

Protect! Resist! Transform!

# Coronavirus: solidarity update 28 March

Saturday 28 March 2020, by [JOHNSON Mark](#) (Date first published: 28 March 2020).

## Mark Johnson's selection of news and analysis from around the world

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## Impact on poor and social movements

### Europe

[Italy](#) is the European country hardest hit so far. The SI COBAS labour union is [calling for widespread action](#). [Antonello Zecca](#), an organizer with the [Sinistra Anticapitalista](#) (Anticapitalist Left) provides an [overview of the crisis \(22 March\)](#), and [David Broder](#) reports on the [beginnings of a strike wave](#) demanding closing down of protection not essential for the population, and adequate protection for all those still working (12 March)

From [Spain](#) Dani Ramos reports on strike [protest at the Mercedes-Benz factory](#) in Vitoria-Gazteiz. [Laia Facet](#) explains how the [Socialist Party and Podemos government is handling the crisis](#).

**Britain** The government seems to be abandoning its '[mitigation' strategy](#) of letting the old and sick die , but this has cost valuable time and will cause extra deaths, says[Phil Hearse](#). The National Health Service was already [weakened by years of austerity](#) and the reduced EU migration following Brexit, explains Siva Anandaciva. The crisis also requires [nationalisation of empty houses](#) and a new commitment to state housing.

### South Asia

[India](#)'s Coalition for Environmental Justice is arguing for[limited and people-centred public health](#), rather than the authoritarian and anti-science fumbling of the Hindu fundamentalist government. [Jean Drèze](#) analyses the [impact of the lockdown](#)on the poor. Statements have also been issued by People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism ([PADS](#))

[Pakistan](#) [Ammar Ali Jan](#) and Zahid Ali propose a detailed [left strategy for fighting the pandemic](#).

The [Haqooq-E-Khalq](#) movement is [calling for a people-centred response](#).

## South East Asia

**Philippines:** The National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL) warns that [President Duterte is claiming excessive emergency powers](#).

## East Asia

From South Korea, the People's Health Movement explains the [success and limits of Covid-19 containment](#) and the challenges for labour and social movements on the peninsula. (19 March)

[China Labour Bulletin](#) explains how women in **China** bear [most of the burden](#) of pandemic response, in emergency services and on the home front.

## Americas

**Brazil's** President Bolsonaro is a [dangerous liability](#), warn [Forrest Hylton](#) activists of the [PSOL](#). There is a [strong mobilisation](#) of social movements in **Chile** writes Javier Pineda of the Convergencia de 2 de Abril.

In the **USA**, [transport workers in Detroit are striking](#) for better protection, writes [Jane Slaughter](#)

**Africa]]** South Africa trade unions are demanding pro-people policies - see this [statement](#) by [SAFTU](#) and [this article](#) by NUMSA President Andrew Chirwa. [Community Health Workers](#) are also on the front line.

## \*Middle East & North Africa

**In Algeria, the pandemic seems to be blocking the [weekly hirak protests](#) for justice and democracy.**

## How to resist

There are increasing strikes for worker safety and closing down non-essential production. This includes international coordination among [call centre workers](#) (see also this [declaration](#) of CGT (ES), SUD (FR) and other radical labour unions) and at [Amazon](#).

**In Canada, Gary Kinsman takes inspiration from the strategy and tactics of [AIDS activism](#).**

## In the long term

**Cedric Durand and Razmig Keucheyan look at [the four interlocking crises: health, economy, ecology, finance](#). Niel Faulkner (UK) predicts the Tory strategy to [use the epidemic](#) to force through unpopular reforms (16 March)**

## **Understanding the science**

**Daniel Tanuro summarises** the origin and impact of the pandemic and its implications for social movements.

**Dr Jeyakumar Devaraj** of the **Socialist Party Malaysia** explains the **difference** between the ultraliberal 'mitigation strategy' of letting the old and sick die, as opposed to the costly eradication strategy followed by China, South Korea and some other countries.

### We're also reading...

**Namibia 30 years after independence**: a series of articles commissioned by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (DE) **Teivo Teivainen** and Pauli Huotari unpick the **prejudices and assumptions in 'western' thinking** about this global crisis. **Ammar Ali Jan** identifies the**authoritarian mechanisms** that the capitalist elite uses in times of crisis.

### From our archives

**Swee Kheng Khor** identified the **negative impact of privatisation of health in South-East Asia** in January 2020. Its worth re-reading these key articles on the **Ebola** pandemic