

Protect! Resist! Transform!

Coronavirus: solidarity update 13 April 2020

Monday 13 April 2020, by [JOHNSON Mark](#) (Date first published: 13 April 2020).

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

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Impact on poor and social movements

Europe

Years of neoliberalism, combined with late introduction of physical distancing and lockdown measures, explain the [Netherlands](#) 5th highest Covid-19 death rate in the world. The *Swedish government is also [failing to protect](#) the people*, explains Agnes Lou.

[Polish labour unionists](#) have condemned their country's failures in public health and labour rights. **Bulgarian** health workers [are the worse paid and worse treated](#) in the EU. Populists and the far right are exploiting the crisis for their own interests. The Slovak government has [scapegoated Roma](#).

In **France** attention is turning to the conditions in [care and retirement homes](#) earlier wrote this [overview of the crisis in France](#).

From **Spain** [Brais Fernandez](#) explains how the [health system was criminally weakened](#) during years of austerity.

Even if **Britain** is less affected by religious fundamentalism than some other countries, [religious extremists are still a potential threat](#) to public health, warn Chris Sloggett.

South Asia

Saurav Sarkar contributes a [round up of labour struggles](#) across South and South East Asia.

Bangladeshi civic groups have called for an [urgent debt moratorium and write-off](#).

India's [mining sector has negotiated an exception](#) from the lockdown; workers are not receiving extra protection from Covid-19. Left concern with migrant workers focuses on the male migrant, [ignoring rural women homemakers](#), argues Chetan CHOITHANI. The return of destitute migrants, and the de facto suspension of MNREGA job schemes [will hit Bihar state hard](#), warns <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?auteur19052>. The [Radical Socialist](#) group issued this [statement](#).

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](#). So is the peasant movement [Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee](#).

South East Asia

Thailand cannot control the pandemic unless it provides [relief and health support to unemployed migrants](#), argues Sutthichaya YIAMYUT. The Mekong Migration Network has highlighted [migrant worker challenges](#) across the region.

In **Philippines** the authorities are [repressing solidarity initiatives](#) of community and labour groups. See also [this report](#) on the same topic. Sonny Melencio wonders how long President Duterte can keep the [various elite factions](#) happy. [Raymond da Silva](#) and [Herido CORAZON with Joshua SANTOS](#) identify the weaknesses in health and social protection, militarisation of society and shameless profiteering crisis as well as the opportunities for grass roots resistance.

Malaysia will [suffer more from religious fundamentalism](#) than the virus, warns [S. Thayaparam](#). This can be seen in [government advice for women to wear makeup and talk childishly](#) to their husbands during the lockdown, in the interest of 'Family Harmony.'

East Asia

Hong Kong [domestic workers](#) bear the brunt of the Covid-19 lockdown. Casual workers and many unemployed are [not eligible](#) for government relief schemes.

Just as China's economy was recovering from the domestic lockdown, [demand for exports \(except medical equipment\) is collapsing](#). How will this affect the CPP leadership's plans for [market reforms in property and labour rights](#)?

Americas

[Transit workers](#) in the **USA** are demanding a shutdown of unsafe workplaces. [Noam Chomsky dissects the failures](#) of Trump.

Africa

Activists and researchers from Kenya, South Africa, Burkina Faso and Nigeria and Zimbabwe speak about the impact of Covid-19 [on their countries](#). This is an update of an [earlier roundup](#). The demands are for more testing, free health care, and an end to police violence in lockdown enforcement.

South Africa: Social movements are organising solidarity and protests, [reports Khanya Forum](#). [Patrick Bond](#) warns that the pandemic will hit [urban and rural poor](#) hardest.

Middle East & North Africa

Egyptian [labour unions are protesting](#) inadequate health and social protection response of government, as well as the insulting 'charity' of the capitalist elite. An international labour solidarity initiative is [highlighting Palestinian suffering](#) during the pandemic, in the occupied territories and in Israel.

The **Algerian** regime is using the pandemic as a [pretext for repression](#) of activists.

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