



ACTIVITIES AND STATEMENTS OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

**From the Barcelona Council in November 2017 to
the Geneva Council in June 2018**



Council

Meeting of the SI Council in Barcelona, Spain

24-25 November 2017



The Council of the Socialist International met on 24-25 November in Barcelona, hosted by its member party in Spain, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE. Delegations from all continents, representing SI member parties and invited guests, gathered to discuss three main themes: *Building the future with the left: democracy, equality and solidarity*; *Working for stability and peace in a world of multiple conflicts*; and *Promoting human responses to humanitarian crises*.

At the opening of the meeting, SI Secretary General Luis Ayala outlined the importance of the themes to be discussed and their significance for the socialist movement. He was pleased that the SI had delivered on its commitment to meet in Barcelona, saying that the SI was here to listen, understand and support the efforts of the socialists in Catalonia and Spain, at the side of Pedro Sanchez, leader of the PSOE, and Miquel Iceta, First Secretary of the Socialist Party of Catalunya. He noted with satisfaction that 2017 had been a year in which the SI had reaffirmed its commitments in face of global challenges, following on from the XXV Congress in Cartagena in March. Its member parties were motivated by a shared conviction that our principles, values, and politics, the way we understand them, are crucial in our common struggle for greater equality, justice and solidarity.

Miquel Iceta expressed his pleasure and honour to welcome all the delegates to Barcelona, in an address that reviewed the historical work of the SI and PSOE in promoting shared values and principles. He recounted the exemplary manner in which Catalan society had reacted to the recent terrorist attack, declaring that the people were not afraid because they were together. He expressed his firm belief that there should be no new borders around Catalonia, and that the PSC should continue to work for Barcelona to be the capital of the Mediterranean and one of Europe's great cities. His party offered Catalonians a country less divided, in which a willingness to give would allow all citizens to win, echoing the words of former SI president Willy Brandt, who considered reconciliation to be the best weapon against isolation and prejudice.

SI President George Papandreou congratulated the PSOE and the PSC for standing up for shared socialist values at a historically crucial moment. He was convinced that both the PSOE and the PSC were on the right path and that they would be successful in providing lasting solutions to the crisis in Catalonia. This was one of many challenges in a turbulent world, and he stressed that it was not possible to improve societies without the inclusion and participation of citizens, giving them the voice to air their grievances and hopes. He reflected on the growing inequality in the world and lack of democratic accountability of corporations that had become bigger than governments. Increased fear and marginalisation in the world must be overcome with coexistence he added, and real change needed a democratic vision.

Pedro Sánchez, leader of the PSOE and an SI Vice-President, made a keynote speech at the closing of the meeting. He described Barcelona in the terms of Miguel de Cervantes as a city unique in beauty, which was a host to foreigners, hospital for the poor and homeland to the brave, words that continued to define the city. The PSOE was committed to radical equality between men and women, the recognition of multiple identities and global responses to global challenges. It would not let anyone appropriate Catalonia or Spain, but he saw the need to reach a new agreement and open the door to a new constitution. This vision was reflected in the Declaration on Catalonia adopted by the Council. Addressing current global challenges, he called for more democracy to tackle globalisation, for a social market economy that would prioritise combating climate change, for ending social disequilibrium and fighting corruption, leaving the best possible legacy for the next generation.

Being the 25th of November the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Sánchez underlined the significance of that date for global social democrats. Earlier in the Council, all delegates had marked this event and sent a strong message of denunciation of these crimes on behalf of socialists the world over.

The diverse interventions on the main themes of the agenda incorporated many perspectives, ranging from the presentation of specific local and national situations to reflections on the global challenges faced by the people of the world. Specially invited guests included Antonio Ledezma (ABP, Venezuela), a former political prisoner who just days prior to the meeting had escaped house arrest in Venezuela where he had been held for more than a thousand days, who called for the liberation of Venezuela and an end to the suffering of its people. Maung Tun Khin, representing the Burmese Rohingya Organisation, presented a harrowing and deeply moving account of the extreme violence and persecution suffered by the Rohingya minority in Myanmar in recent months. The

Council would later adopt a resolution on the situation in Venezuela and a declaration on the Rohingya.

Following the debates, the Council also adopted resolutions and declarations on Catalonia, the elections in Equatorial Guinea, on Honduras, Nicaragua and Haiti, on North Korea, on the Kurdish People, on the recent elections in Nicaragua, on slavery and migration, and on Yemen. The Council expressed its sympathy and sent a message of solidarity to all those affected by the terrorist attack on a mosque in the North Sinai region of Egypt during Friday prayers on 25 November, resulting in the loss of more than 300 lives.

In accordance with the mandate given by the XXV Congress and subsequent Council meeting in New York earlier in 2017, the SI agreed and established the Committee on gender equality. Its responsibilities will include identifying the obstacles and promoting strategies and innovative ideas for achieving gender parity.

The Council received reports from both the Ethics and the Finance committees which had met on the eve of the Council. The Ethics Committee had elected Ariane Fontenelle (PS, Belgium) as its chair for the current inter-Congress period and the Finance Committee had re-elected Maurice Poler (AD, Venezuela) and Janos Veres (MSzP Hungary) as co-chairs and Márcio Bins (PDT, Brazil) as its vice-chair. The Council adopted the reports of both committees, and approved the budget of the SI for 2018.

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DECLARATION ON CATALONIA

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Council has always supported the struggle of the Spanish socialists for freedom, democracy and the rule of law. The transition to democracy, since the end of the Franco dictatorship, was an exemplary process, which has inspired many member parties of our organisation in their own struggles to gain freedoms. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 created momentum for the welfare state, the expansion of social and civil rights as well as the development of a largely decentralised state, which allows a high level of self-governance by the different autonomous communities.

Within the framework of democracy and freedoms which Spain enjoys, and which, unfortunately, member parties of our organisation still lack in some regions of the world, the Socialist International shows its deep concern and shares the rejection of the unilateral declaration of independence of Catalonia on 27 October, imposed by one part of the Catalan Parliament against the majority will of Catalans and Spaniards. This contravenes the constitution, the Autonomous Status of Catalonia, coexistence and the territorial integrity of the country.

In Catalonia there is no social majority in favour of independence, and much less supportive of actions that lead away from democratic legality. The strategy carried out by the pro-independence government of Catalonia has had serious political, economic and social consequences: in a few weeks more than 2,000 businesses have left, there has been an enormous split within the society complemented by growing international isolation and weakening of Catalan institutions.

On the other hand, the Socialist International notes that the intransigent position of the right-wing government in Spain for years, its rejection of dialogue and its lack of responses to the deterioration of the political situation has been highly irresponsible and has only contributed to aggravate the problem. As socialists we believe that the current government of Spain must once and for all offer a political response to the problem of Catalonia, as the response cannot be simply juridical.

In this context, the Socialist International supports the PSOE and the PSC in their proposal to promote a solution based on dialogue and negotiation, within the framework of the state of law and the Spanish democratic institutions, which culminates with a reform of the Spanish Constitution in a federal sense and a new Autonomous Statute to find a better fit for Catalonia within Spain.

Finally, our organisation considers that Catalonia needs a government that makes possible agreements of a broad majority, a change of course and a policy of reconciliation. Bridges must be rebuilt. For this reason, the Socialist International supports the candidacy of the First Secretary of the Catalan Socialists, Miquel Iceta, for the Presidency of the Catalan government in the elections which will take place in the autonomous region on 21 December.

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RESOLUTION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE ON GENDER EQUALITY

The Committee on Gender Equality will be composed by five women and five men from SI member parties elected by the Council.

It will be chaired by the President of the SI Women and the President of the SI.

Members of the Committee will assume specific responsibilities in order to carry out specific tasks of the Committee.

The Committee will have the goal to identify obstacles for gender equality, promote strategies and innovative ideas for achieving parity and ensuring that gender balance is crucial in the composition of party delegations at the SI meetings.

In this framework it will submit an annual report to the Socialist International to be discussed in the respective Council meeting.

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RESOLUTION ON EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International attentively followed the legislative and municipal elections that took place in Equatorial Guinea on 12 November. The political parties in opposition to the regime of General Teodoro Obiang Bguema, among them the SI-member Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS), reported serious irregularities which demonstrate that those elections were neither transparent, free nor fair, given that the opposition had no access to any means of communication or sufficient resources.

Additionally, numerous opposition observers were expelled from polling stations and detained by the security forces, preventing the proper monitoring of the vote.

The official result of the aforementioned elections was more than 95% of the votes in favour of the governing party, unthinkable for a democratic regime.

The SI Council, meeting in Barcelona on 24-25 November 2017, condemns the legislative and municipal elections held in Equatorial Guinea on 12 November and requests that its member parties and the governments that they support do not recognise the results of those elections.

The SI Council supports the Equatoguinean political opposition and its member party, CPDS, and endorses the demands of this party that these polls are nullified and repeated under free, transparent and equal conditions, with the monitoring of an impartial international observation.

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DECLARATION ON HONDURAS, NICARAGUA AND HAITI

Original: Spanish

The member parties of the Socialist International, gathered in Barcelona on 24-25 November 2017, have been observing with concern the evolution of the situation of migrant workers from Central America and the Caribbean, particularly from Nicaragua, Haiti and Honduras, who enjoy temporary protection status. These workers have been subject to an ultimatum from the current administration of the United States under which 59,000 Haitians, 57,000 Hondurans and 2,500 Nicaraguans are to return to their countries of origin. This results in incalculable damage both in the household and national economies of these populations, further provoking social and family breakup, damage to education, health and livelihoods, having lost work and been removed from the country.

In view of the above, the Council of the Socialist International calls on the governing authorities and the Congress of the United States to reconsider this decision and to make a reality the Declaration of Independence of 1776 that "all men are created equal", which is also proclaimed in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and specifically, the statute of permanent residency for these migrants.

The SI Council expresses its solidarity with these fraternal populations, as solidarity is not simply a motto, but we are all citizens of a global reality and all refugees from human conditions, violence and terror.

The SI Council requests that temporary protection status (TPS) is kept in force and that the ultimatum is dropped.

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DECLARATION ON NORTH KOREA

The situation on the Korean peninsula, examined in detail by the SI Presidium in September of this year and addressed in a statement issued from the UN Headquarters in New York, continues to represent a grave challenge to the international community.

The Council considers that the development of atomic weapons by the North Korean regime, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, threatens stability and peace in Asia and the Pacific and must end. Aggressive and provocative actions by North Korea are also having global repercussions, and raise the chilling prospect of a conflict between states with the capability to launch nuclear weapons. Therefore, we call on all states in the region and the United States to refrain from statements, initiatives or military activity that might further escalate tensions in that area.

The SI reiterates the necessity of seeking a political solution to the tensions on the Korean peninsula, in line with its fundamental commitment to peace and diplomacy. The SI will work to define new initiatives to relieve this potentially catastrophic situation, working in consultation and dialogue with partners on the Korean peninsula and regional actors, including its member party in Japan and representatives from China, in order to promote and advance a solution that takes into account the vital regional implications of the current circumstances.

The Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea, in February 2018 give a unique opportunity for a symbolic truce as stated in the UN resolution adopted unanimously on 13 November 2017. The consensus for the resolution included the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as the future hosts of the Olympic Games: Japan, China, France and the USA.

RESOLUTION ON THE KURDISH PEOPLE

In Iran, human rights violations have become routine and normalised. The Iranian Regime does not pay attention to international conventions when it comes to human rights. The international community needs to react and remind the Iranian regime as often as possible about basic human rights.

The Iranian regime does not fulfil its responsibilities when it comes to its own people. In the case of the powerful earthquake two weeks ago, it has not even allowed the international community to get involved in helping the population. The international community needs to help the Kurdish people in reconstructing their houses and recovering after the catastrophe by providing help and getting involved directly, since the Iranian regime does not offer its assistance to the Kurds.

The Kurdish case in Iran deserves the chance of peaceful negotiations but unfortunately at the present time, the Iranian regime is not ready or able to do that.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, the SI supports the implementation of the Iraqi constitution and the stopping of all kinds of violence against the Kurdish people. It condemns the military measures taken by the Iraqi government in the Kurdistan region, which is a violation of the Iraqi constitution. We call on the Iraqi government to implement a peaceful solution and share power with the Kurds, allowing them to govern in Iraq in accordance with the framework of the Iraqi constitution, and to start non-preconditional negotiations with the KRG. We also call on the Iraqi government to protect the rights of the Kurdish people in disputed areas and to withdraw the militias from there.

In Syria, we salute the liberation of Raqqa, the so-called capital of the terrorists of Daesh, by the Syrian Democratic Forces and the international coalitions. We reiterate that the only solution to the Syrian question is a political solution, with the participation of all the democratic representatives of the Syrian people including of course the representatives of the Kurdish people. The final aim of the whole procedure will be the creation of a federal democratic Syria, that will promote peace, stability and freedom.

In Turkey, Erdogan's government should allow the political dialogue to be resumed and release political prisoners and journalists. The Turkish government needs to return to the process of finding a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question.

The Socialist International supports the reactivation of the SI Committee on the Kurdish Question, and the holding of a meeting in the Kurdistan region of Iraq to focus on the Kurdish case and creating harmony among the Kurdish members of the SI.

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RESOLUTION ON THE ELECTIONS IN NICARAGUA

Original: Spanish

The Council of the Socialist International welcomes the completion of municipal elections on 5 November in Nicaragua. These elections were monitored by the Organization of American States (MAE-OAE), headed by the Vice-President of the Electoral Court of Uruguay, Wilfredo Penco, accompanied by 60 observers and experts in electoral organisation, registration and technology, inclusion of political parties, finance and electoral law. They observed the elections on 5 November in the fifteen departments and two autonomous regions.

At this election, 153 mayors and vice-mayors were elected along with their respective municipal councillors. The Sandinista Front won 135 of these with a participation of 52%. The Council of the Socialist International welcomes the success of its member party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, in the elections in Nicaragua and congratulates the people of Nicaragua.

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DECLARATION ON ROHINGYA

The SI Council reiterates the call of the SI Presidium, made from the United Nations in New York in September of this year, for an end to violence against the Rohingya people in Myanmar, and condemns the persecution suffered by this minority. The continued restrictions placed on access to the conflict zone for aid agencies and representatives of the UN are a clear indication of attempts to cover up the reality of the atrocities that have been committed in an attempt to forcibly remove the Rohingya from their homes and villages. There is overwhelming evidence of systematic violations of human rights and serial persecution on the grounds of ethnicity in Rakhine province, and those responsible must be held accountable. This ethnic cleansing has led more than 600,000 refugees to flee across the border into Bangladesh.

The SI has previously called for the right of return for those forced to leave the country, and though a recent pact allows for the repatriation of some of the Rohingya, it is meaningless without an end to the repression that has been imposed upon them for decades. The right of return must therefore be accompanied by the suspension of military action and allowing of the delivery of humanitarian aid by the UN and other international organisations. Without these, there is no guarantee that those who return to their home will not continue to suffer discrimination at the hands of those who forced them from their homes, and perpetrated heinous acts of violence. Until the Rohingya are safely able to return to their homes in Myanmar, those who have crossed into neighbouring countries must be assured of humanitarian assistance and given all necessary support to rebuild their lives.

The SI Council reiterates the responsibility that the government of Myanmar has towards the Rohingya minority, which must no longer be denied fundamental rights. The Burmese leadership must open a full dialogue to address minority rights and the need of the Rohingya to be recognised and respected as full citizens of Myanmar.

DECLARATION ON SLAVERY AND MIGRATION

Throughout the current global wave of migration, the SI Council and Committee on Migrations have consistently urged respect for the human rights of migrants and underlined the need to address the root causes of migration. The guiding principles of the organisation were laid out in 2015 in the SI Charter of the Rights of Migrants, which outlines that the need to overcome poverty, escape conflict and rise to the challenge posed by economic and environmental hardship is behind the majority of cases of migration and exile.

The SI Charter is a demonstration of the commitment of the member parties of the SI to fight to overcome the injustices, discrimination and racist and xenophobic practices faced by migrants. In light of the situation currently being faced by migrants in Libya, the Council strenuously underlines the provision of Article 5 of the charter, which states: "All practices such as slavery, servitude, forced or obligatory labour, and human trafficking shall be prohibited."

The recent emergence of clear evidence of the selling of humans as slaves in Libya is a shocking and abhorrent demonstration of complete disregard for the human rights of migrants who have in many cases been taken unwittingly into the country by human traffickers under false pretences. Migrants, in Libya as in the whole world, are among the most vulnerable in society and are particularly prone to exploitation and mistreatment.

The SI Council reaffirms the fundamental commitment of SI member parties to the Charter of the Rights of Migrants, and strenuously rejects all violations of the basic rights of migrants around the world. It entrusts the SI Committee on Migrations, which has been re-established for the current inter-Congress period, to continue the engagement of the SI in this area, working to uphold the rights of migrants and develop concrete proposals and initiatives to alleviate the root causes of this phenomenon.

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RESOLUTION ON THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

Original: Spanish

The Council of the Socialist International reaffirms the resolution made on 3-4 November in Santo Domingo during the meeting of the Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean:

1. To immediately release the political prisoners and ensure respect for the human rights of all Venezuelans to create the conditions for finding ways that lead to a satisfactory solution of the political crisis.
2. To request the opening of a humanitarian channel which can immediately address the complex food and health emergency that the Venezuelan people are suffering.
3. To ensure that the presidential elections in 2018 are free and fair without prisoners or those disqualified, under the leadership of a new electoral authority that guarantees their full credibility, together with effective qualified international observers from the European Union, OAS and the United Nations. The legitimacy and independence of the electoral authority are essential elements for the sovereign will of the Venezuelan people to be expressed and respected.
4. To respect the National Assembly and all its members in the exercising of their duties. To respect the separation of powers established in the Constitution, the state of law and democratic principles, and to respect the self-determination of the Venezuelan people.
5. The Council hopes that the process of dialogue and negotiation will be constructive and serious in the forthcoming talks on 1 and 2 December in the Dominican Republic, accompanied by international facilitators and guarantors, and that it will be able to deliver results and respond democratically and peacefully to the serious crisis in Venezuela.

DECLARATION ON YEMEN

The SI Council calls for urgent action to address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, where food insecurity is affecting approximately 60 percent of the population, an estimated 17 million people. Of these, seven million are at risk of famine, while three million have fled their homes. In all, it is thought that 9.8 million Yemenis are in acute need of humanitarian assistance, and there remains a shortfall of approximately \$1 billion in funding for the humanitarian response.

The recent blockade imposed by the Saudi-led coalition has undoubtedly exacerbated the crisis in Yemen and led to further suffering and loss of life. Preventing humanitarian assistance from reaching the civilian population is a violation of international law. The SI repeats its condemnation of indiscriminate airstrikes and the use of cluster munitions by the international coalition, another violation of international law. These have killed and wounded thousands of civilians in Yemen. Indiscriminate rocket attacks and the laying of banned antipersonnel landmines by both sides in the conflict have also claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians. Those responsible for violations of human rights and international law during the Yemeni conflict must be held accountable.

The SI has a deep and longstanding commitment to the Yemeni people and the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), its member in that country. The Secretary General of the SI had visited the capital, Sana'a, and held meetings with members of the government, political leaders, party representatives and activists at a time when there was hope for a peaceful and democratic future for all citizens of Yemen, a prospect which today seems further than ever from being realised. The SI will continue to offer its support and solidarity to its member party and the citizens of Yemen as they face this extreme hardship.

The humanitarian situation has already reached unprecedented levels, and must not be allowed to deteriorate further. As a matter of priority, the SI Council calls for:

- An immediate end to the blockade and the resumption of food imports to all Yemeni ports
- A commitment from the international community to fully fund humanitarian response efforts
- The granting of access for aid agencies to all those in Yemen who are in desperate need of relief and assistance.

At the origin of the Yemeni crisis is the conflict that has wracked the country since 2015, and until Yemen is at peace there is no prospect of an end to the suffering of its civilian population. It is therefore paramount that the warring parties take steps to bring the conflict to an end, in the interests of all Yemenis, with the support and assistance of the international community.



Middle East

The unilateral decision on Jerusalem by the United States of America

6 December 2017

The formal recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is a deeply troubling act by the United States that will have damaging and far-reaching consequences for the pursuit of peace in the Middle East. The deep significance of Jerusalem as a historical holy site for Jews, Muslims and Christians makes its final status central to any durable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The future of Jerusalem is therefore not one that can be decided unilaterally by any one nation, a fact that has long been recognised by the international community and previous US presidents, both Republican and Democrat.

The foreign policy of the current US administration has been characterised by unilateral decisions taken with little regard for the global consensus or the wider outcome of such actions. Recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, while continuing to deny the legitimate claims of the Palestinian people for an independent state, extinguishes any notion that the United States will act as a dependable mediator by legitimising the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, which has until now lacked any international recognition and continues to be in violation of international law.

Following a number of years without any meaningful progress, this decision all but ends hopes that diplomatic efforts can be revived in the short term, exacerbating tension in the region and creating the potential for renewed violence and unrest. The SI, while recognising the anger and frustration that many Palestinians will be feeling, urges all those who continue to be committed to a two-state solution and an end to occupation to respond peacefully to this latest setback, through diplomatic and political initiatives.

The fundamental commitment of the SI to a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine remains unchanged, though the voices of those on both sides who are working for peace have today been overrun. The SI has repeatedly called for the immediate and unconditional recognition of the State of Palestine on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, including at its XXV Congress earlier this year when it called upon all governments that had not yet done so to recognise Palestine as an investment in peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The SI reiterates this call today and urges all those governments that pursue a peaceful outcome to this longstanding conflict, to now recognise the Palestinian state, thus demonstrating that the wider international community continues to be committed to the two-state solution, ending the Israeli occupation and reaching a just and lasting peace based on international law.



Africa

Meeting of the SI Africa Committee in Luanda, Angola

12-13 December 2017



Latifa Perry

The African member parties of the Socialist International convened in Luanda on 12-13 December 2017, hosted by the SI's member party in Angola, the MPLA. The Committee's discussions centered on two main themes: "For humane, just and democratic policies – our role and our commitment in Africa" and "Securing peace and resolving conflicts in the Great Lakes Region".

The meeting was opened by Julião Mateus Paulo "Dino Matross", from the host party, and by the SI Secretary General. In his opening address, Julião Mateus Paulo referred to this important moment in Angola's history following the last elections which their candidate had won with 61% of the vote, and the new cycle that had now begun. They aimed for greater economic diversification with less dependency on oil, a transformation accompanied by a process of reforms of the State and the judicial system, and to ensure employment, better services, more social justice and a better quality of life. On the international scene, he pointed to the increasing tensions and underlined the need for cooperation with the United Nations for peaceful solutions to the multiple conflicts in the world. Regarding Africa, he spoke of the conflicts in the Great Lakes region, in Somalia, Nigeria, Libya, Sudan, Central African Republic and in Mali, which had led to illegal

emigration in large numbers and under inhumane conditions. He reiterated that Africa was rich in natural resources but poor in development. Within the SI we were united in the need to work together in addressing the problems of the continent.

The SI Secretary General Luis Ayala congratulated the President of the Republic, João Lourenço, on his election victory, expressing his satisfaction and honour at having been able to accompany the electoral process and the transformation that Angola was going through. He welcomed João Lourenço's approach to the work of his government to "improve what is good, correct what is wrong". The commitment of the President to combat corruption deserved the attention and respect of all leaders. Angola had progressed considerably since achieving peace in 2002 and Lourenço provided a solid vision and leadership for the future. As social democrats and socialists we stood true to our principles and promises, committed to guaranteeing freedoms and the respect for people's rights, men, women and the youth. In the SI we remain firm in the fight against economic inequality, in responding to the challenges of sustainable development and to improving people's lives. Recognising the world of conflicts we live in, he reiterated the need to tackle the deficit of democracy, the problem of inequality, and increase justice and solidarity, to ensure peace.

Commencing with the theme of Securing peace and resolving conflicts in the Great Lakes region, the Committee heard a key-note speech by the Angolan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Manuel Augusto, who highlighted Angola's performance in resolving conflicts, noting that while there was underway a process for pacification and stabilisation in the East of the DRC, new conflicts were emerging in Burundi, Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan. He spoke of the recent summit involving the Heads of State of Angola, Congo Brazzaville and the DRC, an initiative of Angolan President João Lourenço, and reiterated Angola's commitment to the search for peace and conflict resolution in the region. Members of the committee engaged in an active debate on this subject and benefited from a question and answer session with the Minister.

On the theme of humane, just and democratic policies – our role and our commitment in Africa, a key-note speech was presented by Manuel José Nunes Júnior, MPLA political bureau member and a State Minister, in a session which included a wide range of perspectives with many contributions from representatives of member parties in Africa.

The meeting offered the opportunity for participants to share information on the national situation in their respective countries. Numerous reports were presented, including on the crisis affecting the Anglophone population in Cameroon; the grave developments that have been taking place in Togo over the last four months; the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the government has committed to holding elections on 23 December 2018; the current climate in Equatorial Guinea following the 12 November elections, where to no one's surprise the ruling party won all but one of the seats in the Chamber of deputies, every seat in the Senate and every local council; the situation regarding Chad, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Guinea, whose President Alpha Condé, an SI member, is the head of the African Union. An in-depth presentation on the current situation in Angola was also presented by João de Almeida Martins, member of the MPLA Political Bureau.

The Committee re-elected Emmanuel Golou (PSD, Benin) and Ebrahim Ebrahim (ANC, South Africa) as chair and vice-chair of the Committee respectively.

Following the discussions and the work of those gathered in Luanda, a Declaration was issued reflecting key aspects of the debates.

LUANDA DECLARATION

Original: Spanish

The member parties of the Socialist International meeting in Luanda on 12-13 December, hosted by the MPLA, the member party in Angola, declare:

1. Their satisfaction and joy to see that the MPLA, through the work undertaken by the government of President João Lourenço, is implementing an ambitious programme and a set of priorities that respond to the aspirations of the Angolan people, within the framework of a democracy fully consolidated and strengthened by the voice of the people in the elections that took place last August, elections that were totally free and fair.
2. We appreciate and support the objectives set out by President Lourenço to reaffirm political institutions and democracy by strengthening the rule of law, the fight against corruption, the diversification of the economy and policies that will lead to the improvement of the living conditions of the Angolan people.
3. We welcome the commitment undertaken by President Lourenço to put first the interests of the Angolan people in the construction of a country and a society of opportunities for all citizens, giving priority to social progress, to inclusion, to the fight against poverty, to economic growth and to future advances in the benefit for all.
4. We unanimously express our gratitude and pride at the task that our comrades in the MPLA and the President of the Republic of Angola have undertaken today in this new phase of their country's history, wishing them every success in their work.
5. At the same time, we congratulate President Lourenço on his efforts and initiatives in regard to the stability and democratic certainty in the Great Lakes region following his recent meeting with his fellow Heads of State of Congo Brazzaville and of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which formalised the holding of elections in the DRC agreed to take place on 23 December 2018, a fundamental factor for the stability in the whole of this region.
6. We will continue to count on the contribution, enthusiasm and support of the MPLA to the work of the Socialist International at the regional and global level, in favour of peace, democracy and the freedoms and rights of all, to face the challenges that are common to our political family in the search for a world with more justice and more solidarity.

In relation to the expectations of our political family in regard to Congo:

1. We call on the government of the DRC and the state institutions to guarantee and create all the necessary conditions for the holding of free and fair elections in order to ensure the participation of the different political forces, from the government as well as from the opposition and all the citizens, capable of leading to a peaceful transition and to a democratically elected government within the time limit prescribed and established at the meeting of the three Heads of State of Angola, Congo-Brazzaville and the DRC.
2. The Socialist International, directly and through its members, is ready to contribute in an open and honest manner with their presence and participation in order to accompany and to support this electoral process during its different stages, assuming that the authorities of the country and the electoral institutions will be prepared to open their doors to international observers.

Concerning the serious developments that have been occurring in Togo during the last four months:

1. We support and express our sympathy and solidarity to the people of Togo who have been demonstrating peacefully and continually throughout the country in favour of their freedom that has been confiscated for more than fifty years by the same biological family. These peaceful demonstrations led by a coalition of fourteen opposition parties, including the SI member party, the CDPA, demand: (a) the return to the Constitution of 1992 adopted by more than 97% of the votes in a referendum that is ignored by the regime, perpetuating their permanence in power despite the will manifested in the ballot boxes to limit the number of periods of mandates in the government of the country; (b) the liberation of all political prisoners and all those detained in the demonstrations that have been taking place from 19 August 2017.
2. We observe, with consternation and regret, the obstinate rejection of the Togo government to accept the legitimate demands of its people and we condemn the disproportionate use of force by the illegal regime to suppress the people's aspirations. At the same time, we reaffirm that the democratic alternation of power is a natural right that cannot be indefinitely denied to the Togolese people and we call on our members to act in their respective countries in support of the Togolese people.

With respect to Western Sahara:

1. We express our support for the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his newly appointed Personal Envoy in their efforts to achieve a political, peaceful, fair and lasting solution, mutually acceptable for both sides in the conflict, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In relation to the dramatic and worrying evolution of the crisis affecting the English speaking population in Cameroon:

1. We deplore the loss of human lives within the civilian population as well as within the ranks of the defence and security forces. We urge President Biya to open a frank and sincere dialogue with the different credible actors in Cameroonian society, in order to avoid the radicalisation of populations in the English-speaking regions of the Northwest and Southwest that would benefit the secessionists and other opportunists. We give encouragement to the Social Democratic Front (SDF) in their search for a lasting solution to this crisis by means of a dialogue at every level and under any shape or form.

In what concerns the efforts for achieving peace in the African continent:

1. We reaffirm our full commitment and support to the Heads of State and to the leaders of the SI parties in the African continent, like those in Mali and Niger, or Burkina Faso, that today work to ensure peace, to stop the terror and to provide a secure environment for all their citizens. At the same time, we wish to state our firm solidarity with all the peoples and nations of Africa that suffer the impact of terror and the consequences of the painful conflicts that affect the nations of the continent from Nigeria and South Sudan to Somalia.

Our appreciation to the MPLA and to our comrades in Angola:

1. Finally, we wish to express our profound gratitude for the fraternity and warm hospitality extended to us by our comrades of the MPLA during the course of our work in Luanda.



Syria

The SI warns of a new humanitarian catastrophe in Syria

25 January 2018

The Turkish military incursion into Syrian territory has brought a dangerous new dimension to the conflict in that country, with severe humanitarian repercussions for the civilian populations in the targeted areas. These innocent victims of the latest surge of violence have previously suffered at the hands of both the regime and the terrorist forces and once again find themselves at the centre of a conflict they are powerless to prevent.

According to United Nations spokespersons and conflict monitors in Syria, the Turkish offensive has already resulted in the loss of civilian life and displacement of at least 5,000 civilians, a number that is certain to rise. Of the 324,000 people that currently live in the affected area, as many as 40 percent were already displaced, many of them more than once. Those who are most vulnerable are reportedly unable to flee, placing them at even greater risk.

The SI has consistently reiterated its support to all those working to establish a democratic, non-sectarian, ethnically plural and gender equal society in northern Syria. In the struggle to defeat Daesh, the SI recognises the role played by Syrian Kurds and the hardship and heavy losses that they have suffered for this cause. The SI also acknowledges the dangers created by terrorist attacks in Turkey and has repeatedly condemned such attacks. However, the Turkish offensive 'Olive Branch', risks not only destabilising a relatively peaceful area of Syria, but could jeopardise international efforts to eliminate Daesh and undermine the UN-backed peace process in Syria.

The Socialist International therefore calls on the Turkish government to stop military operations that undermine the efforts of achieving regional peace and threaten civilian life. Recognising the legal obligation of states, Turkey must allow humanitarian assistance to once more reach Afrin, where 60 percent of the population were dependent on humanitarian aid even before the current military operations began.



Guinea Bissau

SI denounces violation of freedom of assembly and other rights in Guinea Bissau

2 February 2018



SI SG and Presidium members, PAIGC leader and other local leaders and international guests

In the capital of Guinea Bissau, amid deep tensions, the IX Ordinary Congress of the SI member party, PAIGC, which was scheduled to be held in Bissau from 30 January to 4 February, was forcefully impeded from opening by government authorities and police, in a violation of freedom of assembly and other rights, which SI guests to the Congress firmly denounced.

On the 29th of January, the day before the Congress was due to open, the party leadership received a communication from the police authorities that the congress would not be allowed to proceed, an act that led hundreds of militants to occupy the party headquarters on the 30th, where the congress was due to be held. However, in the early hours of 31 January, the police forced their way into the building, expelling close to 300 PAIGC members, detaining a number of them, and occupying the premises in order to prevent the holding of the congress.

A number of international guests had arrived on the eve of the congress, invited to attend by the PAIGC, including the Secretary General of the SI, some of the SI Vice-Presidents from the region, and other party leaders and representatives. PAIGC leader Domingos Simões Pereira, on the morning of the 31st, held a meeting with the international guests, in which he explained the difficulties encountered by the party following the decision by the government to prevent the holding of their ordinary congress, which should have opened the day before. He reiterated the will of the party to hold the announced event. By the perseverance of the party leadership and despite the arbitrary impediments imposed, the congress finally opened on the 31st close to midnight in an outdoor space in the grounds of a hotel in the capital. The congress was then inaugurated in the open air, with speakers addressing the gathering out loud and with a hand-held megaphone. Thus, with the attendance of a large number of party delegates the working sessions of the congress were initiated.

The following morning, the 1st of February, the leader of the PAIGC, along with a number of leaders of different political parties of Guinea Bissau, held a special meeting with the Socialist International representatives and other guests invited to the congress, at which the media was also present. In this meeting, the leaders and representatives of the Guinea Bissau political parties participating closed ranks with the PAIGC. The Secretary General of the Socialist International addressed the gathering denouncing the act by the authorities as an undemocratic attempt to silence the voice of the people and to dismantle crucial rights and freedoms protected by the constitution and the law and fundamental principles of a democratic system, and he conveyed the unequivocal solidarity of the SI with the PAIGC and all the democratic political forces in the country. Other members of the SI Presidium and party leaders and representatives from different political forces also addressed the meeting expressing their rejection of these developments.

Later that day, an official statement was issued by a delegation of ECOWAS, the organisation of West African states, in which it called on the Bissau government to respect previous Accords on the political situation in Guinea Bissau or to face sanctions, and deplored the lack of respect for freedom of assembly. At the same time, it launched an appeal to the authorities of Guinea Bissau to fully comply with the rule of law and to respect human rights, including the right to free assembly, while exhorting the national security and defence forces to maintain a neutral republican position in regard to the country's political actors.

Following all these developments, the IX Ordinary Congress of the PAIGC resumed close to midnight on the 1st of February at the party headquarters, in line with the sustained efforts of the PAIGC leadership, of their members, the other democratic political actors of the country, and the unanimous support of all the specially invited international guests to the event.

Addendum: Joint statement issued on 3 February 2018 by the African Union and the United Nations on Guinea Bissau

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, express concern over the

protracted political crisis in Guinea-Bissau despite the multiple opportunities offered to the main political stakeholders to arrive at a consensual arrangement. They denounce the actions being taken by those who seek to obstruct and prevent a resolution of the crisis.

They condemn the recent actions taken by the national authorities to prevent the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) from convening and holding its Party Congress, including the directive given to national security services to evacuate and shutter the party's headquarters. They call on all relevant authorities to strictly adhere to international human rights and humanitarian law and to immediately remove all restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly, political participation and freedom of speech.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations fully endorse the recent decisions on Guinea-Bissau taken by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the margins of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 27 January, and endorsed by the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on 29 January 2018, and welcome the communiqué issued by the ECOWAS ministerial mission that visited Guinea-Bissau on 31 January and 1 February. They support the measures being taken by ECOWAS against "political obstructionists" in the country. They reiterate their endorsement of the centrality of the Conakry Agreement which, inter alia, provides for the appointment of a consensual Prime Minister, and call on the main political stakeholders to faithfully and urgently implement this Agreement, as well as the ECOWAS Roadmap to which they have all signed up to.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations reaffirm their commitment to continue to closely follow all political developments and to support ECOWAS in its efforts to ensure a swift resolution of the protracted crisis in Guinea-Bissau, and stand ready to employ additional measures, should the situation warrant it.

Declaração conjunta da União Africana e das Nações Unidas sobre a Guiné-Bissau

O presidente da Comissão da União Africana, Moussa Faki Mahamat, e o secretário-geral das Nações Unidas, António Guterres, expressam sua preocupação com a prolongada crise política na Guiné-Bissau, apesar das múltiplas oportunidades oferecidas aos principais interessados políticos para chegar a um arranjo consensual. Os dois líderes criticam as ações que estão a ser tomadas por aqueles que procuram obstruir e evitar uma resolução da crise.

Condenam as recentes medidas tomadas pelas autoridades nacionais para evitar que o Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) reúna e realize o seu Congresso, incluindo a ordem dada aos serviços de segurança nacional para evacuar e fechar a sede do partido. Apelam a todas as autoridades relevantes para que respeitem rigorosamente os direitos internacionais dos direitos humanos e direito humanitário e removam imediatamente todas as restrições ao direito à reunião pacífica, à participação política e à liberdade de expressão.

O Presidente da Comissão da União Africana e o Secretário Geral das Nações Unidas

subscrevem plenamente as recentes decisões sobre a Guiné-Bissau tomadas pela Autoridade dos Chefes de Estado e de Governo da Comunidade Económica dos Estados da África Ocidental (CEDEAO) à margem da Cimeira da União Africana em Adis Abeba, Etiópia, em 27 de janeiro, e aprovada pela 30ª Sessão Ordinária da Assembleia de Chefes de Estado e de Governo da União Africana em 29 de janeiro de 2018 e saúda o comunicado emitido pela missão ministerial da CEDEAO que visitou a Guiné-Bissau entre 31 de janeiro e 1 de fevereiro. Eles apoiam as medidas tomadas pela CEDEAO contra "obstrucionistas políticos" no país. Reiteram o seu apoio à centralidade do Acordo de Conacri que, entre outras coisas, prevê a nomeação de um primeiro-ministro consensual e solicita aos principais interessados políticos que implementem de forma fiel e urgente o presente Acordo, bem como o Roteiro da CEDEAO que todos subscreveram.

O Presidente da Comissão da União Africana e o Secretário-Geral das Nações Unidas reafirmam o seu empenho em continuar a acompanhar de perto todos os desenvolvimentos políticos e apoiar a CEDEAO nos seus esforços para assegurar uma rápida resolução da crise prolongada na Guiné-Bissau e Pronto para empregar medidas adicionais, caso a situação o justifique.

Costa Rica

Socialist International SG in Costa Rica

February 2018

SI Secretary General, Luis Ayala, visited Costa Rica to observe the elections on 4 February.



Luis Ayala with Bernal Jimenez, ex-president of the PLN and SI Vice-President (Diario Extra, 12 February 2018)



Former president of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace laureate, Oscar Arias, with SI Secretary General Luis Ayala



Paraguay

Conference in Paraguay

22 February 2018



From left to right: Rafael Michelini, SI Vice-President from NE Uruguay; Rafael Filizzola, leader of the PDP Paraguay; Mario Nalpatian, SI Vice-President from ARF Armenia; Luis Ayala, Secretary General of the SI; Efraín Alegre, Presidential candidate of GANAR, Paraguay; Alejandro Guillier, Senator from Chile; Desirée Massi, Senator from Paraguay; Edgar Giménez, Secretary General of the PDP, Paraguay; Pedro Arturo Santacruz, Senator from Paraguay.

In advance of the forthcoming general elections in Paraguay, to be held on 22 April 2018, the SI member Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) of Paraguay hosted a conference in Asunción on 22 February under the heading “United building the future: Experiences of Alliances in Government”, with the participation of Efraín Alegre, the presidential candidate of the alliance “Gran Alianza Nacional Renovada” (GANAR) of which the PDP is a member, along with SI guest speakers and other invited political personalities.



Burkina Faso

SI condemns terrorist attacks in Ouagadougou

3 March 2018

The Socialist International unreservedly condemns the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Ouagadougou on 2 March, which targeted the Burkinabe army headquarters and the French embassy. These barbaric acts, which claimed the lives of dozens of people, will not weaken the resolve of those who are tirelessly working to rid Burkina Faso and the Sahel region of the threat of violence and terror.

Burkina Faso has suffered multiple terrorist attacks in recent years, and the SI expresses its deepest solidarity with the Burkinabe people, and its member party in that country, the MPP, as they come to terms with this latest deadly incident. Terrorism destroys life and harms the wellbeing of all citizens affected, and is a major obstacle to economic and social development.

The terrorist threat is not restricted to Burkina Faso, and the SI offers its wholehearted support to the efforts of Burkinabe President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré and his government to combat terrorist insurgents across the Sahel region, in cooperation with other members of the G5 Sahel joint task force. Any and all attempts to undermine regional cooperation against the ongoing terror threat must be met with renewed determination and strengthened resolve.

Leaders from the G5 Sahel countries have recently called for increased funding from the international community for their joint initiatives, which are ever more pertinent in light of the tragic events in Ouagadougou. The SI reiterates the calls made by its Presidium in September 2017 for international partners to offer their full support to this body, whose mission is vital to the security of the region.



International Women's Day

Socialist International celebrates International Women's Day

8 March 2018

The Socialist International today celebrates International Women's Day, in recognition of the continuing struggle for women's rights around the world. International Women's Day is of particular significance for the SI, as it was first marked as a result of a resolution of the Second International Conference of Socialist Women on the occasion of the 1910 Copenhagen International Socialist Congress. The cause of women's rights has been at the heart of the global socialist and social democratic movement since its inception, and remains key to its agenda to this day.



International Women's Day

Since the establishment of International Women's Day, a great deal of progress has undeniably been made in the pursuit of gender equality. Women have served at the highest level of elected office in many countries and have more opportunity than ever in large parts of the world when it comes to education and employment. Nonetheless, the objective of equality of women in government and society is yet to be achieved, as it is still the case that women are on average paid less than men for equivalent work, and are underrepresented at the highest levels of business and politics. It is therefore not enough to point to past achievements, but necessary to strive to address the structural and systematic injustices that continue to place half of the world's population at an unfair and unjustifiable disadvantage from the moment they are born.

Furthermore, the revelations that have come during the last year of countless incidents of sexual harassment and discrimination against women in the workplace across all industries, including politics, demonstrate that sexism, exploitation and sexual violence remain a serious problem. Such behaviour can never be justified, and the Socialist International stands in solidarity with all victims of workplace harassment and discrimination and committed to ensuring that this issue is not overlooked or forgotten. The only acceptable outcome is long-lasting change and the eradication of sexism and sexual harassment.

The Socialist International has a proud record of promoting and defending women's rights, both within the organisation and in its political work. On this International Women's Day we pay tribute to all the women working within our member parties and organisations to achieve equality for women and a brighter and more prosperous future for all.



Greece

Founding Congress of The Movement for Change, Kinima Allagis

March 2018





India

SI SG at the 84th INC Congress

March 2018



*Rahul Gandhi,
President of the INC,
with Luis Ayala, SI
Secretary General*



*Anand Sharma,
Deputy Leader of the
Congress
Parliamentary Party;
Manmohan Singh,
former Prime Minister
of India; Luis Ayala,
SI Secretary General;
and Sonia Gandhi*



Anand Sharma, MP; Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India; Luis Ayala, SI Secretary General; and Sonia Gandhi



IPU

SI meeting at the 138th IPU Assembly

25 March 2018



The SI held its meeting of parliamentarians from SI member parties in the context of the 138th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU, which on this occasion took place in Geneva from 24 to 28 March.

The meeting, which was attended by parliamentarians from all continents, offered the opportunity for participants to exchange views on some of the key issues on the agenda of the IPU Assembly and to discuss particular concerns of a national or international nature, with other colleagues from the social democratic family.

Discussions included exchanges on issues that had been put forward for adoption as emergency items at the Assembly, including that of the consequences of the US declaration on Jerusalem and the rights of the Palestinian people in Jerusalem in the light of the UN Charter and resolutions, and of violence against women in the workplace, in particular in parliaments, in the wake of the #MeToo movement. The meeting heard from the Palestinian representative on the developments in the six months since the previous meeting and the pressure they had been under by Israel and the USA since the decision by the US government to move its Embassy to Jerusalem, compounded by the further US decisions to cut its contributions to UNWRA with dire consequences for nearly 5 million Palestinian refugees, and to close the PLO office in Washington. During the discussions there were expressions of support and solidarity with the Palestinians and statements regarding the importance of tackling the issue of violence against women.

A further subject of attention by participants was the theme of strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees, bearing in mind the UN-led process on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), which are due to be adopted at the end of this year. It was proposed to invite members participating in these parliamentary exchanges to contribute to develop common concepts in regard to these subjects for a shared approach from our political family on the GCM and the GCR, further to previous SI positions and decisions on migrants and refugees.

In the discussion on migration and refugees, there were unanimous expressions of condemnation of Myanmar over its treatment of the Rohingya people and the failure of Aung San Suu Kyi to speak out, constituting a betrayal both of the Burmese people and of the confidence that the international community had placed in her. It was pointed out that the Socialist International stance in this regard was very clear from the beginning of this tragedy, however, it was noted that members of the international community continued to pour money into Myanmar and action was needed to stop that and to change political attitudes.

The meeting received a report on the continuing grave situation in Venezuela which had led to the exodus of over 4 million Venezuelans during the last few years. The UNHCR has been calling on the international community to extend their assistance to these Venezuelans who have been forced to leave their country. It was reported that the population was suffering from hunger and misery, as well as a lack of pharmaceutical products and treatments for chronic diseases. The lack of food was compounded by the destruction of the country's agriculture industry and the gross mismanagement of the economy by the government. It was also reported that the majority in the national parliament, two thirds of which were the opposition, were being punished by the government and had not been paid a salary since the beginning of 2016.



USA

SI heartened by massive youth protests in cities of the US and other countries against gun violence

26 March 2018

The Socialist International is heartened by the massive number of young people who protested in cities across the United States and worldwide as part of the 'March for Our Lives' on Saturday 24 March. This diverse grassroots movement, led by young people whose lives have been profoundly affected by gun violence, has been truly inspirational, and should mark a turning point to bring about real reform on the issue of gun control in the US.

By exercising their right to protest in order to stand up for what they believe in, these courageous young people have issued a clarion call to elected representatives. Those returned to enact the will of the people must now respond to the urgent calls for legislation to prevent school massacres from ever happening again, knowing that any who fail to heed those calls will be held accountable at the ballot box.

The debate surrounding gun violence and firearms regulation in the United States has drawn attention to the negative influence of special interests and lobbying groups. The democratic process relies on politicians acting in the interests of the citizens, rather than those who financed their election campaign. As the SI and its members have stated on many occasions, democracy is damaged, and progress and development are impeded when special interests are too powerful and able to influence the outcome of elections.

The bravery, determination and optimism of those who participated in the March for Our Lives are a reminder that it is possible to make an impact for positive change and the SI wholeheartedly supports their cause. For the SI, it is self-evident that children and young adults should be able to grow up and attend school and university in safety, anywhere in the world. We stand in solidarity with all those who have been affected by incidents involving gun violence on school and university campuses in the US, which have occurred at a rate in excess of one per week since the beginning of 2018.



Middle East

SI denounces killing of unarmed Palestinians by Israel along Gaza border

1 April 2018

The Socialist International strongly denounces the killing of 16 Palestinians by the Israel Defence Forces during a major protest along Gaza's border with Israel on Friday. The protests were organised as part of a 'Great Return March' initiative in Gaza. In addition to the 16 killed, more than 700 are reported injured and required hospital treatment in Gaza, many of them having been shot with live ammunition. The use of deadly force against protesters and the scale of the loss of life represent a major escalation of the conflict in the region and a damaging blow to hopes for resuming the process for peace.

The SI supports and echoes the call of the UN Secretary-General and others for an independent inquiry into these violent events and the deadly response by the Israeli military. Israeli troops have an obligation to follow human rights law and ensure that lethal force is only used as a last resort. The response so far from the Israeli ministry of defence has been to reject all calls for an independent, transparent investigation, casting serious doubt on the legality of the military response. In light of reports from human rights organisations that unarmed demonstrators were targeted by live ammunition, it is vital that Israel allow this inquiry to take place.

As the SI warned in December last year, recent setbacks to the peace process have had the effect of increasing tensions, creating the potential for the type of violence and unrest witnessed in the last days. The cycle of violence only serves to further damage any prospects for long-term peace as it undermines the moderate voices on both sides urging a return to negotiations.

The events of last Friday are proof that those in both Israel and Palestine who advocate for peace, among them SI member parties, are more than ever in need of international support and solidarity, to counteract the position of hard-line elements in both camps that conflict is inevitable. The objective of a negotiated, durable peace based on international law remains the only viable resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the commitment of the Socialist International to a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine living side by side remains unchanged.



Peru

SI at the VIII Summit of the Americas in Peru

12 April 2018



*SI Secretary General,
interview on RPP
television, Peru*



*Luis Florido, Voluntad
Popular, with Luis
Ayala, SI SG*



Demonstration convened by APRA in solidarity with the Venezuelan opposition



At a meeting in Lima with leaders of APRA, in front of a mural of the founder of the party, Raúl Haya de la Torre

Paraguay

SI in Paraguay for elections

22 April 2018



Presidential candidate Efrain Alegre (centre left) with SI Secretary General, Luis Ayala (centre right), and SI Vice-Presidents Rafael Michelini, PNE Uruguay (left) and Mario Nalpatian, ARF Armenia (right)



Gerardo Morris, APRA, Peru (centre) with Presidential candidate Efrain Alegre (right) and Rafael Filizzola, PDP, Paraguay (left)





Nicaragua

Declaration of the Socialist International on Nicaragua

23 April 2018

The death of nearly 30 Nicaraguan citizens as a result of the repression carried out by the national police and other armed groups against demonstrators during protests that have taken place in that country these last days following the Government's announcement of reforms to the social security system, can under no circumstances be justified and is totally unacceptable.

This loss of life and the deplorable violence used against the protestors have been a cause of deep consternation within the Socialist International. At the same time, we express our grave concern at the limitations imposed on the media and the undetermined number of detainees who should be immediately released.

A democratic State must always guarantee the life and protection of its citizens, and it is its duty to articulate responses to their demands and concerns, fully respecting their lives, their rights and their freedoms.

Today, we make a strong appeal to the Government of Nicaragua to immediately initiate a process for effective responses to the demands of its citizens, in a spirit of inclusion and justice, to re-establish social peace through initiatives that will allow the whole of the Nicaraguan population to recover the road to coexistence, within the framework of democracy.



Palestine

SI attends 23rd session of the Palestine National Council

30 April 2018

SI President, George Papandreou, and SI Secretary General, Luis Ayala, attended the inaugural sitting of the 23rd session of the Palestine National Council, under the title "Al-Quds and protection of the Palestinian Legitimacy", held at the Presidential Headquarters in Ramallah on 30 April 2018, and an International Seminar organised in connection with that session.



George Papandreou and Luis Ayala, during their stay, laid a wreath at the mausoleum of Yasser Arafat, former President of the Palestinian National Authority and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, in Ramallah.





Dominican Republic

SI at the commemoration events on the 20th anniversary of the death of José Francisco Peña Gómez

8-10 May 2018





Middle East

Socialist International condemns killing of demonstrators in Gaza

15 May 2018

The Socialist International condemns the use of live fire by Israeli forces against protesters in Gaza, killing at least 60 people and injuring thousands. Monday's bloodshed bears terrible similarities to the events of 30 March this year, when several unarmed Palestinians were shot dead by the IDF during a major protest. Yesterday, Palestinians exercising their right to peaceful protest were once again targeted. Among the dead were a number of children under the age of 16. A loss of life on this scale has not been seen in Gaza since the end of the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict and the SI stands today in solidarity with the people of Palestine.

Those responsible for these killings must be held to account. Earlier this year, calls made by the UN Secretary-General, members of the international community and the Socialist International, for an independent inquiry into the killings were rejected by the Israeli government. Without an investigation, a clear message is being sent that Israeli forces are able to act with impunity, and it is therefore of paramount importance that an independent and transparent UN investigation into these tragic events is allowed to take place, to ensure that they are never repeated. It should not need reiterating that Israeli troops have an obligation to follow human rights law and ensure that lethal force is only used as a last resort.

The protests took place on the day of the opening of the new embassy of the United States in Jerusalem, a decision by the US government which has severely damaged the pursuit of peace in the Middle East by unilaterally pre-empting the final status negotiations on Jerusalem, which holds such significance for Jews, Muslims and Christians. This decision, taken without regard for the global consensus on the path to peace in the Middle East or the wider ramifications of a political act affecting the sensitivities of millions of people across cultures and religions, coupled with the veto by the US in the UN Security Council of an independent investigation into the killings in Gaza, hinders the road to peace.

In light of the volatile situation and the rapidly diminishing prospects for achieving a sustainable peace in the region, it is incumbent on all those within the international community that wish to see a resolution to seven decades of conflict to urgently intensify their diplomatic efforts to achieve a two-state solution with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace.



Latin America and the Caribbean Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo, Uruguay 17-18 May 2018



A meeting of the Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Montevideo on Thursday 17 and Friday 18 May 2018, hosted by the SI member party in Uruguay, Nuevo Espacio (NE).

During the opening session, the NE President and SI Vice-President, Senator Rafael Michelini, welcomed the more than fifty delegates (see list of participants), representing around twenty social democratic parties of the region. Michelini also welcomed the presence in this session of the Committee, of government and political authorities of the Uruguayan Frente Amplio, giving special thanks to the Vice-President of the country, Lucía Topolanski, and the former President José *Pepe* Mujica.

The President of Nuevo Espacio highlighted some of the characteristics that, in his opinion, can explain why his country has, for the third consecutive term, a centre-left coalition government, the Frente Amplio, whereas in some countries of Latin America and the Caribbean the forces of the social democratic family are living complex times. From its creation and then in government, the Frente has recognised the diversity of its members and also the underlying need of unity in its actions, as a process of synthesis within the group.

Miguel Vargas, as Chair of the Committee, thanked the host party and during his intervention he reflected on the violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, the challenges to public security, inequality and the importance of education to improve the current situation. The Dominican Foreign Minister recalled that Latin America and the Caribbean is the most violent region on the planet, according to recent studies of the WHO. The question of public security is a complex one and inequality on the continent is one of the elements that explain the violence. Vargas highlighted the

importance of education to fight it in the medium and longer term. A better educated people have access to better jobs and better living conditions, therefore our countries must focus on establishing comprehensive education systems to promote creativity through innovation and research and to prepare citizens to respond to the challenges of the forthcoming years, he said, in closing his remarks.

The Secretary General of the Socialist International, Luis Ayala, pointed out that the SI is a family that shares values, principles and also a collective memory, a fact that led him to remember in Montevideo a great Uruguayan leader who fell in the struggle for democracy, Zelmar Michelini, whom he had the opportunity to meet. He remembered as well the historic Dominican leader José Francisco Peña Gómez, as the 20th anniversary of his death was being commemorated. Peña Gómez was the first Chair of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, following the road taken to extend the International beyond Europe and to transform it into a truly global organisation. Following on that path the SI, in its global action, was in solidarity with the liberation struggles in Africa, raising, in so doing, another pillar of the SI in that region of the world where today there are many parties of this political family in government in countries where today there is democracy, peace, rights and freedoms. The SI is also present in Asia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics, a fact that makes it the biggest organisation of political parties on a global level. Currently, our movement faces the challenges of populism, emergent nationalisms with their consequent democratic setbacks, a growing level of insecurity due to open or latent conflicts in many places of the world, the effects of climate change on the planet and increasing inequality, all of which hands us a particular responsibility given our identity and our goals for peace, democracy and equality.

Following the opening session, the delegates debated the main themes set out in the agenda: “Working for the change we want: strengthening the institutions of the democratic state, ensuring rights and freedoms and improving human wellbeing”, and “Latin America and the Caribbean in the face of the global challenges of strengthening peace and security, building an economy of more equality, and responding in a just way to migration and the urgent situation of refugees”.

Participants from the different countries of the region addressed in detail the themes of the agenda, discussing as well the challenges posed by gender issues today in the region. The Committee was attended by and could listen to the interventions of the SI Vice-Presidents from Latin America and the Caribbean: Isabel Allende (PS, Chile), Elsa Espinosa (PRI, Mexico), Sandra Torres (UNE, Guatemala), Jesús Rodríguez (UCR, Argentina), Bernal Jiménez (PLN, Costa Rica), Víctor Benoit (Haiti), the SI Vice-President and host of the meeting, Rafael Michelini, and the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Eyra Ruiz (PRD, Panama).

The Committee had also the opportunity to hold exchanges with Alejandro Guillier and Efraín Alegre, candidates of the social democratic political forces in the last presidential elections in Chile and Paraguay, respectively, who shared their electoral experiences and their viewpoints about the big challenges faced by the countries of the region.

During the morning of the second day of the meeting, the delegates presented and shared views on the national situations in their respective countries. At the end of the discussions and as a result of them, the Committee adopted declarations stating its opinions on Bolivia, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Venezuela and a declaration in honour of José Francisco Peña Gómez.

Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
Montevideo, Uruguay, 17-18 May 2018

Resolution on Bolivia

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo on 17-18 May 2018:

Reiterates the declaration of the XXV Congress of the Socialist International in May 2017 in Cartagena de Indias, in regard to judicial restrictions on political leaders in Latin America.

The Committee expresses once again its concern over the judicial restrictions in Bolivia that affect the leader of its member party National Unity, Samuel Doria Medina, by decisions of the courts that systematically restrict his trips abroad when these are of a political nature.

The Committee declares that to restrict his movements and the international dimension of his work, does not correspond to reasonable measures in a democratic state and rule of law.

Resolution on Guatemala

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean meeting in Montevideo on 17-18 May:

Welcomes and recognises the advances made in the fight against corruption and impunity in this Central American country. Nevertheless, it warns against the worrying and progressive judicialisation of politics in Guatemala and the risk of the judiciary becoming politicised and involved in the conflicts and partisan political confrontations in that nation.

The phenomenon of the judicialisation of politics represents a threat for the consolidation of Guatemalan democracy because the judges and prosecutors become actors with the power to decide the direction in which politics are steered and then become the subject of suspicions of partiality.

The Committee calls on the operators of justice in that country to ensure independence and objectivity in their actions, on the political parties to deepen the reforms that consolidate the democratic system and on the Guatemalan society to maintain the fight against poverty, corruption and the consolidation of peace.

Resolution on Haiti

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo, capital of Uruguay, adopts the following resolution with regard to Haiti:

- 1.- Asks the progressive and democratic forces in Haiti to continue in their efforts to set in motion as soon as possible the Permanent Electoral Council and the Constitutional Council, two important institutions for strengthening the democratic process in that country;
- 2.- Urges all the democratic forces in Haiti to continue their work for the strengthening of the State institutions and for transparency;
- 3.- Promotes the implementation in that country of a policy of economic and social development capable of generating decent jobs to curb the migration of the Haitian population, giving back to the youth confidence in the future of their country.

Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean
Montevideo, Uruguay, 17-18 May 2018

Resolution on Nicaragua

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo on 17-18 May 2018:

- 1.- Recalls the Socialist International declaration issued on 23 April 2018 regarding the situation in Nicaragua;
- 2.- Reiterates its consternation at the loss of so many lives and deplores the violence used against the demonstrators over the past few weeks;
- 3.- Affirms that it is only through democracy and the full respect of all freedoms and rights of its citizens, that Nicaragua will be able to advance towards a future of co-existence, social peace and progress for all;
- 4.- Demands an impartial and objective investigation into the deaths that have occurred during the incidents of these past weeks in order to clarify the facts and establish the corresponding responsibilities;
- 5.- The Committee will closely follow the dialogue underway between the parties to the conflict, recognising that this is the only possible and appropriate way forward to find a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

Resolution on Panama

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo on 17-18 May 2018:

Reiterate its interest in the fight against corruption and impunity in Panama. The Committee warns against the worrying and progressive judicialisation of politics in the country and the risk that the judicial power and public ministry may become politicised and involved in the political affairs of the country.

The phenomenon of judicialisation of politics represents a threat to the consolidation of Panamanian democracy, because some judges and prosecutors become actors that are able to have an impact on the direction of politics and to intimidate the leaders of the opposition.

The Committee calls the operators of justice and the Comptroller General of the Republic to safeguard the independence and objectivity in their actions, on the political parties to deepen the reforms that will consolidate the democratic system, and on the Panamanian society to remain vigilant against the threats to the institutions of democracy.

Resolution on Paraguay

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo on 17-18 May, in its discussion on the strengthening of the democratic state in the region, made an assessment of the recent general elections in Paraguay which took place in April of this year, together with representatives of its member party in that country, the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) and with the presidential candidate of the GANAR coalition, Efraín Alegre, leader of the Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico (PLRA).

The Committee members acknowledged the fact that the Paraguayan electoral process still suffers from a series of weaknesses and procedural gaps, which almost thirty years after the end of the dictatorship should have been overcome and which affect the trust and credibility of the electorate. In particular, the lack of rigour in the speed with which the counting of the votes was done and the partial and selective delivery of the election results, as well as the manipulation of opinion polls in the period prior to the elections, and even during the polling day itself, a fact that was made evident by the large disparity between the early results announced and the results that were subsequently communicated.

With regard to the electoral process itself, it is worth noting the civic spirit and the will of Efraín Alegre and the coalition that supported him, to mobilise the Paraguayan citizens in the search for legitimate and necessary objectives to strengthen and deepen democracy in the country, the political and state institutions, and their disposition and commitment to undertake the necessary reforms to enable Paraguay to achieve an effective democracy based upon solid institutions that work for the benefit of all its citizens.

The Committee recognised and encouraged Efraín Alegre and the members of his coalition present in the meeting, to continue their efforts and their work so that the Paraguayan people may be able to open up new perspectives and new phases in the political life of their country which will be possible within the framework of a full democracy, like the one that he and his colleagues aspire to and will enable Paraguay to enter the XXI century.

Resolution on Venezuela

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo on 17-18 May 2018, expresses that:

The Socialist International has been closely involved for many years in the situation of Venezuelan and has been witnessing with concern the deterioration of its democracy and the growing authoritarianism in the exercise of different public functions in the country. The International has repeatedly reaffirmed through its different organs, and in particular within the Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, its commitment to democracy in Venezuela and the concerns about its decline. Along with this, the International has consistently denounced the violations of the human rights of Venezuelans, the restrictions on their freedoms and political rights, the worsening of the living conditions of the people and the polarisation of society.

The SI has always believed that the challenges to democracy must be responded to with more democracy. For this reason we welcomed the results of the 2015 elections. Nevertheless, as from the installation of the National Assembly in January 2016, the government of president Maduro has been intent in ignoring the sovereign will of the people, making accusations of disrespect, blocking initiatives and finally, convening the election of a Constituent Assembly, which violates the legitimate powers of the National Assembly.

On the eve of the presidential elections called for Sunday 20 May, the Committee expresses that in Venezuela there does not exist today an independent authority in charge of the electoral process. The date for the elections was set and then changed in a unilateral and arbitrary manner, establishing deadlines that made impossible the nomination of competing candidacies. There are political leaders who are prevented from presenting their candidacies because they are in prison, banned or in exile. There is no free access to the media to carry on campaign activities, while it is evident that on a daily basis the government abuses public resources to ensure its re-election. There are no credible international observation and the system of automatic voting facilities, since the elections for the Constituent Assembly in August 2017, has been questioned by the same enterprise that provides technology support. Therefore, the Committee refuses to recognise any legitimacy of these elections due to the lack of the minimum guarantees for them be considered as free and fair.

Once again, the Committee declares its confidence in the efforts and hopes of the Venezuelan people that will open the way to restore democracy in that country, making possible a future of freedom and dignity for the people of the sister country of Venezuela.

The Committee reiterates its call for the liberation of all the political prisoners; for respect for the National Assembly and all its prerogatives, and for the recognition of the powers and immunities of parliamentarians in the exercise of their duties; for the nomination of independent electoral authorities and for the establishment of an electoral calendar that ensures free, fair and competitive elections as soon as possible, with a real and broad participation of parties and candidates.

The Committee, taking into account the serious economic crisis facing the country and the shortages of food, medicine and basic necessities, calls on the government, the civil society, the international organisations and the international community to immediately mobilise all the humanitarian aid possible to Venezuela.

Our International will not rest in its support for the struggle of the Venezuelan people for freedom and democracy and to whom today we send our full solidarity from Montevideo.

DECLARATION ON JOSÉ FRANCISCO PEÑA GÓMEZ

Original: Spanish

The Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Montevideo on 17-18 May 2018,

On the twentieth anniversary of his disappearance, pays a heartfelt tribute to the fondly remembered Dominican leader José Francisco Peña Gómez, who, at the head of his party, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD), was the first chair of the Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and a global point of reference for the social democratic movement in the world with the responsibilities he assumed within the leadership of the Socialist International.

Peña Gómez devoted his life and his leadership to working for the advancement and consolidation of democracy in his country and throughout the continent; for peace in times when different conflicts struck Central America; and for the solidarity that was established as the sign of identity of our movement in a continent that laid the democratic foundations for the new times ahead.

For his example and dedication, Peña Gómez remains today a point of reference for everyone in this continent and in our international movement, as a leader whose teachings and battles live on in the efforts for building a continent of freedoms, of rights and of more justice and greater solidarity.



CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea

Meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea, St Petersburg, Russia

25-26 May 2018



Sergey Mironov, leader of A Just Russia, SI SG Luis Ayala, SI Vice-President Alexander Romanovich

The Socialist International Committee for the CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea convened in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on 25-26 May 2018, hosted by A Just Russia, its member party in that country, whose leader, Sergey Mironov, addressed the gathering at its opening.

The meeting's agenda focused on three main themes: 'Moving forward a common strategy to strengthen social democracy in the region', 'Overview of the advancement of democracy and its institutions in the region' and 'Our contribution as a movement for peace in resolving and preventing conflicts'. In the lively and rich discussions of the meeting, participants also shared information with their colleagues on the political and social situation in their respective countries, the challenges they faced and the work their party was carrying out.

This meeting, which was chaired by the SI Secretary General, Luis Ayala, had the task of electing the new authorities of the Committee. Alexandra Dobolyi (Hungary MSzp), Araz Alizadeh (Azerbaijan SDPA) and Mikalai Statkevich (Belarus SDP-NH) were unanimously elected as co-chairs.

A declaration was issued after the meeting.

DECLARATION

The Socialist International Committee for the CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea, meeting in Saint Petersburg, Russia on 25-26 May 2018, hosted by the SI member Just Russia Party, discussed the contribution of our movement to the advancement of democracy and its institutions; to resolving and preventing conflicts and strengthening peace in the region; and to moving forward a common strategy for strengthening social democracy in the region.

The Committee took note that social democracy is a growing movement in this region where member parties are playing an increasing role in the political life in different countries, and reaffirmed that the principles and values that inspire our International are recognised and shared by a growing number of citizens, giving way to a greater representation of SI member parties in social movements, parliaments and governments across the region. The Committee noted that the work of our members in favour of fundamental freedoms and rights, and on behalf of the most vulnerable, had contributed to advance democratic goals and consolidate peace. Nevertheless, there remained much to do.

Amongst the issues that Committee members highlighted was the need to guarantee the provision for all citizens in countries of the CIS, Caucasus and Black sea, of open and equal access to the diverse print and electronic media, such as TV, radio, internet and other sources of information, including the official media, opposition and foreign sources of the press. The imposition of barriers, including those sanctioned by legislation, to the free distribution of and access to reliable information were strongly objected to, along with different methods of influencing or affecting the free mass media and those working in it, including prosecution of local and foreign journalists.

The Committee regretted the ongoing armed stand-off in South East Ukraine and called for a peaceful settlement of this conflict in line with the Minsk Agreements and the Normandy format. The Committee appealed to both President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Petr Poroshenko of Ukraine, to adopt a humanitarian initiative and exchange prisoners: the Ukrainians imprisoned in Russia for the Russians imprisoned in Ukraine, based on the “all for all” principle.

Regarding Belarus, the Committee expressed its concern over the ongoing pressure put upon members and representatives of civil society, on the SI member party Social Democratic Party “Narodnaya Gramada”, the radio-electronic trade union and on other democratic and social organisations in the country. The Committee called on the authorities to immediately stop all politically motivated oppression and to release all political prisoners. The Committee equally appealed to the Belarussian authorities for greater transparency of the electoral processes and vote counting mechanisms in that country.

In regard to the situation in Armenia, the Committee expressed its support for the popular movement and applauded all sides for the peaceful transition of power that had taken place, hoping that the process will continue to proceed based on the Constitution of the country. The Committee supported the SI member party in Armenia, the ARF-Dashnaktsutyun, in its persistent efforts to reform the state government, aimed at

establishing a parliamentary system in which the separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government is complete. In this context, the Committee supported its member party in its struggle against illegal monopolies, corruption, in favour of social justice, and for greater powers to the parliamentary opposition, for a more decentralised system of government and for a more open, transparent and accountable government at all levels.

Concerning the increasing use and application of sanctions as a political tool in the relations between states, the Committee, taking into account the need for increased dialogue and contact between the different political actors internationally to overcome differences, considered that such measures should exclude the travel restrictions imposed on political leaders and members of parliament who normally enjoy immunity in democratic political systems.



Spain

The Socialist International congratulates Pedro Sánchez

2 June 2018



The Socialist International congratulates Pedro Sánchez, leader of the SI member party in Spain, PSOE, and a Vice-President of the SI, on becoming President of the Spanish government, taking office on Saturday 2 June, 2018. The world social democratic movement celebrates this news and wishes him and our Spanish comrades every success in these new times for Spain and its people.



SI welcomes the agreement signed yesterday by Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

18 June 2018

The parties belonging to the socialist family are committed to peace and cooperation among the peoples and the countries of the Balkans.

The parties of democratic socialism have a decisive role to play in these turbulent times. We oppose extreme right wing and demagogic forces that are bent on undermining democratic achievements and pluralistic societies. We oppose their authoritarian rhetoric and actions which threaten the basic democratic guarantees for every citizen, for their rights and the free expression of citizens' voices. We oppose their attempts to divide through extreme nationalism, xenophobia and hate speech.

The peaceful resolution of pending conflicts through mutually agreed solutions is a one way street if we want to establish stability, security, rule of law and sustainable growth in the Balkan region.

For these reasons we have followed the spirit and the principles of the Agenda for the Western Balkans adopted at the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003 which gave an effective perspective for the accession of the countries of that region to the EU once the relevant criteria are met.

In this spirit, we welcome the decision of Athens and Skopje to end the pending issue of the constitutional name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through an agreement reached under the auspices of the United Nations.

Despite whatever difficulties, this breakthrough will extensively enhance regional and citizens cooperation and open up new possibilities for the development of infrastructure, innovative investment, sustainable development, trade and tourism in a time of economic crisis.

In this context,

We wish the government of Zoran Zaev success in completing the necessary steps that will enable the implementation of this agreement.

We encourage all progressive political forces to stand in solidarity to this effort for growth and stability in the Balkan region.

We call on the progressive citizens of both countries to actively fight divisive rhetoric and polarization.

This moment signals a major chance for a secure and peaceful future for all. This opportunity should not be missed.



Pierre Mauroy

5th Anniversary of the death Of Pierre Mauroy

7 June 2018

On 7 June, the fifth anniversary of the passing of Pierre Mauroy, former President of the Socialist International, the SI Secretary General joined former close collaborators of Pierre Mauroy in the cemetery of Lille to lay a wreath and pay respects on behalf of the SI. A former Mayor of Lille and Prime Minister of France, Pierre Mauroy served as Socialist International President from 1992 to 1999.



*Jean-Michel Rosenfeld,
Luis Ayala, Michel
Thauvin at the grave of
Pierre Mauroy in Lille*





In Memoriam



Abdul Razzaq Mirza
also known as Abdul Razzaq al-Feily

1945 - 2018

Co-founder of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Abdul Razzaq Mirza held several leadership positions in the PUK and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

In our International we will long remember him for his dedication to the Kurdish cause, to his people, for his work for his party, and for his firm commitment to the common values and principles that we share in this global political family.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

from the Barcelona Council in Nov 2017 to the Geneva Council in June 2018

November 2017

Meeting of the SI Council in Barcelona, Spain

Election observation: 1st round of the Presidential and parliamentary elections in Chile

December

Meeting of the SI Africa Committee in Luanda, Angola

Election observation: 2nd round of the Presidential elections in Chile

January 2018

Participation at the IX Congress of the PAIGC of Guinea Bissau

February

Election observation: General elections in Costa Rica

Election campaign event with the PDP, Paraguay

Meeting with the Chair of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

March

Participation in the founding congress of the Movement for Change in Greece

Participation in the congress of the INC, India

Meetings re security situation in the Korean peninsula, Seoul, South Korea

Attendance at the 138th Assembly of the IPU and Meeting of parliamentarians from SI member parties at the IPU Assembly in Geneva

April

Presence during election campaign in Hungary

Attendance at the PS Congress, France

Attendance at the Summit of the Americas in Lima, Peru, and participation in APRA event

Election observation: General elections in Paraguay

Participation in Fatah Conference and Opening of Palestinian Council in Ramallah

Meetings with Israeli member parties in Jerusalem

May

Participation in 20th anniversary events of the passing of José Francisco Peña Gómez, Dominican Republic

Meeting of the SI Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo, Uruguay

Meeting of the SI Committee for the CIS, Caucasus and Black Sea in Saint Petersburg, Russia

June

Meetings of the Ethics and Finance Committees in Geneva

Meeting of the SI Presidium in Geneva

Meeting of the SI Council at the UN in Geneva

Meeting of the SIW Council in Geneva