

Report on ESSF's solidarity activities in 2023

Tuesday 26 March 2024, by [ESSF](#), [NOVAK Adam](#), [ROUSSET Pierre](#) (Date first published: 24 March 2024).

We present below an overall report on the activities of our association in 2023. It includes an assessment of our financial solidarity with our Asian partners, as well as the development of our website and our involvement in various international campaigns. We wanted to introduce the micro-team on which all this relies (it's the first time we've done this!), the support we receive, the collaborative links we forge, particularly in translation work, an area that has become increasingly important: it gives English- and French-speaking readers access to a wider range of sources and allows them to share common information.

"Taking advantage" of the delay in writing this report, we have updated some information to 15 March 2023.

Contents

- [Four or five countries?](#)
- [The website and our team](#)
- [Summary reports by country](#)
- [To send donations via ESSF](#)

In 2022, international attention focused on Ukraine and then Iran. In 2023, it was on Russian-Sino-U.S. geopolitical tensions and Eurasia, Ukraine and Eastern Europe, then, from October, on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Middle East. We have covered these issues extensively on our website, with a twofold aim: to offer quality information and to articulate a solidarity-based approach.

We have tried to respond as best we can to these developments, while ensuring the continuity of solidarity in the geographical area for which we are responsible.

We begin this report with an overview of the funds raised in 2023 (compared with previous years), and then deal with other issues, before returning to the breakdown of financial aid by country.

The overall financial picture for 2023

The financial comparison between 2023 and previous years is not easy, because we made different choices: very cautious in 2023, with the priority of starting 2024 with a large Solidarity Fund (interrupting transfers from mid-November), and more "spendthrift" in previous years.

In 2023, we transferred €43,020 to our partners. This represents a significant reduction compared with 2022 (€55,500) and 2021 (€56,370). However, this real fall should be put into perspective for a number of reasons:

- In previous years, we continued to send funds until the end of December. This time, the last

transfer took place on 15 November. We launched our appeal for donations to the Asia 2024 Solidarity Fund [1] and we preferred to preserve our resources so that we could start the year 2024 in the best possible conditions, knowing that the international context would remain difficult. Last year, €5,500 was sent during the end-of-year period.

- The response to the appeal launched in mid-November was more 'reactive' than we had feared (despite the cost-of-living crisis!). In our acknowledgements, we announced that we had received €31,000 by 15 January 2024 [2]. To this we can add some €3,500 in expected donations which normally arrive at the very beginning of the month and which, this time, reached us a little later.
- In 2022, we had €12,370 in cash on 5 January 2023 and €18,333 in 2024.

Donations came in particular from France and other European countries (Germany, Belgium, Spain, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, etc.), Canada, Quebec, the United States and Japan.

We started 2024 with a permanent Solidarity Fund that was much larger than in previous years. This has enabled us to send aid on a regular basis during this first quarter.

We can conclude this point with two remarks:

- Thanks to your solidarity, we have withstood the present difficulties better than we might have feared.
- Nevertheless, a major effort must be maintained to avoid a downward trend in financial solidarity.

Four or five countries?

After the military putsch in Burma on 1 February 2021, we added Myanmar to the four Asian countries to which we were already committed (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines). Initially, we received a large number of donations for components of the Burmese resistance. A final transfer of funds was made in January 2023, but then we had to suspend them (see below for an explanation of the context).

We hope to be able to resume sending donations to components of the Burmese resistance, but for the time being we are limiting ourselves to :

In Bangladesh, our partners are the peasant associations BKF-BKS-BAS and the movements with which they are allied - in particular, with regard to the trade union movement, BSF.

In Indonesia, with the Free Women association as our partner.

In Pakistan, in partnership with the Crofter Foundation (CF), the PKRC and the Labour Education Foundation (LEF).

In the Philippines, in partnership with Mihands coalition and its member organisations.

In 2023, there were no interventions with one-off partners in these or other countries.

The website and our team

Our bilingual website was created in 2006. It now contains over 68,000 pages, providing a

considerable database on a wide range of subjects, half in French and half in English. It is intended to be a useful tool for all those who are fighting for a world of solidarity, and offers a wide range of texts: articles on current affairs or in-depth issues, expert reports and documents, elements for debate, etc. Over the last few years, the site has undergone an ongoing overhaul (it will never be finished!) to make it more functional.

The team responsible for its development has been strengthened, but remains very small. Originally, there were two of us: Pierre Rousset and Arnaud, the webmaster, who had committed (for a fortnight...) to setting up the skeleton. He's still with us, having overseen several structural overhauls, not all of them straightforward, without which the quantitative and qualitative expansion of our site would have been impossible. We've had some major problems in the past (access difficulties, undue slowdowns, etc.), but we think we can now guarantee stable operation. Thank you Arnaud!

A network of contacts has quickly been established, suggesting or pointing out articles and websites that might be of interest to us. The content offered by ESSF thus quickly became the fruit of a collective enterprise, and it was very important that it should be so. This 'feeder network' has continued to grow and the content has continued to be enriched. Unfortunately, we are not able to publish everything that is proposed to us and that deserves to be published. There's a significant element of randomness when it comes to putting something online - one text may be published immediately, while another, undoubtedly more important, will be put on hold... at the risk of disappearing forever into the depths of email inboxes. This happens to some real 'jewels' whose fault is that they were made available 'out of time', when the news was overrun by other subjects.

Over the years, we have integrated into our team a number of administrators who have contributed to the development of ESSF. Today, there are three of us who put articles online: Alain Baron, Adam Novak and Pierre Rousset, with Arnaud still providing 'backing support'. To these four we can add our regular translators, starting with Pierre Vandevoorde, who supplies us with translations at an impressive rate (and also gives us the benefit of his familiarity with Germany) and E., who translates from Hebrew, a precious contribution in these times!

Sharing translations

The role of translations on our site has therefore grown considerably over the past year. It's important that French and English speakers can, as far as possible, access the same sources. Fortunately, we are not the only ones to think so, and the Ukrainian and Palestinian crises have given an added boost in this area.

We can benefit from translations produced by ENSU (the European Network of Solidarity with Ukraine) or by ad hoc committees such as AFPS and Agence Média Palestine [3], or AURDIP [4] as well as by magazines and websites such as International Viewpoint, A l'Encontre, Inprecor - and even Viento Sur, whose Castilian translations introduce us to English texts that we had missed.

We work closely with the 'Entre les mots, entre les lignes' blog, which does a fantastic job of publishing a 'bundle' of articles every day, many of them translations.

In addition, at Adam's instigation, an ecosystem of newsletters informing readers about our publications has been set up, with the possibility of subscribing according to theme and region [5]

Geographical and thematic coverage

Not all issues and not all regions of the world are covered equally. For one thing, we do not publish in Spanish, Arabic, etc. On the other hand, we have particularly close links in Asia, as well as in

certain French- and English-speaking countries (in Europe, the United States, etc.). However, we try to compensate for these imbalances, depending on current events in particular.

Eastern Europe. Over the last ten years, with the addition of Adam Novak to our team, coverage of Eastern Europe has grown considerably. This 'refocusing' obviously deepened following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The Eastern European 'point of view' has now found its rightful place on our site.

Middle East. Coverage of North Africa has always been fairly constant. Egypt has had its ups and downs. The same was not true for the rest of the Middle East. In the wake of the 'Women, Life, Freedom' uprising, we devoted particular attention to Iran from September 2022, thanks in particular to Alain Baron. Then, from October 2023, the Palestinian crisis took centre stage on our website. Today, we offer a range of articles that is quite unique in terms of its number, the quality of its sources and the variety of topics covered. Our sources include the Israeli Jewish-Arab magazine +972 [6], Middle East Eye [7]... This is a long-term effort. Of course, not all the countries in the region are covered with the same attention, but the "refocusing" on the Middle East is now a given.

The Americas. The United States and Canada-Quebec enjoy fairly constant coverage, but coverage of Latin America remains uneven or irregular. In French, we can enrich it with the help of contributions or texts translated by A l'Encontre, *l'Anticapitaliste*, or by the network of collaborators linked to the France-Amérique latine (FAL) committee. In English, analyses and translations come, in particular, from the United States.

Themes. Over the years, our site has seen an increase in the number of "women", "ecology", "health" and "LGBTQ+" sections. New sections were added in 2023, such as "Polar Regions" and "Oceans". In some cases, this is made easier because a member of the ESSF team is personally involved in the field of activity or interest concerned, in others this is not the case. Our micro-team is now exclusively male - and older (it has been different in the past), but we try to compensate for this with the help of people who suggest article links.

For some years now, we have been paying special attention to the 'polycrisis' that is now affecting every continent, to the irresolvable crisis of capitalist globalisation, to geopolitical issues and to the fundamental theoretical questions that go with it. On the other hand, we only touch marginally on areas such as the communications industry and artificial intelligence. Weaknesses that are not easy to overcome, due to a lack of knowledge and resources.

As things stand, some of the issues we care about are not as well covered as in the past (Myanmar in particular) or are not on a par with the current catastrophe (the climate and ecological crisis). We will try to reduce these shortcomings, but we cannot promise success.

The Cedetim discussion list and the "Entre les lignes, entre les mots" ("Between the lines, between the words") blog help us to cover a wide range of issues. We support the commitment of Editions Syllepse and relay the activities of the Réseau syndical international de solidarité et de luttes.

The "Entre les lignes, entre les mots" blog [[See ESSF (article 70227), [Entre les lignes entre les mots](#)] provides us with a daily turnkey selection of articles on a wide range of countries and subjects. Many thanks to Didier Epszajn who runs it!

Links with movements and solidarity

Our website allows us to report on the activities of numerous movements and to build solidarity links with them, as well as to lead or take part in militant campaigns ("Stop patents on vaccines,

Requisition!", in defence of political prisoners, etc.).

Other commitments

Asia ESSF is a member of the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF) and we take part in various initiatives launched within it.

We regularly co-sign appeals in solidarity with struggles and rights, against repression, initiated by an Asia-Pacific network led by the Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM).

We have forged close links with Chinese activists (who have had to leave Hong Kong, for example) or those of Chinese origin, and are following the development of progressive websites devoted to China and Asia.

We want to work with other organisations on our campaigns in Asia - particularly in defence of movements hit by repression and to strengthen the financial solidarity we can provide. We are also taking part in unity initiatives outside our own geographical area of responsibility (Iran, North Africa, etc.).

Ukraine. ESSF is a founding member of the Editorial Solidarity Brigades, as well as of the network of solidarity editors of the progressive Ukrainian review *Spilne* ("Commons"). Many of the editors and key contributors to our website are members of the European Network Solidarity Ukraine.

Iran. In the wake of the "Women, Life, Freedom" uprising, we are maintaining our links with the association Solidarité socialiste avec les travailleurs d'Iran (Socialist solidarity with the workers of Iran, SSTI). We have relayed their appeal for donations on our website, ensuring their collection while their association (re)opens its own bank account. We played a very active role in gathering national and international signatures for a declaration of solidarity, which was initiated by the SSTI and was a great success.

North Africa. As our association is based in France, we were approached by movements on both sides of the Mediterranean with appeals in defence of the vital rights of migrants, prisoners of conscience and democratic movements in North Africa. We obviously responded, even if this took us outside our own Asian remit.

Middle East. In addition to our commitment to Iran and Palestine, we are also trying to maintain a reactive monitoring of Egypt and especially **Sudan**, a centre of popular struggles whose importance is too often ignored.

Summary reports by country

Reminder: The donations we receive can be earmarked for a specific country or organisation, or paid into the Permanent Asian Solidarity Fund, which enables us to send aid immediately after a disaster (with the solidarity campaign replenishing the fund at a later date); to balance the balance of specific solidarity campaigns in the event that this is not the case; to follow up prolonged aid; to provide aid when the conditions for a specific solidarity campaign are not met.

Our partners in Asia have to deal with the violence of established powers, which can take several forms depending on the time, region and country: dictatorial regimes, landowners, extremist fundamentalist movements, etc., violence which can go as far as all-out war (Myanmar). We have to take this into account so as not to put them at even greater risk, and we do not publish certain

sensitive data.

The figures below relate to the amounts transferred, excluding bank charges (an international transfer generally costs us €27). In principle, we cover all costs (some may be deducted in the destination country according to rules which vary from country to country) .

BANGLADESH

Contributions sent via the BKF (farmers), BKS (women farmers), BAS (indigenous) movements and the BSF trade union federation. These movements are mainly based in the south-west of the country. The majority of their members are farmers who occupy public land (large sandbanks that appear in estuaries), cultivate it and demand legal recognition of their rights of use. Members of the BKF-BKS have to deal with violence from the henchmen of landowners. In the event of a humanitarian disaster, they can provide aid elsewhere. In association with a trade union and an indigenous peoples' organisation, they take part in unitary activities, particularly in Dhaka, where their national headquarters are located, on a wide range of issues.

Total for the year 2022: €12,300

Total Bangladesh (2011-2023): €79,629

BURMA (MYANMAR)

Myanmar is the scene of an all-out war. Since 2021, we have been sending funds to support components of the resistance to the military dictatorship. These funds are transmitted indirectly via a group of associations operating on the country's borders. The situation is very fluid and requires close monitoring to be effective. The components of the resistance are very varied. Some of the ethnic minorities who oppose the junta (or occasionally negotiate with them) command the equivalent of a regular army (minus the air force). Today, with the junta on the defensive (good news), our regional lines of communication have been suspended. We need to determine who should receive our aid in the current situation. We hope they will be restored soon.

Total for 2023: €800

Total for Burma (2021-2023): €18,920

INDONESIA

As well as taking part in collective initiatives on various issues and working closely with trade unions, the "Free Women" movement, based in the industrial areas of Jakarta and Sukabumi (West Java), works with women workers in the clothing sector to defend their social and reproductive rights (which are not respected by employers), and against gender-based violence in the domestic sphere and in the workplace. It runs educational campaigns, conferences, helps with self-organisation, supports women's demonstrations, etc.

As the geographical and social scope of "Free Women"'s work is more "focused" than that of our other partners, we have sent them a more limited amount of aid. However, we have decided to increase their funding this year, given the deteriorating national context and the quality of their activities. As a result, €3,000 has already been transferred to the first quarter of 2023, more than in 2022.

Total for 2023: €2,600

Total Free Women (2016-2023): €29,200

Total Indonesia (2006-2023): €32,700

PAKISTAN

We are in partnership with the Crofter Foundation (CF), the PKRC and the Labour Education Foundation (LEF). For practical reasons, we now send all “Pakistani” funds to the Crofter Foundation, whose priority is to defend the interests of peasant farmers. Since 2017, the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee is a network of 27 small farmers’ organizations and the the only member-organization of La Via Campesina in Pakistan.

The LEF has a very wide field of action and receives significant support from international associations. It helps workers in the formal and informal sectors to organise, train and demand their social, economic and political rights, with a view to bringing about fundamental changes in power relations. It runs special programmes for children. It works with the Crofter Foundation on joint initiatives, particularly in response to natural disasters.

Part of our aid to Pakistan goes to the Himalayan territories under Pakistani administration (Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir).

Clearly, Pakistan was “under-endowed” in 2023. This should not be the case in 2024.

Total 2023: €8,500

Total Pakistan (2005-2023): €116,605

PHILIPPINES

Our partner in the Philippines is the Mihands coalition, which brings together a network of around fifty associations with a wide range of specialities - they work together to respond to humanitarian emergencies, combining their skills as close as possible to what is needed. These crisis situations have many causes: military conflicts, so-called natural disasters, epidemics, challenge, the rights of mountain populations (Lumad), etc. Mihands operates in a large part of the island of Mindanao, in the south of the archipelago, but occasionally “projects” itself further afield. It helps local communities to organise themselves and adapt their socio-economic activities (including agricultural production) to make them more resilient to climate chaos.

Mihands has strong social roots, enabling it to promote solidarity between Christian, Muslim and mountain populations. As Mindanao is one of the most heavily militarised areas in the archipelago, the members of this network (and of other progressive movements) have to assume their many responsibilities in a context of permanent insecurity. Given the scale of these responsibilities and the regional context, the annual grant allocated to the Philippines has always been the largest.

Total for 2023: €13,500

Total Philippines (2007-2023): €158,589.27

All countries combined

GENERAL ESSF TOTAL FOR 2022: €43,020

General ESSF total (2005-2022): €480,213.04

With warm thanks to all those who have contributed to this year of solidarity,

With exceptional years now the new norm, we need to consolidate and continue to expand in 2023 the base of donors who will ensure that our financial solidarity is maintained.

ESSF

Mark Johnson, Pierre Rousset

Extracts from the minutes of the ESSF general assembly of 18 February 2023

The following points were noted:

- **We maintain our fundamental conception of solidarity** Each power chooses the victims that suit it and abandons the others. We refuse to enter into this type of “campist” logic. We defend the rights of the Kanaks in Kanaky, whatever Paris may think, the Syrians and the peoples of Syria in the face of the implacable dictatorship of the Assad clan, the Ukrainians under the deluge of Russian fire, the Puerto Ricans under US colonial rule, the Haitians denied protection and asylum by the so-called “international community”. We defend the victims and we do not abandon them in the name of geopolitical considerations. We support their right to decide freely about their future and, where that is the issue, their right to self-determination.

We stand with progressive movements around the world that reject the logic of the “principal enemy”. We are not in the camp of any great power, be it Japanese-Western, Russian or Chinese.

- **Naturally, we remain committed to the “Stop Patents on Vaccines, Requisition” campaign**, which we helped to launch. Initially launched at the time of the Covid pandemic, the campaign demands that patents on vaccines be lifted and that a health policy be implemented to enable developing countries to produce and use vaccines under the best possible conditions.

- **We note that the global climatic and ecological crisis** (collapse of biodiversity, soil erosion, deforestation often combined with the expansion of plantations, water crises and droughts, extreme climatic phenomena, etc.) is proving to be increasingly out of control and its impact increasingly brutal.

- **We note that geostrategic tensions are exploding, particularly in Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific**. The Eurasian continent is at the heart of global contradictions.

- **We must maintain our aid to the Burmese resistance**, but financial support must be provided at the borders by regional networks with which we collaborate. The situation in the country is very fluid and requires “close monitoring”.

- **We have entered the era of health crises**. We need to maintain a policy of ‘total information’ in this area, dealing with their purely medical and informative aspects, their political and economic interrelationships, the impact on health systems and the critique of the capitalist order that they call into question.

- **The overhaul of our website** is a major undertaking that will never be completed, but we have passed a milestone and this tool has demonstrated its ‘multi-utility’: pluralist but committed information; a framework for solidarity links and campaigns with numerous movements; monitoring of current events and compilation of background files...

We reaffirm our commitments

- The association's operations are based entirely on voluntary work and a policy of minimum costs, so that the funds raised are used entirely for solidarity. The only fees deducted are for transfers and account management (around 5%). Our association has no funds of its own and its bank account only receives solidarity donations.

We cover all other operating costs ourselves, such as those relating to the website (domain name, hosting) and the distribution of newsletters.

- As a general rule, our work is long-term. We do not "export" our own projects. We prefer to support movements that are socially rooted in their own countries, able to respond to emergencies on the basis of their involvement on the ground and their own perceptions of priorities. We help our partners to develop their solidarity activities and encourage the self-organisation of the people for whom our financial support is intended.

- Given our limited resources and the quality of our relationships with local associations and networks, we will continue to devote regular support to the Philippines, Pakistan, Indonesia and Bangladesh. We will also continue to support Burma, where our links with popular resistance are indirect. Any other solidarity initiatives will, at least initially, be more ad hoc.

We hope to work with other associations in France and Europe to develop a "Europe of solidarity".

To send donations via ESSF

Donations can be given by cheques (in euros only, payable in France), direct bank transfers to our account or via Helloasso and PayPal. All payment options are listed on the home page of our website.

Cheques

cheques to ESSF in euros only, payable in France, to be sent to:

ESSF

2, rue Richard-Lenoir

93100 Montreuil

France

Bank Account:

Crédit lyonnais

Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)

10 boulevard Chanzy

93100 Montreuil

France

ESSF, account number 445757C

International bank account details :

IBAN : FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12

BIC / SWIFT : CRLYFRPP

Account holder : ESSF

Through PayPal

To access PayPal use the email address contact europe-solidaire.org
Or click on the PayPal icon on the home page.

Through HelloAsso

You can also send money through the association HelloAsso: see its button on ESSF English home page: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?page=sommaire&lang=en>

Or go directly to:

<https://www.helloasso.com/associations/europe-solidaire-sans-frontieres/formulaires/1/widget>

P.S.

- Translation Pierre Rousset with DeepL pro.
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Footnotes

[1] <https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article68680>

[2] <https://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article69368>

[3] <https://agencemediapalestine.fr>

[4] Association des Universitaires pour le Respect du Droit International en Palestine:
<https://aurdip.org>

[5] To subscribe to the various newsletters:
<https://facebook.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5c732dd5ee65845cf20fd724a&id=f9557c45ce>

[6] see ESSF (article 69647), [About us: +972 Magazine and Local Call](#)], some journalists from *Haaretz* in English or Hebrew, the magazine *Against the Current* in the United States, the AFPS
[[Association France Palestine Solidarité : <https://www.france-palestine.org>

[7] <https://www.middleeasteye.net>