

Photo: Workers at a shipbreaking yard in Bangladesh



RULES FOR BUSINESS RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE

ASIA IN FOCUS



**Friends of
the Earth
Asia Pacific**



**Friends of
the Earth
International**

TIME FOR JUSTICE

The biggest companies in the world are often implicated in human rights abuses.

A man is killed defending his home from a destructive mining project in El Salvador. Hundreds are displaced from their traditional lands to make way for palm oil plantations in Indonesia. Yet many of these crimes go unpunished, due to corruption of local legal systems and the fact that many corporations are richer and more powerful than the states that seek to regulate them.

Photo: Abeer Al Butmeh, FOE Palestine at the United Nations



SHELL
\$458 BILLION



EXXON MOBIL
\$426 BILLION



BANGLADESH
\$195 BILLION

▲ **ANNUAL REVENUE/GDP IN BILLIONS OF \$US DOLLARS¹**

Since 2014 a historic UN process has been unfolding at the Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to enforce new binding rules on business and bring justice to thousands of victims. At the 1st session of the Inter Governmental Working Group (IGWG) in 2015, UN member countries worked on the scope, content and form of this new Human Rights treaty.

From 24 to 28 October 2016 the IGWG will hold its 2nd session in Geneva, supported and monitored by an alliance of civil society and social movements representing countries and communities affected by TNCs.

Photo: Fires in a palm oil concession in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia

CORPORATIONS BURNING INDONESIA FOR EXPORT

“Voluntary corporate commitments are not enough, we need binding international and national rules for business”
Khalisah Khalid, Friends of the Earth Indonesia

In 2015 forest fires in Indonesia destroyed over 3 million hectares of land, killed 23 people and caused over 500,000 respiratory diseases . WALHI and other Friends of the Earth groups found that many of these fires were started by corporations for the production of palm oil and paper. Their research discovered forest fires on Indonesian plantations owned by global palm oil companies Bumitama and Wilmar International.² All this despite the fact the companies had their own voluntary policies against deforestation.

American, British, Dutch and French investors are directly financing Wilmar and Bumitama. One way to put an end to this corporate destruction is to prevent these investors from funding such activities, and by legally forcing them to respect Human Rights. Companies, including financiers, throughout the palm oil supply chain must be held to account for environmental and human rights breaches.

we need a binding treaty on business

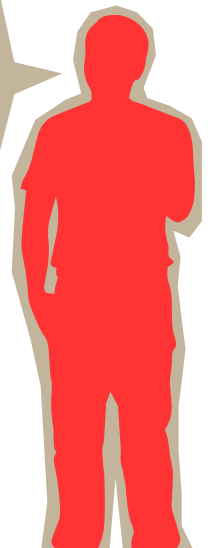




Photo: Shipbreaking yard in Bangladesh

DESTRUCTIVE AND DEADLY SHIP GRAVEYARDS

Ships and shipping lie at the heart of the global trading system. When these ships are decommissioned they are often dumped on the beaches of South Asia in a practise called ship breaking. Ship breaking is a polluting industry. It destroys coastal ecosystems where toxic chemicals, like asbestos and PCBs leach from the boats. In Bangladesh alone hundreds of workers have died. Around 20% are estimated to be children under the age of 15.³

“The industry is never going to change if we don’t push it. The pressure only comes when the government begins to show some commitment in this”
Syeda Rizwana,
Friends of the Earth
Bangladesh/BELA

Friends of the Earth Bangladesh/BELA has launched around seven cases so far. In 2009 they won a national court case, which ruled in favour of the following regulations to the ship breaking industry: imported ships must get clearance, all ships must decontaminated and the industry must be monitored for labour rights violations. Yet to this day dangerous practices are still rife in the industry.

Container ships are mostly built in European countries and travel the world. Yet neither the manufacturers nor the shipping companies take responsibility for these human and environmental rights violations. Binding international and national laws are needed to regulate this global industry.



Photo: Transporting water, Bedouin community in West Bank, Palestine

MEKOROT: WATER APARTHEID IN PALESTINE⁴

Mekorot controls most water sources in the Palestine occupied territories. Yet it is violating basic human rights by refusing to supply water to some Palestinian communities inside Israel—despite an Israeli high court ruling recognising their right to water.

Mekorot also works in partnership with the Israeli military, confiscating irrigation pipes from Palestinian farmers and destroying Palestinian communities' water supplies. In 2012 alone the Israeli army demolished 60 water and sanitation structures belonging to Palestinians.⁵

Brazilian, Dutch, Paraguayan and Portuguese public water companies intending to partner with Mekorot must be made responsible for the impact of such partnerships and be held to account for resulting Human Rights abuses of such partnerships. The global campaign of Boycott Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) has succeeded in breaking Mekorot's partnerships in some of these countries due to the strength of civil society movements.

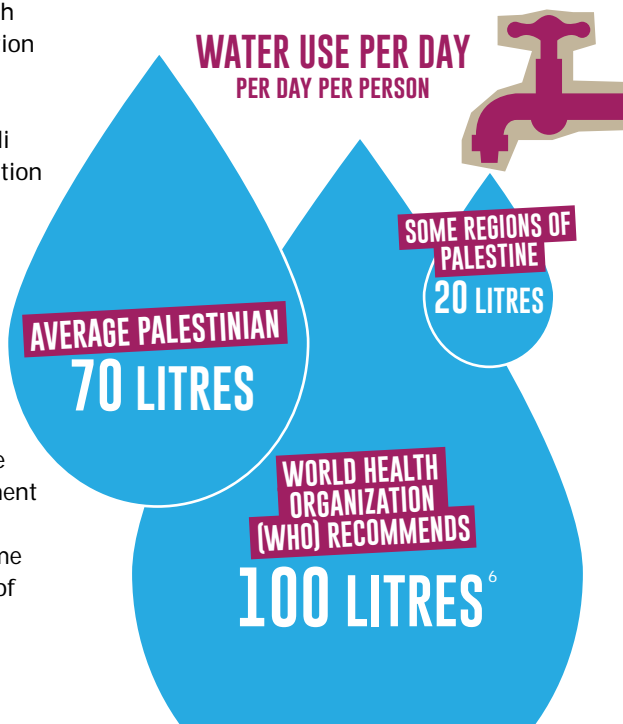


Photo: Protest against Reckitt Benckiser, in South Korea



OXY: HUMIDIFIER STERILISER DISASTER IN SOUTH KOREA

Between 2001 and 2011 British based multinational company Reckitt Benckiser sold 453,000 bottles of a humidifier steriliser in South Korea called “New gasupgi dangbun” containing a dangerous and hazardous PHMG chemical.⁷

“Multinational companies cannot continue to get away with murder, we need justice.”

Hye Lyn Kim KFEM, Friends of the Earth South Korea

Toxic humidifiers led to 920 tragic deaths and over 4,000 reported medical cases.⁸ A large percentage of these cases is believed to have been directly related to this chemical.⁹ This is one the worst chemical disasters of the 21st century.

The company Reckitt Benckiser took advantage of the fact that Europe’s consumer product standard doesn’t apply in Korea and was able to sell the product without proper safety checks. When the humidifier steriliser was found to be poisonous in 2011, the company pulled out all the stops to avoid responsibility and is still refusing to pay proper compensation.

Victims and Friends of the Earth South Korea/KFEM are demanding justice at a national and international level.



Photo: UN Human Rights Council in Geneva



TIME FOR A TREATY

After decades of struggle from communities across the world, the idea of corporations being held legally responsible for their crimes no matter where they may occur is finally becoming a reality. The new Human Rights Treaty has the support of more than 800 organizations, the UN Human Rights council, the Vatican and many diverse governments including South Africa, Indonesia, India, China and Ecuador.

ON THE ROAD TO CHANGE

1974

UN Commission on Corporations established

1990

UN drafts TNCs code of conduct

2014

UN passes treaty resolution

2015

First IGW meeting on binding treaty

JUSTICE FOR ALL

Traditionally, international human rights law focuses on the role and responsibilities of states. Human rights abuses arising from the cross-border activities of corporations is the largest gap in international law. In our globalised world, companies operate between different national jurisdictions and often escape accountability. The Treaty will seek to address the current gaps in international law and bring much needed justice to thousands.

TO GET INVOLVED AND FIND OUT MORE GO TO
TREATYMOVEMENT.COM & FOEI.ORG



**Friends of
the Earth
Asia Pacific**



**Friends of
the Earth
International**

Friends of the Earth International is the world's largest grassroots environmental network with 75 member groups and over two million members and supporters around the world.

Our vision is of a peaceful and sustainable world based on societies living in harmony with nature. We envision a society of interdependent people living in dignity, wholeness and fulfilment in which equity and human and peoples' rights are realised. This will be a society built upon peoples' sovereignty and participation.

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