

Protecting

human

rights



Senior Program Director Shayda Naficy speaks to the press in Lagos, Nigeria about how corporations that privatize water undermine the human right to water. A strong global treaty on corporate abuse and human rights has the potential to protect people's right to water worldwide.

Securing a global treaty

CORPORATE ABUSE DEMANDS JUSTICE

No corporation should escape justice because of its wealth and power. When corporations violate people's most basic rights, they must be held accountable. And today we have a historic opportunity to protect human rights globally. Governments are in the early stages of negotiating a U.N. treaty that has the potential to be a powerful, lifesaving tool for justice. In partnership with our allies, we are organizing to ensure this treaty effectively protects human rights from corporate abuse and holds corporations accountable.

TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS TRAMPLE HUMAN RIGHTS

All around the world, transnational corporations are violating people's most basic human rights—and they're getting away with it. Just a few examples:

Climate: Shell devastated tribal lands in Nigeria with impunity. Chevron has refused to clean up its toxic

mess in the Ecuadorian Amazon, which has poisoned more than 30,000 people.

Water: Nestlé has drained communities' water and bottled it, making a huge profit while robbing people of democratic control over their most essential resource.

Tobacco: British American Tobacco, now the world's largest tobacco corporation, has bribed officials in countries across Africa in order to block public health laws that would save countless lives.

All too often, these transnational corporations are able to escape accountability for the death and destruction they cause because they operate across borders. As a result, people whose rights are violated find it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain justice.

A BINDING TREATY IS NECESSARY

The solution to this dangerous gap in legal protection is a binding treaty protecting human rights around the world from corporations. But for over 40 years, transnational corporations—and the governments under their sway—have undermined attempts to produce such a treaty.



Corporate Accountability co-founder Leah Margulies addresses governments at U.N. treaty negotiations in Geneva. Corporate Accountability brings unique expertise in securing corporate accountability measures in international law to the treaty process.

The result is that today, instead of a binding treaty, we have “guiding principles” and voluntary initiatives that provide corporate PR instead of real accountability.

Now, with the corporate assault on human rights intensifying, a group of governments and organizations from around the world has come together to revive the treaty process and create a strong and binding treaty: the global treaty on corporate abuse and human rights.

To ensure a strong treaty, we must protect the treaty process from corporate interference and include gold-standard corporate accountability measures in the text itself. The treaty we secure will set a precedent for international and national laws that hold corporations accountable for human rights abuses and provide protection to people all over the world.

ORGANIZING FOR A POWERFUL TREATY

We are organizing to block corporations from undermining this vital treaty, in partnership with two global alliances. These coalitions are the Treaty Alliance and the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity.

Corporate Accountability brings to this work a 40-year track record of reining in corporate abuse at the global level. We were the driving force behind the U.N.’s first code of marketing for breast milk substitutes. And we worked closely with Global South allies and governments to secure the first corporate accountability and public health treaty, in the form of the global tobacco treaty. The treaty measures have helped rein in Big Tobacco and will save 200 million lives by 2050.

We are building on the precedent of the global tobacco treaty to ensure that corporations across all industries are held accountable for violating human rights. As a result, people’s health and rights will be protected all over the world.

Achieving this vision is ambitious, but possible. Securing a strong treaty will require grassroots organizing; research, analysis, and tools for journalists; research support and political backing for champion governments; and bold funders, ready to resource this critical and historic work.

Corporate Accountability

Corporate Accountability stops transnational corporations from devastating democracy, trampling human rights, and destroying our planet.

We are building a world rooted in justice where corporations answer to people, not the other way around—a world where every person has access to clean water, healthy food, a safe place to live, and the opportunity to meet their full human potential.

JOIN THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN

You can be part of making this vision a reality. For more information on how you can get involved, including how to power this work through your financial support, visit CorporateAccountability.org.