

Who's MAWO?

Mobilization Against War and Occupation is a coalition of over 50 endorsing organizations and also individual members, most of which are working class organizations, student groups, grassroots organizations, and ethnic communities. This is including Indigenous activists and groups from the third world as well as women, youth and elder fighters for social justice and against war and occupation. We are the people in struggle because we are people that suffer at the hands of imperialism. We have the energy, drive and will for change because it is in our interest to make this change in order to create a better world for all of humanity!

Get involved



with MAWO!

Meetings & Forums on Tuesdays - 7:00PM

For location: @MAWOvan OR Website:

mawovancouver.org

Mobilization Against War and Occupation

info@mawovancouver.org 778- 938-1557

MAWO Newsletter #61 Created by: Janine Solanki, Ali Yerevani, Azza Rojbi

UPCOMING EVENTS ENDORSED BY MAWO:

CELEBRATING THE 90TH BIRTHDAY OF FIDEL!

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
AUGUST 12-13 2016

VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY - 350 W. GEORGIA ST. - VANCOUVER, CANADA

FIDEL'S FIDEL: PUBLIC PHOTO EXHIBITION
Friday August 12 & Saturday August 13 11am-5pm
Featuring beautiful photographic prints & information about Fidel's vibrant life & leadership by Cuban photographer Roberto Chile (Vancouver Public Library (Outside on Robson & Homer St.))

Friday August 12, 7pm
COMMUNITY CULTURAL & POLITICAL NIGHT
"Condemn me, it does not matter. History will absolve me."
Fidel
nosotros
-Keynote and Featured Guest Speakers!
- Vancouver's premier of the movie "Chavez y Fidel, hasta siempre" by Cuban director Roberto Chile
- Live Music, Poetry!
- Raffle!

Saturday August 13, 7:30pm
AN EVENING WITH FIDEL
We welcome actor, writer and producer, **Tim Perez** in "An Evening With Fidel", a dramatic play that tells the story of Fidel Castro's iconic speeches, interviews and memoirs. It is about political awakenings, rebellion, childhood and... a life that moved and shaped world history.
After the play there will be a reception and Q & A session with the actor and producer Tim Perez!
Entrance by donation (a suggested donation of \$10)

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VANCOUVER, CANADA



stop the war! stop the occupations!

www.mawovancouver.org

MAWO 61

newsletter August 2016 1st Edition

mobilization against war & occupation

NATO, Canada and the New Era of War and Occupation

Canada out of NATO Now!

By Janine Solanki

"Leading efforts in Latvia was exactly something we saw as an opportunity for Canada to contribute security and stability, defence and deterrence at a time where that's very much necessary."

With these words Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, is promoting Canada's leading role in the new NATO military buildup close to Russia's borders in the Baltics. But this new military move has many scratching their heads. Is Russia really such a threat, and how so? We're not in the Cold War anymore, so what's the big deal with Russia and NATO?

NATO ON THE RISE

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is not just a Cold War relic as many believe. The organization, formed in 1949 following the end of World War II, once devised all sorts of plans against a Cold War attack that never came. However in its recent years, following the fall of the Soviet Union, NATO has become an actual military force and has been behind many bloody imperialist atrocities committed under the auspices of the "international community". NATO has expanded its membership, with most of its 28 members joining following the end of the Cold War, and NATO actively working on expanding its membership further.

NATO's debut as a military force started in the 1990's, when NATO intervened in Yugoslavia with numerous military missions which served to help break up former Yugoslavia. NATO's military missions culminating in a 78-day bombing campaign in 1999. The brutal and indiscriminate bombing by NATO members was condemned by peace-loving people and organizations around the world. Yugoslavia was bombarded by 14,000 bombs, including depleted uranium bombs and cluster munitions which have had long-lasting destructive impacts. This so-called "humanitarian intervention" resulted in over 2,000 civilians killed, thousands more injured, and over 200,000 people displaced and forced to leave their homes. The airstrikes destroyed more than 300 schools and libraries, over 20 hospitals and at least 40,000 homes were either completely eliminated or damaged. In a June 2000 Amnesty International report, the human rights organization accused NATO of war crimes when it reported that "NATO forces did commit serious violations of the laws of war leading in a number of cases to the unlawful killings of civilians". As part of NATO, Canada had a role in this deplorable attack on the people of Yugoslavia. The Canadian Air Force deployed 18 CF-18 fighter jets, and was responsible for 10% of all bombs dropped on Yugoslavia.

NATO has more frequently become a tool of imperialist intervention since the start of the new era of war and occupation, which began with the war and occupation of Afghanistan following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The new era of war and occupation, in which we have seen a heightened and strategic war drive carried out by the United States and their allies, has been possible with NATO enabling a division of labour amongst imperialist countries. That division of labour being, the task of no-fly zones, occupation forces, and bombing campaigns.

Afghanistan
In Afghanistan, NATO did a lot of the heavy lifting, enabling the United States to focus on their war and occupation of Iraq. NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) made up the bulk of the occupation forces in Afghanistan, from August 2003 to December 2014. ISAF was NATO's longest mission which at its height commanded more than 130,000 troops from 51 NATO and partner countries. This included a large number of Canadian troops, who at times had the third highest number of troops

deployed, after the US and Britain. Canada also held command of ISAF from February 9 to August 12, 2004 under Lieutenant-General Rick Hillier, as well as Canada has commanded regional operations for NATO's ISAF force. Since 2015, NATO reworked their mission to a vaguely defined "train, advise and assist" mission of 13,200 troops, which is continuously being extended and continues today.

After 15 years of war and occupation in Afghanistan, what does the US, Canada and NATO have to show for itself? Life for the Afghan people is not getting better, and more and more people have no other choice but to leave their homes and join the massive refugee crisis that the new era of war and occupation has resulted in. 2015 was the deadliest year for civilians since the start of the war, with over 11,000 men, women and children killed. This includes the October 3rd, 2015 US airstrike on a Medecins Sans Frontieres hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, in which continuous, repeated bombings killed more than 42 innocent people, mainly patients and staff.

Iraq

NATO also holds a role in the war on Iraq. NATO forces held a training mission in Iraq from 2004 to 2011, and have recently started another training mission of Iraqi officers in Jordan. At the recent NATO summit in Warsaw, Poland, Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada will also be a part of this new training mission. While a "training mission" may seem tame enough, take this into consideration. Canada's current "train, advise and assist" mission includes about 200 special forces soldiers. They are made up of the Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) counter-terrorism unit as well as the Canadian Special Operations Regiment. In 2010 the Globe and Mail described the Joint Task Force 2 as "a shadowy counter-terrorism force about which little concrete can be said" and "Canada's most elite troops - the faceless soldiers who go to places they won't name, to complete missions they won't talk about." While training missions are sold to the public as "non-combat" this was proven otherwise on March 6th 2015 when Sgt. Andrew Joseph Doiron from the Canadian Special Operations Regiment was killed in a friendly fire incident near the front lines while on the training mission in northern Iraq. On

March 8th, 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's new "non-combat" military strategy authorized Canadian soldiers to shoot first in Iraq as soon as they detect "hostile intent" from Daesh fighters. With about 20% of Canadian Special Forces training time taking place close to or directly at front lines, and authorization to shoot first, how "non-combat" are these training missions?

Libya

Another country destroyed at the hands of NATO forces is Libya. The no-fly zone imposed by NATO from

March 19 to October 31, 2011 launched nearly 10,000 sorties against Libya. Canada was a major player in the bombing campaign, and deployed six CF-18 fighter jets and also provided three planes for air-to-air refuelling and two reconnaissance aircrafts. Libya, which before this imperialist intervention had the highest standard of living in Africa, now five years later is in a chaos with no viable government, an economy in shambles and has become a new haven for terrorist organizations such as Daesh (also known as ISIS). NATO is now taking another strike not just against Libya, but against the huge number of refugees, many victims of war and occupation, traveling through Libya in an attempt to reach safer shores in Europe. At the recent NATO summit the decision was made to deploy NATO warships and potentially

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NO TO NATO! CANADA OUT OF NATO!

Petition to the Government of Canada; Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan:



Whereas the government of Canada is fully committed itself to being a major part of increasing and dangerous NATO aggression against Russia in Eastern Europe;

Whereas at the beginning of July, 2016 the government of Canada announced that it will send up to 1,000 Canadian soldiers and lead the NATO Mission in Latvia;

Whereas Canada's defence chief Gen. Jonathan Vance has further announced that alongside the troops, Canada would also send up to six CF-18 fighter jets and armored vehicles;

Whereas this increased commitment is on top of the existing Canadian military forces already deployed in Eastern Europe and Ukraine, including the Canadian warship HMCS Charlottetown;

Whereas the build-up of military force in Eastern Europe comes from the same NATO that bombed and destroyed Yugoslavia and Libya, and continues to assault and occupy Afghanistan.

Be it resolved that the Government of Canada immediately withdraw from the NATO military alliance and remove all Canadian troops and military equipment from Europe and from all NATO missions;

Be it resolved that instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the border with Russia, the government of Canada should fund housing, healthcare, education and the environment here at home.

	SIGNATURE	ADDRESS
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For more info or more petitions: info@mawovancouver.org | 778.938.1557 | www.mawovancouver.org

MOBILIZATION AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION (MAWO)

Please mail the completed petition to:
 PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC V5L 5G5

The New Era of War and Occupation and the Necessity of Building an Antiwar Movement

MAWO discusses and protests Islamophobia and imperialist aggression at home and abroad

By Janine Solanki

Since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, our world has been defined by a new era of war and occupation. Year after year we have seen yet another country invaded and occupied as we have seen in Iraq, or subjected to military intervention such as in Libya. We have seen sanctions imposed on countries resistant to foreign domination such as Iran, and imperialist backed mercenaries wreak havoc in Syria and tear the country apart. We have seen drone wars silently terrorize innocent people in Pakistan, Yemen, Afghanistan and Somalia. Today we see that the result of constant war, occupation and imperialist arming of so-called "moderate rebels" and mercenaries has created the rise of the terrorist organization Daesh. Now the US and their allies have a new justification to wage war on Iraq, Syria and Libya, with the tired claim of fighting terror once again. All of this death, destruction and devastation has been part of the new era of war and occupation conducted by the US government and their allies such as Canada, the UK and France. While imperialist governments -such as Canada- and mainstream media outlets would like you to believe that this is part of a "war on terror", the truth is that it is a war OF terror, in order to save a failing capitalist economic system with a band-aid fix of plundered resources and new markets.

It isn't difficult to see the brutality of these wars and occupations. So then how does the US and their allies -like Canada- get away with carrying out these bloody crimes? The answer is with the age-old tactic of fear and division, today seen in the form of Islamophobia. Mainstream media and rhetoric from imperialist politicians skillfully deceive the general public into believing that they are in imminent danger of Islamic terror and that Muslims are to be feared. Once that fear is gripping someone's sense of reality, it is a lot easier to carry out their wars and occupations. This is a tool in the war abroad, but also carried out in the war at home. If people in the US, Canada and other Western countries were united and not taken over by racism and fear, then maybe we would focus on more important things. Like why is the government of Canada or the US not investing in education, healthcare, housing and employment, instead of spending billions or even trillions of dollars on war, occupation and destruction

of other nations? How is it that these governments can introduce laws which cut back on our human and democratic rights and get away with it? If racism and fear, and especially now Islamophobia, were not used to divide people here at home, I think we would see more people of all faiths and backgrounds, ages and ethnicities organizing together for our rights and against war. And that is a very scary thing for imperialist governments which rely on the complacency of their populations.

As the only truly active antiwar coalition in Vancouver, Canada, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has the responsibility of countering the Islamophobic lies and media manipulation. We may not have mainstream media on our side, but what we do have is the truth, and from discussion to protest we are speaking truth to power. On Wednesday May 18, MAWO organized a community forum titled, "Islamophobia: the War at Home, Why Imperialist Governments Use Racism and Fear." The forum speakers included Mamdoh Ashir, Iraqi-Canadian and Muslim community social justice organizer; Wala Zaidan, an Iraqi high school student and poet; Azza Rojbi, a North African social justice organizer from Tunisia and executive member of MAWO, as well as Thomas Davies, an organizer with the Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 which is demanding a full repeal of Canada's so-called "anti-terrorism" law. Following the insightful presentations from the panel, there was a lively discussion between participants on how to work together to defeat Islamophobia.

On Saturday May 28 MAWO took to the streets with slogans against war and Islamophobia, with an antiwar rally and petition campaign in Downtown Vancouver. Protesters talked to many people who stopped to sign petitions against Canada's participation in the war on Syria and Iraq, as well as to demand that Canada end it's arms deal with Saudi Arabia. These actions, which combine public outreach and protest, have been organized monthly by MAWO over the last 13 years. MAWO will continue bringing antiwar demands to the streets of Vancouver until this new era of war and occupation is stopped. MAWO encourages all peace-loving people to join in standing up against war, occupation and Islamophobia.

drones in the Mediterranean sea to stem the flow of refugees leaving the Libyan coast. Human Rights Watch spoke out against this decision, stating that "NATO's involvement in migration control signals a dangerous shift toward militarisation of a humanitarian crisis."

NATO SUMMIT 2016 - TARGET ON RUSSIA

The July 8-9, 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw, Poland brought imperialist countries together to set their targets on a bigger fish - Russia. An irrational fear-mongering and demonization campaign has painted Russia as an aggressor. As you have just read above though, it is NATO who has dropped their bombs and planted their troops in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. It is the US government who backed a right-wing coup in Ukraine. Now it is NATO who is building up military forces on the border with Russia. So who is the aggressor?

The NATO summit announced that NATO will rotate four combat battalions of up to 1000 troops each, from Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, in Poland and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Also decided at the summit is that NATO will take command of and develop a US-built European "missile shield defense system" which also has Russia in it's targets. As Justin Trudeau stated at the beginning of this article, Canada is taking a leading role by commanding the battalion in Latvia, sending at least 450 troops to this battalion (bringing Canada's troops in Eastern Europe to 800) as well as supplying armored vehicles, up to six CF-18 fighter jets, and continuing to send naval frigates to the region, which Canada has had stationed for the past two years. This new military buildup has no end-date and as Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff General Jonathan Vance has stated, "this is an open-ended commitment."

The NATO summit was preceded by another provocative move by NATO forces. NATO members conducted "Anaconda 2016", the largest war games in Eastern Europe since the end of the Cold War. The 10-day military exercise involved 31,000 troops and thousands of vehicles from 24 countries, including Canada.

Looking at the recent history of NATO and it's increasing actions against Russia, we must be able to define what the objectives of this military body are. NATO is a tool of imperialist forces, specifically US allied imperialist forces. In order to maintain and expand US hegemony in today's world, militarily, politically and economically, the US and their allies must expand their markets, resources and influence, as we have seen them do in this new era of war and occupation, with the help of NATO. They must eliminate sovereign and independent states, as they have done in Libya through NATO, are attempt-

ing to do in Syria and are poised to do in Iran. They must also keep at bay other rising and competing economic and political powers such as Russia and China, and prevent them from growing their economies on a global scale. US sanctions against Russia has been one method. Saber-rattling and building up a military force on Russia's borders is a new and dangerous step that NATO is leading.

NOT TO NATO! CANADA OUT OF NATO!

NATO's actions have not been without opposition, both throughout NATO's history to today. The NATO summit in July 2016 was met with an international call for demonstrations and actions against NATO. Activists from around the world came together for conferences and a demonstration directly in the face of the NATO summit in Warsaw, Poland. Cities around the world mobilized in coordination with the actions in Warsaw, including in Vancouver, Canada where Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) held a rally and petition campaign.

Peace and justice loving people must take Canada's participation in NATO seriously. We need to stop looking at NATO as a Cold War relic or a body of international cooperation. NATO is the increasingly utilized military force used to launch imperialist interventions, occupations, airstrikes and even to militarize the largest refugee crisis humanity has ever seen. NATO members are pressured to commit at least 2% of their GDP to military spending, which is now used to build up a military force against the false threat of Russia. Peace-loving people in Canada can think of vastly more important places that money can go to here in Canada, like education, healthcare, housing, jobs and infrastructure just to name the most obvious. Even Canada could be helping to bring in more refugees, fleeing countries that NATO, along with Canada, has made uninhabitable through their wars and occupations!

The Vancouver action was just the beginning of a new campaign initiated by Mobilization Against War and Occupation demanding "No to NATO! Canada Out of NATO!" The campaign includes a petition to the government of Canada demanding that Canada end it's alliance with NATO and withdraw Canadian troops and military equipment from Europe and from all NATO missions. This campaign will be moving forward with more literature, materials and educational and protest events and actions, which will be listed on www.mawovancouver.org.

While imperialist countries are joining together to launch wars and occupations on oppressed nations and flex their military muscles, it's up to peace and justice loving people world wide to also come together, in the pursuit of peace. Together let's demand:

No to NATO!
 Canada Out of NATO!