence, that a woman from Zimbabwe, who runs a small farm in that country, congratulates a young woman from Bavaria for her decision to also run a small farm and tells her to be proud of that decision. Elizabeth Mpofu is, however, not an everyday woman, but the general secretary of the worldwide peasant organization "Via Campesina", an association of more than 160 independent peasant organizations in 63 countries. Mpofu has experienced on her own body and in her own mind, what it means to work on their plot of about ten hectares in the South-East-African Country. The difficulties, that she has had and still has to overcome, not only in an economic way, in the pursuit of her profession as a farmer, are at least as great, as those facing a young farmwoman in Bavaria. [Read more...](#)



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**[Solidarity Message from Via Campesina International in reaction to violent incidents in Honduras](#)**



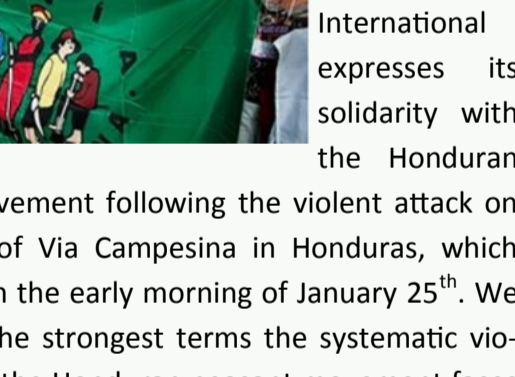
(Zimbabwe, Harare, January 28, 2015) Via Campesina International expresses its solidarity with the Honduran peasant movement following the violent attack on the offices of Via Campesina in Honduras, which took place in the early morning of January 25<sup>th</sup>. We denote the strongest of our solidarity with the Honduran peasant movement which the Honduran peasant movement faces every day, and which has worsened since the coup d'etat that took place in 2009.

This new attempt to deter the peasant movement from its struggles and its conquests took place as follows:

1. On Monday January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, a contingent of men armed with heavy weapons fired more than two dozen shots into the building housing the offices of La Via Campesina in Honduras. [Read more...](#)

**[The Heat Is On: Via Campesina and Allies Challenge Climate Summit](#)**

"There's absolutely nothing smart about it," said Jean-Baptiste, a Haitian Via Campesina leader who coordinates the movement's work around climate change, in a critical workshop on Climate-Smart Agriculture in Lima. "The climate crisis is rooted in capitalism, which is also in crisis as an economic system," he explained. "Entrepreneurs are trying to emerge from this crisis, and as a way of doing so, are creating green capitalism, of which Climate-Smart Agriculture is typical."



By Salena Tramel

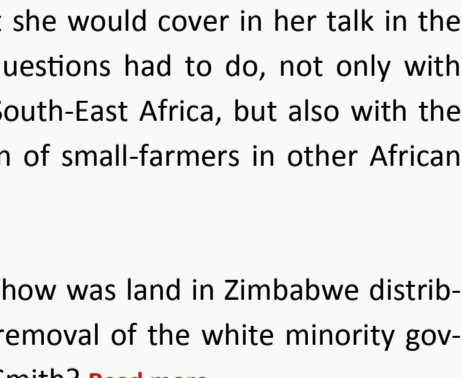
A [new report](#) by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indisputably confirms what many scientists had predicted: 2014 is officially the hottest year on record. And this past year is not an anomaly -- the previous 10 hottest years on the books have all occurred since 1998. [Read more...](#)

**[UWAC: More than 5500 trees uprooted in one month!](#)**

(Palestine, Ramallah, January 2015) More than 5500 trees uprooted in one month! The Union of Agricultural Workers Committees (UAWC) follows up intensively the Israeli violations against the Palestinian farmers to expose the brutality of the occupation to the local and international world. West Bank Damages to the agricultural sector of 50 armed settlers tried to detain five Palestinian herders next to the settlement of Itamar (Nablus), sparking clashes; Israeli forces who arrived at the site fired live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas canisters at the Palestinians, injuring two of them. [Read more...](#)

**[UN concludes the 2nd session for declaration on peasants' rights](#)**

(Switzerland, Geneva, February 6, 2015) The United Nations (UN) 2<sup>nd</sup> special session on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas was held in Palais Nations, Geneva from 2-6 February 2015. Member states, UN bodies and peoples' movement from all over the world participated in the session. La Via Campesina, the initiator from grass-roots, sent delegates from Africa, Asia, Americas and Europe. Other organizations of mobile pastoralists, fisher people, women and NGOs were also present. The reason for this 2<sup>nd</sup> session was the UN Human Rights Council resolution 26/26 of 2014. The resolution gave a clear mandate to the intergovernmental working group to negotiate, finalize, and submit to the Council a draft UN declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. This process inside the UN has been a long struggle by La Via Campesina for almost 14 years.



In the session, the Chairperson-rapporteur, Angelica Navarro from Bolivia presented a draft declaration ([click here to read the draft Declaration](#)). [Read more...](#)

**[Polish Farmers Blockade Motorways Across Country](#)**

(Poland, February, 5 2015) This week thousands of Polish family farmers turned out to protest in over 50 locations across the country. Over 150 tractors blockaded the A2 motorway into Warsaw on the 3rd February and hundreds more continue to close major roads and picket government offices in other regions. The farmers are vowing to continue the struggle until the government agrees to enter talks with the unions and commits to addressing what the farmers see as a crisis in Polish agriculture. These actions represent a dramatic escalation of protests that have been simmering across the country over the last year. Edward Kosmal, chairman of the farmers protest committee for West-Pomeranian Region said: "We are ready for dialogue. We look forward to meeting with you Prime Minister and beginning a comprehensive government commitment to solving the problems of Polish agriculture. If you do not enter into a dialogue with the Union, we would be forced to tighten our forms of protest." [Read more...](#)

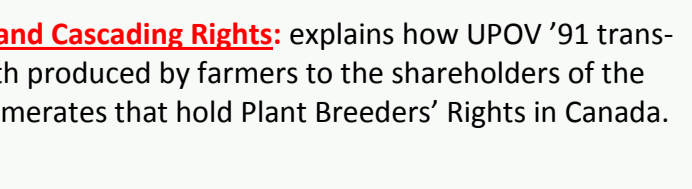


**[UAWC: International Community Says NO to Israeli Violations](#)**

(Palestine, Ramallah, January 2015) The International community, human rights organizations, activists and social justice movements raised their voice to end the Israeli violations against the Palestinian farmers and the agricultural sector. La Via Campesina International, Grassroots International – USA, Landless Workers Movement- Brazil, Alter Trade Japan (ATJ), APNet- Korea, Jews Voice for Peace – USA, Agreeeoo – France, Featherview Farm – Australia, Alternative People's Linkage in Asia – Japan, and international activists signed UAWC's position paper to say NO to: land confiscation for establishing illegal settlements, trees uprooting, physical and verbal assaults, and demolition of agricultural properties. UAWC wrote its latest [UAWC's position paper](#) when the Israeli settlers from "Susiya" Settlement –that was established on the Palestinian land of Sousia Village - chopped down 345 olive trees belonging to Palestinian farmers in Masafer Yata to the south of Hebron; on January 9th settlers chopped down 45 trees and then on January 10th they chopped another 300 trees. [Read more...](#)

**[Elizabeth Mpofu speaks before 50,000 people at the "we are fed up" demonstration](#)**

(Berlin, Germany, January 20, 2015) Speech of Elizabeth Mpofu, General Coordinator of La Via Campesina, in front of 50,000 people at the we are fed up demonstration  
My dear friends!  
It is a pleasure and an honor for me to be here today in Berlin for this « We are fed up » demonstration. This was such a powerful march!! My name is Elizabeth Mpofu, I come from Zimbabwe, and I am the general coordinator of the international peasant movement called La Via Campesina. I am myself a small-holder farmer. As small farmers in La Via Campesina, from all over the globe, we are calling for Food Sovereignty, meaning, among other things, that we want and we need local food – and not industrialized and standardized food: we need a good quality food produced through indigenous agroecological farming systems, that respect life and the environment. Agroecological farming is the solution to climate change! And not climate smart agriculture! [Read more...](#)



**[India: Planned Massive Demonstration on 18 March](#)**

La Via Campesina South Asia - Press Release: 24th January 2015 (India, New Delhi)  
The farmers unions affiliated with the All India Coordination Committee of Farmers Movement (AICCFM) met for 2 days at the Punjab Bhawan in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Shri Ajmer Singh Lakhwal, President Bhartiya Kissan Union, Punjab. During this meeting, the farmers' leaders from 12 farmers unions intensely discussed the current burning issues in Indian agriculture which included, the Land Acquisition Act Ordinance, NDA government U-Turn in the WTO, the recent report of the Shanta Kumar High Level Committee for restructuring FCI, and others. The meeting started with a 2 minutes silence to mourn suicide by hundreds of farmers during the current NDA government regime. The farmer suicides in India are continuing despite many promises by the Narendra Modi before the election that he would work for the Indian farmers. However after becoming Prime Minister, he expressed no concern for agrarian crisis and continuing farmer suicides. During NDA Government since May 2014, more than 7000 farmers have committed suicide. During this 2 days meeting, farmers' leaders focussed on some key issues which are of great concern and they made the following demands to the NDA government to express their frustration with this government agrarian policies. [Read more...](#)

**[Thousands of Polish farmers march in Warsaw](#)**

(Poland, Warsaw, February 17, 2015) Today 6000 farmers marched in Warsaw to protest the Polish government's failure to address their longstanding demands. After failed talks between Union leaders and the prime minister this afternoon farmers built an occupation camp outside the prime ministers palace and have vowed to remain until their demands are met. Protests have been taking place across the country over the last three weeks with a range of organisations to community groups and local protest committees to regional and national unions blockading roads and government ministries in hundreds of locations. At the national level the protests are being coordinated by the farmers' branch of the Solidarity Union. The protests today are also being supported by unions representing bee-keepers, coal miners and nurses who are also on strike. [Read more...](#)



**[Alten Post interview Elizabeth Mpofu about G8/G7 Initiative](#)**

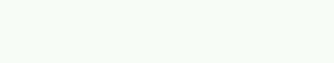
(Germany, Teisendorf, January 21, 2015) On the afternoon of January 21, 2015, before the talk of small farmer Elizabeth Mpofu from Zimbabwe, general secretary of the international peasant organization "Via Campesina" and Co-founder of regional farmers-organizations, on the evening of the same day in the "Alten Post" Teisendorf, did freelance journalist Alois Albrecht have the chance to do an interview with Mrs. Mpofu about themes other than those, that she would cover in her talk in the evening. The questions had to do, not only with the country in South-East Africa, but also with the general situation of small-farmers in other African countries.

The Interview:  
Q. Mrs. Mpofu, how was land in Zimbabwe distributed, after the removal of the white minority government of Ian Smith? [Read more...](#)

**[The land grabbers of the Nacala Corridor](#)**

A new report by Mozambique's National Farmers' Union (NFU) and GRAIN shows there is a colonial-style scramble for Africa's farm lands under way. Politically-connected companies based in offshore tax havens have grabbed hundreds of thousands of hectares of farmland from peasants in Mozambique. [Download the PDF Report](#)

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Part One: **[What-is-UPOV 91?](#)** highlights the key mechanisms in UPOV '91 that increase the rights of large corporate plant breeders including Monsanto, and severely restrict farmers' age-old right to save and reuse seeds.



Part Two: **[Royalties and Cascading Rights:](#)** explains how UPOV '91 transfers ever more wealth produced by farmers to the shareholders of the multinational conglomerates that hold Plant Breeders' Rights in Canada.