

## **Statement from the Guggenheim Urdaibai Stop Platform**

Gernika, February 7

To all the people who have come to Gernika today: welcome!

Thank you all for being here with us today, thank you for filling this square. And thank you for the commitment, courage, and dignity you have shown over the past few years.

Today is a great day for Busturialdea, and also a great day for all of Euskal Herria. There have been many struggles against abuses of authority throughout our land, and rarely do we have the chance to celebrate anything at the end of the road. That is why this victory reaffirms the necessity and the value of grassroots movements. And that is why we want to celebrate this victory together. Have no doubt about it: the struggle is worth it! We insist that the Guggenheim Urdaibai project has been halted by us, the citizens. It has been scrapped thanks to the work of the people, thanks to the people's struggle! This project has been abandoned because we, the citizens, have taken to the streets, have worked together, and have raised our voices. It has been rejected because we have taken it to the courts to defend the laws that protect our land. This project has been rejected because we have confronted misinformation and informed citizens, town by town. Because we have shown people the truth.

We began in Busturialdea and gradually we have reached every corner of Euskal Herria: neighborhoods, small towns, and capital cities; youth and cultural centers; square by square. Step by step, day by day, drop by drop, we formed a giant wave that sank the Guggenheim Urdaibai project. Association by association, movement by movement, struggle by struggle, we shared our concerns and listened to and learned from others. We gradually built a network—a strong, broad network—that sustained us to the end and carried us to victory.

But, surprisingly, according to our public institutions and political leaders, it was administrative obstacles, legal uncertainties, and technical problems that brought the project to an end. That is not true. That is a lie! We, the people, drowned the project! And that will be our story from now on, and that is how we will tell it to our descendants. So that they know that authorities cannot always do whatever they want. So that they know that the people also have a voice, the people also have power. That citizens also have the duty to care for the environment, the right to enjoy our surroundings, the right to live with dignity, and the obligation to leave the world as livable as possible for future generations.

And to those who govern us, listen carefully: here we are and here we will stay, to applaud what is done well and to denounce the outrages you may come up with. The usual wild card no longer works. How many times have we heard: "You... you say no to everything!" Who are "you"? Who are "you"? In this struggle, many different types of people have come together: young people, adults, the elderly; locals and newcomers; people of very different ideologies; among them students, workers, pensioners; environmentalists, feminists; scientists, cultural activists, lawyers. That is who we are.

Likewise, when our land is in danger, when our future is at stake, half-measures and political calculations are not enough. We must join the struggle—yes or yes! Yes or yes! And we are not the only ones who say so. International studies make it clear: local movements and socio-environmental groups are essential worldwide in conserving biodiversity. Instead of obstructing or criticizing our actions, you should see us as allies. Instead of oppressing us, you should protect us. Together we will be stronger; together we will build a better world.

That is why today our gratitude is clear. Thanks to all of you who have joined us in the streets; thanks to all of you who have done invisible work; thanks to all the associations, groups, and individuals; thanks to those who have been with us and encouraged us in the face of the obstacles we have encountered along the way. We know the struggle does not end here. We will continue working to protect Urdaibai and to ensure that Busturialdea has sustainable, viable strategic plans that above all respond to the needs of the region. But today we have paused. December 16 was the day of victory, and today, February 7, is the day of celebration. Because we achieved this together, from the people and for the people. We have won together and we want to celebrate together.

Urdaibai is not for sale!

Euskal Herria is not for sale!

Long live all of you! The struggle is worth it!