

Saturday 13th of April 2006

INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

Orleans, France: the solidarity world-center of anti-“GM crops” activists

Solidarity is a meaningful word for the Voluntary Reapers.

When 49 of them were accused of GM crops destruction near Orleans, France, many other reapers officially assumed their responsibility in these civil disobedience actions, conducted in 2004 and 2005.

Accounting for the global nature of the GM invasion, worldwide activists are increasingly prepared to resist together. This solidarity movement already expressed itself during the 8th of April “Joint International GMO Opposition Day” (JIGMOD) in which 260 activists’ teams participated, everywhere on earth. Global solidarity will also show itself on the occasion of the Orleans Trial on Appeal undergone on May 15-16 by Voluntary Reapers.

Figures of the “anti-GMO in fields” movement will come from India, Spain and Switzerland to attend the 3-Day event organized in connection with the trial, whereas messages of support will have been sent from Australia, Portugal, Poland, Spain, USA, Austria and Hungary, among other countries.

After having been released on the 9th of December 2005 by the court of Orleans, the 49 citizens previously acquitted for having destroyed genetically modified crops will be prosecuted again by the Monsanto Company. The plaintiff appeals against the decision of the judges, for which the protesters “proved that they committed voluntary acts of damage on the goods of a third party in response to the needs of the situation...a **necessity driven by the uncontrolled release of modified genes that constitutes a real and present danger, and may be a source of undesired contamination and pollution**”.

The Sunday meeting, chaired by the journalist *Ruth Stegassi* of the National French Radio “France Culture”, is entitled “the anti-GMO fight: a world challenge”. Following *Jean-Emile Sanchez*, former spokesman of the *Confédération Paysanne* and the student *Eloïse Borgeais* who will justify the reapers actions, *Guy Kastler*, of the French *Peasant Seeds network*, will address the issues of the worldwide battle against GMOs. *Lilian Ceballos* will then speak about the health question. Related topics such as “peasant seeds” will be discussed the following days with contributions of *Robert Ali Brac de la Perrière* (*genetic resources*), *Guy Kastler*, *Gérard Joulain* (*Agrobio-Périgord*).

International activists will contribute to the full three days long program, that includes exhibitions, concerts, stands of information and organic food.

- *Juan F. Carrasco* (Spain): “The impossible co-existence between GM-crops and other cultivations”
- *Urs Hans* (Switzerland): “The obligatory moratorium: example of Switzerland, the EU situation”
- *Vandana Shiva* (India): “GMO resistance in India – Call to European citizens and farmers”
- *José Bové* (France): “The Reapers in favour of a Moratorium in France”

In parallel with this popular event, within the law-courts of Orleans, two opposed conceptions will be judged: on the one hand, the private interests of a multinational company and its allies of the establishment, and, on the other hand, joint unselfish citizens who ran considerable personal risks for the common well. *António Pedro Dinis*, of the University of Vienna, concluded his supporting message by these words: “*I would like to express my solidarity with the activists who have bravely defended our mother-nature, human beings and the future of the planet against the unscrupulous interest of Monsanto & Co. I am sure that the judges will for the second time be wise and fair, by acquitting all the anti-GMO activists*”.

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“GMO-Reapers of Pithiviers” Supporting Committee (<http://www.soutienfaucheurspithiviers.org>) with the contributions of partners of the JIGMOD international network (<http://altercampagne.free.fr>)