

## End Australia's illegal occupation of the Timor Sea

Friday, April 8, 2016

The Socialist Alliance released this statement on April 8.

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In the wake of the recent demonstrations of thousands of people in Timor-Leste's capital Dili and in other places around that country, the Socialist Alliance joins in support of the Timorese people's demand that the Australian government end its illegal occupation and plunder of Timor's rightful exclusive economic zone.

Liberal and Labor Australian governments have refused to abide by international law of the sea conventions and recognise a median boundary between Australia and Timor-Leste. Instead, Australia has plundered billions of dollars' worth of undersea oil and gas resources that rightfully belong to its small, northern neighbour, relying on dirty deals made with the Indonesian government while its troops bloodily occupied East Timor between 1975 and 1999.

Timorese activists have described Australia's refusal to recognise a permanent maritime boundary based on the median line between the two countries as an illegal Australian "occupation" of Timorese exclusive economic zone.

Australian governments have also helped multinational oil companies to plunder Timorese resources and used its secret service to spy on the Timorese cabinet and to raid, steal documents from, constrain and intimidate legal firms representing the Timorese government.

Furthermore, Australian governments have used political and economic pressure to force its small, poor neighbour into signing temporary "resource sharing" deals which have short-changed Timor-Leste of billions of dollars in revenue.

The Socialist Alliance condemns this bullying, imperialist behaviour by Australian governments towards its neighbour and demands that the Australian government:


- Recognise a permanent maritime boundary between Timor-Leste and Australia in accordance with the Law of the Sea Convention.
- Renegotiate all the "resource sharing" agreements Timor-Leste was coerced or pressured into signing with Australia to take into account such a permanent maritime boundary, and
- Compensate Timor-Leste for all the income it has been denied under these previous unfair temporary "resource agreements".

Acknowledge, apologise for and end its spying and disruption of Timor-Leste governments' attempts to negotiate a just permanent maritime boundary and a just share of resources in the Timor Sea.

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East Timorese protest outside the Australian Embassy in Dili in March.

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