

## Military Resistance 12C6



# Labor Abuses Out Of Control On US Bases In Afghanistan:

**“This Exploitive System Has Wasted Over \$15 Billion Of Taxpayer Money”**

**“No Contractor Has Ever Been Prosecuted, Suspended Or Fined For Trafficking Abuses”**

# **“Most Of The Defense Contractors, Tend To Be Staffed And Headed By Former Generals” “They Still Have Friends In The Pentagon”**

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

**One young man’s face contorted in terror when asked whether he had paid a recruiting fee. He shook his head no, fearful of any reprisals.**

**They work 12-hour days with little or no time off.**

[March 7, 2014 by Sam Black, Al Jazeera America [Excerpts]

**A year and a half after President Barack Obama issued an executive order outlawing human trafficking and forced labor on U.S. military bases, a five-month investigation by “Fault Lines” has found compelling evidence that these abuses remain pervasive at U.S. facilities in Afghanistan.**

“Fault Lines” traveled to India, the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan to trace the journey of a typical migrant worker seeking a job at a U.S. military base.

**We found Department of Defense subcontractors and their recruiters colluding to profit directly from exorbitant fees charged to job candidates, who are sometimes left with no choice but to work for six to 12 months to recoup those costs.**

Over the past decade, the U.S. military has outsourced its overseas base-support responsibilities to private contractors, which have filled the lowest-paying jobs on military bases with third-country nationals, migrant workers who are neither U.S. citizens nor locals.

As of January 2014, there were 37,182 third-country nationals working on bases in the U.S. Central Command region, which includes Afghanistan and Iraq — outnumbering both American and local contract workers.

These laborers do the cooking, cleaning, laundry, construction and other support tasks necessary to operate military facilities. In Afghanistan they primarily come from India and Nepal and are employed by subcontractors for one of two large American companies, Fluor Corp. and Dyncorp International, which manage U.S. bases in Afghanistan under the Department of Defense’s Logistics Civil Augmentation Program.

Dozens of subcontracting companies, mostly headquartered in the Persian Gulf, work on Fluor and Dyncorp contracts.

South Asian workers are at the bottom of the social hierarchy on U.S. bases.

They earn far less than American or European contractors, work 12-hour days with little or no time off and, on some bases, aren't allowed to use cellphones or speak to military personnel.

**On the base we visited, Camp Marmal, most were surprised and nervous when we approached them, concerned that talking to journalists could get them in trouble.**

**One young man's face contorted in terror when asked whether he had paid a recruiting fee. He shook his head no, fearful of any reprisals.**

"To come here, you have to use an agent," another worker told us. "There is no other way. So we pay money to come." An agent is a person from a recruitment agency hired to find laborers for a company — in this case, the subcontractor.

At Camp Marmal, the most prominent Fluor subcontractor is Ecolog International.

**One current Ecolog employee we met, who didn't want to be identified, said he paid \$4,000 to an agent in his village for a job he was told would pay \$1,200 per month.**

His recruiter told him the final papers would be signed in Dubai, a crucial stopping point for workers en route to Afghanistan.

**In Dubai he learned his salary would be only \$500 per month.**

**Because he had borrowed money at a high interest rate to pay his recruitment fee, he had no choice but to work for an entire year just to earn enough money to pay off his loan.**

### **"We Can Call This Bonded Labor Or Human Trafficking, Because It All Starts With False Promises"**

"We can call this bonded labor or human trafficking, because it all starts with false promises about what the job is, and they have to pay an amount to get the job," Kavinamannil explains.

"Debt will make you work anywhere. It doesn't matter if it's a war zone."

When we reached out to Fluor, which manages Camp Marmal, the company said it "provides hotlines to allow individuals to report anonymously any suspected instances of human trafficking" and holds its subcontractors to a "zero tolerance policy regarding trafficking in persons."

Yet that Ecolog employee's experience is fairly typical.

Of 75 people "Fault Lines" contacted who work or used to work on U.S. bases across Afghanistan, 65 said they paid agents fees ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Many said

their monthly salaries, generally \$400 to \$800, ran several hundred dollars short of what they were promised.

Some paid fees, only to be warehoused by an agent for months and never receive a job. Nearly everyone we talked to was still paying back loans.

According to a former human resources manager at a major subcontractor in Afghanistan, who asked to remain anonymous, subcontractors intentionally steer potential South Asian job candidates through third-party recruiters. The workers we spoke with confirmed this experience, saying that when they attempted to apply directly to companies like Ecolog, they received no response or were directed to apply through an agent.

Why would a company outsource hiring when it receives direct applications?

**“Employees at the subcontractor are taking kickbacks from these agents,” the former manager told us. “They tell the workers to apply through the agent, and the agent gets money from (the workers). The agent splits some of that fee with the people in human resources.”**

In other words, because taking fees from applicants is illegal, subcontractors outsource hiring to recruiters who are willing to pass a portion of their fees up the chain.

As a result, applicants who pay recruiting fees are often indirectly paying their employer — the subcontractor — simply for the opportunity to work.

In Dubai, we tested these allegations by setting up an undercover meeting with an agent who recruits workers for Ecolog and Supreme Group, another contractor in Afghanistan. We posed as representatives from a fledgling U.S.-based subcontractor, looking to hire workers from India and Nepal for U.S. military contracts.

**The agent explained that subcontractors like Ecolog do not actually pay him. Though his contract states that Ecolog owes him \$300 for each worker he recruits, in reality, he said, he pays an Ecolog representative a small bribe to hire people from his candidate pool.**

His earnings come entirely from fees paid by job candidates. And it didn't take long before the agent offered to give us \$100 to \$200 for each worker we were willing to hire from him.

The recruiter we met told us he has supplied 9,000 third-country nationals for Ecolog and Supreme contracts in Afghanistan.

This is the business model operating on United States military bases in Afghanistan and Iraq. It's the same model used by employers in the oil-rich Gulf countries, which have long relied on cheap migrant labor from South Asia to build their economies.

**The crucial difference is that the trafficking of workers to U.S. bases is made possible by U.S. tax dollars.**

## **“This Exploitive System Has Wasted Over \$15 Billion Of Taxpayer Money”**

According to Sam McCahon, a former Army judge advocate general officer who is an advocate for reforming the military contracting system, more than 500,000 contract laborers have worked on U.S. facilities since 2002.

**He estimates that this exploitive system has wasted over \$15 billion of taxpayer money. And it has left tens of thousands of men from across India and Nepal deeply scarred and mired in crushing debt.**

In India we visited two villages in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, from which hundreds of men have traveled to jobs on U.S. military bases.

Govindnagaram (pop. 6,452) and Odaipatti (pop. 13,892) lie in the bucolic valley of the Nilgiri Hills, where, as farming incomes have dropped over the past decade, residents have had to look elsewhere for work. The area has become fertile ground for recruiting agents and loan sharks looking to reap quick profits. “Farming isn’t like it used to be. Now most people use the land as collateral, and that’s how they go abroad,” explained Ganesan Subbaiah, who has worked as a cook with the U.S. military.

**Subbaiah sold his father’s farmland and his mother’s jewelry to pay an agent for a job with a U.S. military in Afghanistan. But after he arrived in Dubai to sign his contract, he was told he would be going to an American base in Djibouti for a much lower salary.**

**We spoke to dozens of men in the villages, and each of them had a story of deception, loss and humiliation in his quest for work.**

Some, so shattered by their experience, vowed never to look overseas for work again. Others held out hope for a direct line — sans agents — to a job on a U.S. base to pay off their outstanding debts.

For these men, the U.S. military’s regulations to discourage trafficking have had no impact.

**“We’ve already paid the agents for the job,” explained a man named Kumaran, who said his agent — after collecting a hefty fee — made him sign a declaration stating he had not paid anything.**

**“If we tell the U.S. military that we paid a fee, they’ll just send us back, and we’ll lose everything.”**

Another man, who had worked at Camp Taji in Iraq, remembered that upon arrival, his contractor required him and his colleagues to sign a Trafficking Awareness form, issued by the Department of Defense.

“We all knew — and they knew — that we had paid,” he said, referring to his supervisors. “Oh, yeah, everybody knows.”

The only possibility for change, he thought, was if workers could be hired directly, without the need for a fee. But McCahon says that's unlikely to happen because there's so much money to be made under the existing contracting system.

### **“American Contractors Make More Profit Off This Process Than If They Hire The Workers Directly”**

“American contractors make more profit off this process than if they hire the workers directly,” he says.

“That’s because the U.S. government pays prime contractors, like Fluor and Dyncorp, on a cost-plus basis, which means the government reimburses all of their allowable costs and then typically pays them a fixed profit of 6 percent of those costs.

**“Subcontractors have been reported to make profits of more than 75 percent by hiring cheap, trafficked labor and overcharging prime contractors. But the incentive is for prime contractors not to care — they incur more costs, and thus make more profit, by subcontracting it out.”**

**The U.S. government has been aware of inequities and violations in the military contracting system for at least eight years.**

**In 2012 both the Obama administration and Congress issued new rules to curtail these problems. But no contractor has ever been prosecuted, suspended or fined for trafficking abuses on U.S. military contracts.**

**When pressed for a reason, McCahon responded, “If you look at most of the defense contractors, the large entities, they tend to be staffed and headed by former generals. They still have friends in the Pentagon.”**

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

The development of civilization and of industry in general has ever shown itself so active in the destruction of forests, that everything done by it for their preservation, compared to its destructive effect, appears infinitesimal.  
-- Karl Marx; Capital: A Critique Of Political Economy; Volume II; The Process Of The Circulation Of Capital

**Ukraine: “The Genuine Revolution,  
Unfavourable For The Oligarchs,  
Only Just Began To Unfold”**

**“There Stood On The Maidan Many  
Representatives Of Those Forces  
Who Uphold Internationalist, Left  
And Democratic Positions”**

**“The Oligarchs Plundered Our  
Country, And Now They Are  
Demanding That Hungry People  
Stand In Defense Of Their Corrupt  
State”**

# **“The Ukrainian Army Should Act Under Citizens’ Control. Why Die Under The Leadership Of Nationalists Like Parubiy And Yarosh?”**

**The population of Eastern and Southern Ukraine, as well as the members of ethnic minorities should know that there stood on the Maidan many representatives of those forces who uphold internationalist, left and democratic positions.**

**The workers of all nations should learn solidarity from the Ukrainian oligarchs – they overcame all their differences and united around their common class interests.**

3 March 2014 LeftEast

Translation from the original (<http://gaslo.info/?p=4990>)

The socialist union “Left Opposition” offers its assessment of the Russian aggression in Crimea and the destructive role of Ukrainian nationalists.

The intervention of Russian armies was made possible as a result of a split in Ukrainian society.

Its unity is impossible with the oligarchs and chauvinists in power. Only solidarity will save Ukraine.

1) We are for the self determination of Crimea only after the withdrawal of the Russian armies that are carrying out this flagrant intervention.

We are for the self determination of the people, and not of the mercenary elite who “self determine” so as to protect themselves from Crimeans with the muzzles of Russian automatic weapons.

The outcome of separatism in Crimea will become the rebirth of the Russian empire, which threatens a world war.

2) The justification of Putin’s aggression is the nationalist hysteria that the leaders of the Maidan have ignored.

Aggressive xenophobic jokes were treated as normal, and even today on anti-war pickets we are still hearing provocative slogans like “Glory to the nation! Death to its enemies!”

The Kremlin’s manipulation of these slogans has frightened the people of the East and South. However, the aggression initiated by the Russian Federation is patently imperialistic and aimed against the revolutionary republic (the genuine revolution,



unfavourable for the oligarchs, only just began to unfold and it was sure to put the question of social lustration [to purify] on the order of the day).

A war of liberation if led by the Ukrainian oligarchs would resolve itself in the fascisation of society: we can expect unification around mythical national interests, an unrestrained dictatorship and the conduct of social policies aimed at concentrating wealth in the hands of the elite.

**Our government can claim popular legitimacy only after a social lustration [to purify] has been carried out. However, our government has been legitimised by the threat of foreign intervention – we are forced to love a regime, not our country.**

**Government in Ukraine is progressively passing directly into the hands of the oligarchs (Kolomoisky and Taruta have become governors).**

**The oligarchs plundered our country, and now they are demanding that hungry people stand in defense of their corrupt state!**

**3) the Maidan was not uniform – radical nationalists really bespoiled the protest with xenophobia, but fortunately they did not determine the Maidan’s demands.**

**The population of Eastern and Southern Ukraine, as well as the members of ethnic minorities should know that there stood on the Maidan many representatives of those forces who uphold internationalist, left and democratic positions.**

**To support the myth of a “fascist Maidan” is to legitimise the use of force by neo-Nazis against such citizens as those noted here who disagree with them.**

**We are very saddened to see that antifascist ideas are being exploited to justify war. Antifascism is solidarity, not intervention!**

4) the citizens of Western and Central Ukraine should press the government not to allow linguistic discrimination, destruction of monuments or the incitement of unnecessary hostility. Ukrainisation led by the oligarchs can be realised only in a chauvinist key.

It is necessary to review language policy and to broaden the right to use the native language in those regions where it is needed. The national-cultural renaissance of the Ukrainian and other peoples of our country is inseparable from the resolution of social questions.

5) We are for the preservation of a united Ukraine, as a unique cultural phenomenon. The coexistence of various ethnicities only enriches universal human culture.

In the event of the country splitting the rule of chauvinists will be established in both its parts.

**All conflicts in Ukraine are as a result of the dictatorship of the oligarchs.**

**Ukraine can be consolidated on the basis of defeating the rule of the oligarchs – the workers of the East and South equally want social change and they should**

**understand that inflaming conflict simply puts off the prospects for improvements to an unforeseeable future.**

**6) The Russian Federation government is controlled by the most conservative advocates of the interests of capital.**

And that is why those citizens who support a referendum on “reunification” with Russia had better prepare for a police state and for an antisocial policy.

**We will not allow for the precedent of a victory for Russian imperialism.**

**Despite the claims of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists, there are no traces of socialism at all left in Russia.**

The population of Ukraine will start to hate Russians even more, while among the Russian masses imperialistic and revanchist illusions will grow stronger. Hitler-style promises of a better life will culminate in a catastrophe for the aggressor nation.

**Let us not forget that this war is also an opportunity for Western capital to bring in its own armies and to seize part of Ukrainian territory.**

**7) It is necessary to appeal in the first instance to the Russian speaking population of Ukraine and to Russians who do not support war.**

They must sabotage the mobilisation and movement of occupying armies, while also exerting continuous pressure on the Russian government and Russian capital.

Russian imperialism is using them to strengthen its domination through a referendum.

It is necessary to create international brigades to maintain lawful order, to oppose mutual chauvinisms, to defend strategic facilities, to conduct propaganda among troops, as well as to oppose the disarming of Ukrainian armies.

Form workers self defence detachments at enterprises for their protection from external intervention and the covetous hands of their unpropitious “owners”.

Organise detachments with those you trust, or whom you are prepared to elect!

**The Ukrainian army should act under citizens’ control.**

**Why die under the leadership of nationalists like Parubiy and Yarosh?**

They have on their conscience inept tactical mistakes on the Euromaidan and the stoking of interethnic hostilities.

Why die in the interests of the Akhmetov-Kolomoiskys?

**The workers of all nations should learn solidarity from the Ukrainian oligarchs – they overcame all their differences and united around their common class interests.**

**Down with the bandit office holders who have become separatists!**

**Down with Russian imperialism!**

**Down with the Ukrainian chauvinists!**

**Long live the workers' independent Ukraine!**

### **YOUR INVITATION:**

**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.**

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

### **March 8, 1965; Unhappy Murderous Imperial Stupidity Anniversary**



Carl Bunin Peace History

About 3,500 U. S. Marines became the first American combat troops in Vietnam, landing near the coastal city of Da Nang. The USS Henrico, Union, and Vancouver, carrying the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brig. Gen. Frederick J. Karch, took up stations 4,000 yards off Red Beach Two, north of Da Nang.

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# ***Two Magnificent Anniversaries In The Fight For Human Liberation:***

**#1:**

**March 8, 1908:**

**New York City Women Strike For  
Higher Wages, A Shorter Workday  
And An End To Child Labor**



Carl Bunin Peace History; un.org [Excerpts

March 8, 1908

**Thousands of workers in the New York needle trades (primarily women) demonstrated and began a strike for higher wages, a shorter workday and an end to child labor.**

**This event became the basis for International Women's Day celebrated all over the world since March 8, 1945.**

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**#2:**

**March 8, 1917**

# With 2 Million Russian Soldiers Dead In The War, Women Ignore The “Political Leaders” And Lead A Revolution To Overthrow The Imperial Tyrant Czar Of Russia



*Two old women lament  
Old days of sorrow,  
When prayers went unheard  
And the grave was relief.*

*But no more does the stick  
Fall upon women's shoulders.  
Free and equal they march,  
Comrades of men!*

March 8, 1917

With 2 million Russian soldiers dead in the war, Russian women again chose the last Sunday in February to strike for “bread and peace”.

Political leaders opposed the timing of the strike, but the women went on anyway.

The rest is history:

Four days later the Czar was forced to abdicate and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote.

That historic Sunday fell on 23 February on the Julian calendar then in use in Russia, but on 8 March on the Gregorian calendar in use elsewhere.

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## CLASS WAR REPORTS



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**Strikes Wave Rocks Egyptian Military Dictatorship:  
“I Don’t Know What Else The New Prime Minister Wants To Tell The Workers,’ Said Fayez, ‘Except That The Mubarak Regime Is Back’”  
“Some Have Pointed To This Wave Of Strikes As A Contributing Factor In The Cabinet Resignation”**

# “Protests Have Spread Outward From Mahalla, The Spiritual Home Of The Egyptian Workers’ Movement, To The Very Heart Of Cairo”

Strikes are currently being staged by around 100,000 postal workers, bus drivers, government notary employees, street cleaners, field surveyors and medical professionals, according to Mada Masr.

An ongoing public transportation strike has halted buses in all 28 of the Greater Cairo Authority’s garages, costing the city an estimated 800,000 Egyptian pounds (\$115,000) a day, according to Cairo Gov. Galal al-Saeed.

February 27, 2014 By Tom Rollins, Al-Monitor [Excerpts]

CAIRO —

“Security and stability in the entire country and crushing terrorism will pave the way for investment.”

So Ibrahim Mehleb introduced himself as Egypt’s new prime minister on Feb. 25, promising that security solutions would finally bring economic prosperity to a country very much ready for it.

But the mass Cabinet resignation announced by former Prime Minister Hazem el-Biblawi Feb. 24 means a consensus on how to deal with growing labor unrest may now start to crumble, complicated further by the reported exit of leftist Kamal Abu Eita as Egypt’s manpower minister.

Mehleb, housing minister under Biblawi and a member of deposed President Hosni Mubarak’s disgraced National Democratic Party before that, has a difficult road ahead.

**Mehleb must negotiate a way out of the burgeoning labor unrest that has workers armed with a range of demands, including the 1,200 Egyptian pound (\$172) public sector minimum monthly wage originally promised by the government by the end of January.**

**As noted by Al-Monitor’s Bassem Sabry, some have pointed to this wave of strikes as a contributing factor in the Cabinet resignation, of which some ministers were not even aware before Monday’s announcement.**

“It is time we all sacrificed for the good of the country,” Biblawi said in his 15-minute address.

“Rather than asking what has Egypt given us, we should instead be asking what we have done for Egypt.”

The independent daily Al-Shorouk, citing sources close to Biblawi, suggested that striking workers had contributed to his resignation.

Biblawi met with interim President Adly Mansour on Feb. 23 and discussed the strikes, the newspaper's sources claimed.

Josh Stacher, author of *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* and a political science professor at Kent State University, believes the Cabinet resignation was a top-down decision by Egypt's generals.

"People were saying (the resignation) happened now because of Sisi," he said, referring to Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's long-awaited presidential bid.

"It happened now because there is unrest, as well as gas shortages and electrical cuts." Power outages have become a more regular problem in Egypt in recent weeks.

**Meanwhile, protests have spread outward from Mahalla, the spiritual home of the Egyptian workers' movement, to the very heart of Cairo.**

Workers at Mahalla's state-owned Misr Spinning and Weaving Company walked out on Feb. 10, demanding the removal of holding company Chairman Fouad Abdel-Alim and the application of the minimum wage. Workers at this factory first demanded a minimum wage in 2006.

**After a wave of solidarity strikes and sit-ins at textile operations around Egypt, more public sector workers have walked out.**

**Strikes are currently being staged by around 100,000 postal workers, bus drivers, government notary employees, street cleaners, field surveyors and medical professionals, according to Mada Masr.**

An ongoing public transportation strike has halted buses in all 28 of the Greater Cairo Authority's garages, costing the city an estimated 800,000 Egyptian pounds (\$115,000) a day, according to Cairo Gov. Galal al-Saeed.

**"The main reason behind the resignation was the workers. The former Cabinet promised the minimum wage and then never applied it," Aly Fatouh, a strike leader at the Public Transport Authority in Cairo, told Al-Monitor.**

But, Fatouh claimed, workers should also give the new government a chance. He said, "Workers should cooperate with the government ... after the achievement of their demands."

As long as the minimum wage remains out of reach for Egypt's workforce, there is a risk of more strikes.

**Workers are also striking for permanent contracts, better conditions, the payment of bonuses and changes in company management.**



A decision was made on Feb. 22 to suspend the Mahalla strike for two months. But if the Feb. 25 press conference is anything to go by, Mehleb will be looking to shut down further labor unrest, and fast. "Making demands that exceed logic will destroy the country," he was quoted as saying. "We're betting on the patriotism of the Egyptian workers."

The suggestion is that the government may have limited patience for future strikes.

Mehleb's rhetoric is symptomatic of a consensus maintained by trade union federations and government officials since the July overthrow of deposed President Mohammed Morsi. Egypt's "patriotic workers," so the official line goes, will not strike out of respect for the Egyptian nation in its time of need.

"We have patriotism," said Kamal el-Fayoumi, a textiles strike organizer from Mahalla. "That is why we want to make (Misr Spinning and Weaving) work at full power. ... We are striking to increase production."

Other workers, like textiles mechanic Tamer Fayez, also rejected the government's label.

"What patriotic sense?" he asked. "We are pushing for production."

**The Egyptian Trade Union Federation, considered by independent union advocates and activists to be an arm of the state, has repeatedly called for calm.**

Its president, Gebaly al-Maraghy, told Al-Monitor in mid-February, "Our battle is to increase production and combat terrorism. If we don't win, the whole of Egypt will be destroyed."

Other arms of the regime are also combating workers with "patriotism."

In response to the transport strike, army spokesperson Ahmed Ali's Facebook page displayed photographs of soldiers loading elderly citizens onto officially sanctioned coach services emblazoned with the Egyptian flag. A statement cited the army's "great social responsibility" toward the "great Egyptian people."

**But Stacher claimed this rhetoric predates the interim government. He said, "This is the same discourse used after the initial 18 days (of the January 25 Revolution) by (former Field Marshal Mohamed) Tantawi and company. It's about demobilizing workers."**

Many had hoped that Abu Eita, selected as labor minister in Biblawi's Cabinet, represented a genuinely progressive appointment at a time of street massacres and arrests. "Abu Eita was staunchly independent before joining the government," explained Stacher.

Previously the leader of the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, Abu Eita had helped maintain quiet at factories while the military-backed road map progressed. Though he was respected by trade unionists at the local level, his supporters say he was put in a powerless position, negotiating within a government that had no interest in negotiating.

“By using our legitimate right to strike, we’re helping officials to achieve our goals,” Ahmed Ramadan, Misr Spinning and Weaving Company’s independent union leader, told Al-Monitor. Asked which officials he was referring to, Ramadan pointed to Abu Eita. “He is from the workers’ movement and we are helping him.”

But now Abu Eita is out, to be replaced by Nahed el-Ashry, according to reports.

**Like Mehleb, she is seen by some as tainted by the Mubarak era.**

**“She has been in the ministry since Mubarak,” claimed Fayoumi. “She has a history of negotiating with the workers and screwing them over.”**

Fatouh stressed that workers must “give the government a chance,” but that Ashry may not have been “the best choice.”

“This phase, with all the strikes, requires a smart person with the capabilities to deal with this tough situation.”

With Abu Eita gone, Egypt’s new Cabinet will be harder pressed to placate workers while also delivering on its promises of stability and economic prosperity.

**A hard-line approach could also seriously inflame unrest led by workers across Egypt.**

“I don’t know what else the new prime minister wants to tell the workers,” said Fayeze, “except that the Mubarak regime is back.”

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**“A Majority Of Ukrainians Back  
The Movement That Led On  
February 22 To The Deposition Of  
President Yanukovich”**

**“We Pay Our Taxes, We Work, And  
The Only Thing That Has Been Seen  
To Change, In The Past Ten Years, Is  
The Fortunes Of The Oligarchs”**

**“Social Distress Was At The Centre Of  
Political Discontent”**

February 24, 2014 By Vadim Kamenka, L'Humanité. Translated (March 4) by Gene Zbikowski

February 24, 2014 -- Kiev (Ukraine), from our special correspondent.

While a majority of Ukrainians back the movement that led on February 22 to the deposition of president Yanukovich, social distress was at the centre of political discontent. This is what bore the aspiration for change which is on everyone's lips.

Barricades by the dozen, the ground black with soot, the pavement torn up, buildings burnt to the ground – the stigmata of the clashes are still visible on Maidan square, the epicentre for the past three months of the uprising against President Viktor Yanukovich. People came by the tens of thousands on February 23 to place red flowers and to remember the dead (60 since February 18). “We will see it through to the end”, Vassili, 42 years old, promises.

The fall of the president, the return to a parliamentary regime, the liberation of Julia Timoshenko, early elections – what more do these citizens, mobilised for weeks, await?

“We pay our taxes, we work, and the only thing that has been seen to change, in the past ten years, is the fortunes of the oligarchs”, Vassili explains, disgusted by all the leaders who have followed one another since the 2004 orange revolution.

Most Ukrainians have not forgotten the economic and social context which never changed under the “orangists”, in power until 2010, and then under Viktor Yanukovich.

For a portion of the press, behind these events, one is again witnessing a battle between oligarchs.

“One clan made its fortune in industry and finances against another, the dominant corporations in the East, closer to Russia, against other corporations implanted in the West”, the Ukrainian version of the daily newspaper Kommersant underlined.

The agreement with the opposition came when Rinat Akhmetov, the Donetsk strongman with his corporation, System Capital Management (coal mining, metal-working, banking, the media), and the other billionaires close to the government, Dmytro Firtash, Sergei Taruta and Sergei Levoshkin, of the RosUkrEnergo company, abandoned the head of state.

This social bankruptcy includes ever-rising unemployment (officially 10%), 40% of the population living below the poverty line, an average monthly wage of 250 euros, and retirement pensions of less than 90 euros a month.

“Whereas for the majority of the people, nothing changes, the prices of gas, electricity, housing, etc. are rising. And with bankruptcy, we're going to have to make additional efforts. We're going down the road of Greece. We're going to sell all our wealth to the multinationals: our industries, the oil pipelines and the gas pipelines, the fertile land and a skilled workforce,” is economist Oksana Antochenko's analysis.

The poorest regions are the rural regions in the west, where the uprising started. Despite its fertile soil (sunflowers, sugar beets), the agricultural sector has been particularly hard hit, since 2008, by the economic crisis.

“Necessarily, people believed that an economic partnership with the European Union would solve all their problems and end unemployment, corruption, and the destruction of social gains”, Vladimir Bidievka noted. This part of the Ukraine, close to Poland, where a majority voted for the opposition parties and for the far-right Svoboda party, had the backing of an opportunistic ally, “the Polish neighbour”, in the opinion of the economic daily paper Kommersant.

“Poland would have a lot to lose if Ukraine ever turned towards an economic partnership with Russia. The opening of borders and an end to visas would guarantee Poland a cheap workforce. Moreover, this is already partly the case.”

Other economists put forward how little the country has been modernised, as it is still too centred on its industry, which has not changed much since the fall of the Soviet Union and which is based on the same sectors (iron, steel, chemical industry) and important mineral resources (iron, uranium, coal).

## DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



U.S. soldier in Bejjia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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**US Courts Sentence Several  
Hundred Thousand Misdemeanor  
Offenders To Probation Overseen  
By Private Companies That  
Charge Their Fees Directly To The  
Probationers:  
Minor Offenders, Charged Huge Fees,  
End Up Jailed;  
“A Man Who Pled Guilty To Shoplifting A  
US\$2 Can Of Beer And Fined US\$200  
Was Ultimately Jailed For Failing To Pay  
More Than US\$1,000 In Fees To  
Probation Company”**



Thomas Barrett, destitute and living primarily off food stamps, was arrested in 2012 for stealing a can of beer valued at \$2 and was sentenced to probation with Sentinel Offender Services, a for-profit firm. Despite selling his own blood plasma twice a week to raise money, Barrett fell more than \$1,000 behind in his payments and was jailed for failure to pay. © 2014 Jason Blalock for Human Rights Watch

February 5, 2014 Human Rights Watch [Excerpts]

**Every year, US courts sentence several hundred thousand misdemeanor offenders to probation overseen by private companies that charge their fees directly to the probationers.**

**Often, the poorest people wind up paying the most in fees over time, in what amounts to a discriminatory penalty.**

**And when they can't pay, companies can and do secure their arrest.**

The 72-page report, "Profiting from Probation: America's 'Offender-Funded' Probation Industry," describes how more than 1,000 courts in several US states delegate tremendous coercive power to companies that are often subject to little meaningful oversight or regulation.

In some of these cases, probation companies act more like abusive debt collectors than probation officers, charging the debtors for their services.

"Many of the people supervised by these companies wouldn't be on probation to begin with if they had more money," said Chris Albin-Lackey, senior researcher on business and human rights at Human Rights Watch.

"Often, the poorer people are, the more they ultimately pay in company fees and the more likely it is that they will wind up behind bars."

**Companies refuse to disclose how much money they collect in fees from offenders under their supervision. Remarkably, the courts that hire them generally do not demand this information either.**

**Human Rights Watch estimates that, in Georgia alone, the industry collects a minimum of US\$40 million in fees every year from probationers.**

In other states, disclosure requirements are so minimal that it is not possible even to hazard a guess how much probation companies are harvesting from probationers in fees.

Human Rights Watch research in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama revealed numerous egregious cases that illustrate the abuses related to outsourcing probation supervision as it is practiced today.

**In Augusta, Georgia, a man who pled guilty to shoplifting a US\$2 can of beer and fined US\$200 was ultimately jailed for failing to pay more than US\$1,000 in fees to his probation company. At the time he was destitute, selling his own blood plasma twice a week to raise money**

**In another Georgia town, a company probation officer said she routinely has offenders arrested for non-payment and then bargains with their families for money in exchange for the person's release.**

**In Alabama, the town of Harpersville shut down its entire municipal court after a judge slammed the municipality and its probation company for running what he called a “judicially sanctioned extortion racket.”**

The Mississippi Delta town of Greenwood, an impoverished community of 15,000, had more than 1,200 people on probation with the private firm Judicial Corrections Services as of August 2013. Many were guilty only of traffic offenses.

**The town’s municipal judge told Human Rights Watch that “maybe one or two” of those had warrants out for their arrest. The real figure was close to 300.**

These cases are not mere aberrations. Not all company probation officers behave unethically, but they are all subject to perverse financial incentives that encourage abusive behavior. And courts that view probation companies as an easy way to boost collections have troubling incentives not to ask hard questions about the tactics those companies employ.

Probation companies operate on an “offender-funded” basis that is financially appealing to many courts and local governments. They offer to provide probation supervision for low-level, misdemeanor offenders at no cost to the taxpayer.

**Instead, their contracts stipulate that judges should order probationers to pay them various fees as a condition of their sentence of probation.**

**Many companies’ profits are entirely dependent on their ability to collect these fees from probationers.**

In *Bearden v. Georgia*, the US Supreme Court has ruled that a person on probation cannot be jailed simply because they cannot afford to pay a criminal fine.

But many courts effectively delegate the responsibility of determining whether an offender can afford to pay fines and company fees to their probation companies. This presents a clear conflict of interest because company profits, along with the quarterly bonuses of some company probation officers, depend entirely on their ability to collect fees.

**“Probation companies have a financial stake in every single one of the cases they supervise,” Albin-Lackey said. “Their employees are the last people who should be entrusted with determining whether an offender can afford to pay company fees.”**

In some cases, courts sentence offenders to probation because they think they require supervision and monitoring. But in many cases, people are sentenced to probation purely so that courts can task their probation companies with monitoring an offender’s efforts to pay down fines and court costs over time. These offenders would not be on probation at all if they could afford to pay these costs immediately and in full at the time of their sentencing.

**Many are guilty only of minor traffic violations like driving without proof of insurance or seat belt violations.**

**While these offenses often carry no real threat of jail time in and of themselves, a probationer who fails to keep up with payments on their fines, court costs, and company fees can be locked up.**

“Courts sentence several hundred thousand people to probation with private companies every year but many do almost nothing to guard against abusive practices,” Albin-Lackey said.

**“Perversely, some of America’s poorest counties are golden business opportunities for the industry precisely because so many residents struggle to pay off their fines.”**

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## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

# **Unarmed Palestinian Shot By Live Ammunition During Demonstration In Tura: “The Israeli Forces Occupying This Area Are Known For Their Extremely Violent Repression”**

15th February 2014 International Solidarity Movement

Nablus Team, Tura, Occupied Palestine

On Saturday, February 15th, Demonstrators gathered at 11:30 a.m. by the village of Tura near the annexation wall to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine).

People began chanting and marching in the direction of the checkpoint.

After 20 minutes of demonstrating, protesters decided to get back to the village, and the Israeli forces began shooting tear gas grenades and canisters, quickly followed by live ammunition.

Several people suffered severely from tear gas inhalation.

One man, close to the group of soldiers, was targeted and shot in the leg. He was immediately removed from the demonstration and taken to the hospital. As the protest was ending, another young man was shot in the stomach by a tear gas canister. The condition of those injured is unknown at this time.



Tura is located next to the two illegal settlements of Shaqed and Hinnanit.

This proximity combined with the violence of the occupation brings weekly confrontations between the local population and the Israeli army. The Israeli forces occupying this area are known for their extremely violent repression.

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## **Unarmed Palestinian Shot Inside Free Palestinian Territory By Zionist Occupation Troops, As Usual: He “Approached A Security Fence”**

2.22.14 Ma'an

GAZA CITY (Ma'an) -- A young Palestinian was injured by Israeli forces on Friday morning east of Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, medics said.

Ministry of Health spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra told Ma'an that a 21-year-old man was shot by Israeli forces located east of the camp.

He was taken to a hospital with moderate injuries, al-Qidra added.

An Israeli army spokesman said that initial checks indicated that forces near the border fired “riot-dispersal means” when a Palestinian man approached a security fence.

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## **Zionist Settler Mob Attacks, Injures Palestinians Near Nablus, As Usual; “Fuad’s Leg Was Broken During The Attack**

2/22/2014 Ma'an

NABLUS (Ma'an) -- A group of 20 settlers attacked two Palestinians in the Nablus village of Huwwara on Friday, locals said.

Settlers hit Ahmad Awda, 35, and Fuad Daoud Awda, 55, with an iron rod, causing severe bruising.

Fuad's leg was broken during the attack and both men were taken for treatment in a Nablus hospital.

In 2013, there were 399 incidents of settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Over 90 percent of investigations into settler violence by Israeli police do not lead to an indictment.

More than 500,000 Israeli settlers live in settlements across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law.

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## Occupation Naval Boats Open Fire At Palestinian Fishermen, As Usual

2/28/2014 Ma'an

GAZA CITY -- Israeli naval boats on Thursday opened fire at Palestinian fishermen off the coast of Rafah in southern Gaza, witnesses said.

Fishermen in the boats jumped into the water following the incident, locals told Ma'an.

Gaza health official Ashraf al-Qidra confirmed that the fishermen survived the incident, without providing further details.

Israeli warships also opened fire at a military site formerly used by the Palestinian Authority's national security forces near Rafah.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said "Israeli naval forces identified two vessels suspected in smuggling making their way from the Gaza Strip to Egypt. Upon the return of the suspected vessels to the proximity of the strip the soldiers opened fire at them in order to thwart the attempt."

She added that "shore-based Palestinian terrorists" opened fire at the navy soldiers, causing damage to the vessel.

**In the Oslo Accords, Israel agreed to a 20-nautical-mile fishing zone off Gaza's coast but it imposed a 3-mile limit for several years, opening fire at fishermen who strayed further.**

Israel has controlled Gaza waters since its occupation of the area in 1967, and has kept several warships stationed off the coast since 2008.

**To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:**

<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/list.php?id=ej898ra7yff0ukmf16>

The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."

## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

Did you know that a large group of baboons is called a congress?



That explains a lot now, doesn't it!

YoutubeHigh.com

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## **Southern California Police Beat And Taser Innocent Deaf Man As He Signaled To Them That He Was Deaf: They "Shot Taser Darts Into Mr. Meister, Administered A Number Of Painful Electric Shocks, Struck Him With Fists And Feet"**

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

February 14, 2014 By MATT REYNOLDS, CN

LOS ANGELES - Clueless Hawthorne police beat and Tasered a deaf man as he signaled to them that he was deaf and his friend had loaned him the snowboard he was carrying, the man claims in court.

In a federal complaint for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Jonathan Meister claims the attack could have been avoided had Hawthorne trained its police officers to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing.

Officers confronted him on Feb. 13 outside a friend's home as he picked up a snowboard and winter clothes for a trip to Utah, Meister says in the lawsuit.

Meister says he used hand gestures to try to tell police he is deaf and was lawfully at the home.

The cops were having none of it. They "shot Taser darts into Mr. Meister, administered a number of painful electric shocks, struck him with fists and feet, and forcibly took him to the ground," he says in the complaint.

Officers kicked and punched him in the back and stomach, choked and Tasered him, delivering "punishing shocks" and intentionally "burning his flesh," Meister claims.

He says four defendant officers took part in the attack: Jeffrey Salmon, Jeffrey Tysl, Erica Bristow and Mark Hultgren.

After he was knocked unconscious and taken to a hospital, he was cited for assaulting the officers and released, but the charges were dropped.

"This incident occurred in substantial part because the HPD [Hawthorne Police Department] does not provide its officers the training and resources to serve people who are deaf or hard of hearing, including those who communicate primarily through American Sign Language," the lawsuit states.

Meister seeks statutory, treble and punitive damage for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act, and civil rights violations. Also named as defendants are the City of Hawthorne, its Police Department and Police Chief Robert Fager.

Meister is represented by John Burton of Pasadena.

Hawthorne, pp. 85,000, is part of Greater Los Angeles, between Manhattan Beach and Compton.

**Numerous, similar lawsuits have been filed across the country, in which police beat and arrested diabetics suffering from insulin shock, believing, or claiming to believe, that they were drunk.**

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