



From 18-24 May 2024, Bali, Indonesia will host the 10th World Water Forum (WWF). This triennial event, convened by the corporate-driven World Water Council (WCC), brings together politicians, public agencies, academics, select civil society organizations, multilateral institutions and the private sector to address global water challenges. Marketed as a multi-stakeholder water governance space, the WWF is dominated by Northern donor countries, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and some of the world's largest multinational corporations.¹ These actors seek to pressure governments at all levels—especially in the South—to privatize water and sanitation systems and develop market-based solutions to intensifying global water crises including drought, scarcity and climate disasters, 90% of which are water related.²

The accumulated evidence, however, overwhelmingly demonstrates that the market-based restructuring of the water sector exacerbates many of the pressing problems we are told it seeks to address.³ These reforms increase costs for households and public budgets while granting easier access to water-intensive and water polluting industries. Indeed, the WWF agenda threatens democratic control of water and equitable access for small farmers, rural communities, the urban poor and other marginalized and vulnerable populations. These threats are increasingly dire in the context of a world struggling to emerge from the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic amidst climate chaos, economic crisis and proliferating conflict.⁴

Despite the catastrophic risks this agenda entails, especially for the exploited and marginalized whose voices continue to be ignored and sidelined in global water governance spaces, the WWF continues to provide a platform for the world's richest and mightiest water profiteers.⁵ But frontline water defenders and communities will not be silenced! Water justice movements from around the world will gather at the 1st People's Water Forum (PWF) in Bali, Indonesia from 21-23 May 2024 to challenge the corporate capture of global water governance at the WWF, consolidate the global network of water justice movements and champion public and community water alternatives that can truly realize water justice for all.

¹ [World Water Forum. 2023. Thematic Process. Bali: 10th World Water Forum Indonesia.](#)

² [Karunanathan, M. 2018. Water and Sanitation: Privatization is not a means of implementation for SDG 6. Ferney-Voltaire, France: Public Services International; Heller, L., Karunanathan, M., Zwarteveen, M., Hall, D., Manahan, M.A. and Diouf, F., 2023. What water will the UN Conference carry forward: a fundamental human right or a commodity?. *The Lancet*, 402\(10404\), pp. 757-759.](#)

³ [Hall, D. and E. Lobina. 2012. *Financing Water and Sanitation: Public Realities*. Greenwich: Public Services International Research Unit, University of Greenwich.](#)

⁴ [Murray, A. 2023. *Rivers of Resistance. Water for Life, Not Profit*. Amsterdam: TNI et al.](#)

⁵ [Benson, K., and M. Karunanathan. 2022 "Counter Streams: Organizing the Dakar 2022 Alternative World Water Forum." *Transition* 133: 147–173.](#)

The People's Water Forum

The PWF is a platform for water justice activists including urban and rural residents, small farmers, Indigenous Peoples, social and environmental justice organizations, trade unions and allies in local and national governments to both fight back against the corporate water agenda and build sustainable and just alternatives to protect water as a human right and as part of the commons. Building on some two decades of organizing Alternative World Water Forums to challenge the WWF's private sector agenda, global water justice movements established the PWF following the 2022 Alternative Forum held in Dakar, Senegal. The PWF is a permanent space for water justice movements to continuously challenge the corporate capture of global water governance, strengthening our efforts to engage and contest the WWF every three years.

Since its launch the PWF has become a leading global voice in the struggle against the corporate domination of water governance. This leadership includes the network's prominent presence at the UN 2023 Water Conference, where it worked to challenge the promotion of new strategies of water privatization and financialization and amplify the voices of water defenders and frontline communities, and in other international processes. It also includes the PWF's ongoing work to articulate local struggles for water justice and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and practices amongst water defenders and frontline communities in local, regional and global struggles to defend and advance public and community water alternatives.

The 1st People's Water Forum – Bali, Indonesia and Around the World – 21-23 May 2024

The forum in Bali will mark the first gathering of water justice movements under the banner of the PWF and nearly a decade since such an event has been held in Asia. Following from the PWF's mission to continuously challenge the capture of global water governance by the private sector and support frontline struggles for water justice, beginning in January 2024, a series of processes, events and gatherings will seek to articulate and elevate struggles for water justice around the world culminating in the May 2024 PWF. This process will include:

- **Water for Life, Not Profit – Webinar Series**

Beginning in early 2024, the PWF network will host a series of webinars in the run up to the PWF 2024 Bali to exchange and build movement knowledge concerning key issues in struggles for water justice. Topics include long-running and newly emergent threats such as the privatization and financialization of water services and resources; the human rights to water and sanitation; gender and water; public and community water alternatives; expropriation and dispossession—land and water grabs; water and climate change; and water, extractives and the energy transition.

- **Gatherings and Events**

Members of the PWF network will gather nationally, regionally and internationally at a series of events in the run up to the May 2024 PWF. Among others, key events include:

- An international gathering of water justice movements at the World Social Forum in Kathmandu, Nepal 15-19 February 2024
- Coordinated global actions on World Water Day, 22 March 2024
- Parallel gatherings of national water justice movements in Indonesia, March 2024
- Parallel gatherings of water justice movements in Southeast Asia, April 2024

Please join the PWF at these events and others as we organize towards PWF 2024 Bali. Find out more about the network and how you can support our work at thepeopleswaterforum.org.