

# The IAWP Stands with the Cartoneros and Cartoneras of Buenos Aires

Long before Buenos Aires had an inclusive recycling system, it had cartoneros and cartoneras. They were the ones pulling carts through the city at night, recovering what others discarded, and sustaining their families through work that nobody else recognized as work. Everything the city now calls its recycling system was built on their labour and their organizing.

The International Alliance of Waste Pickers expresses its full solidarity with the waste pickers of Buenos Aires, their cooperatives, and our affiliate FACCyR, the Federación Argentina de Cartoneros, Carreros y Recicladores, at a moment when that system and the livelihoods of more than 7,000 families are at risk.

The renewal of the city's recycling service contracts could open the sector to large private companies under conditions designed without the cooperatives, and potentially against them. We have seen this pattern in cities across the world: waste pickers create value for decades, and when that value becomes profitable, they are pushed aside in the name of modernization.

Modernization that displaces workers is not progress. A recycling system that excludes the people who built it is not circular, and it is not just.

For nearly twenty years, the cooperatives of Buenos Aires have shown that social inclusion, decent work, and environmental protection are not competing goals. They recover materials, reduce what the city buries, and provide formal recognition and income to thousands of workers. That achievement belongs to the waste pickers, and no contract renewal should be allowed to undo it.

We join FACCyR in calling on the authorities of the City of Buenos Aires to protect every job and every income, to guarantee the continuity of the cooperatives in the recycling service, and to make no decision about waste pickers without waste pickers at the table.

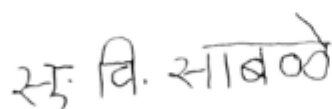
To our member organisations and allies around the world: this struggle is part of our shared struggle. What is decided in Buenos Aires will echo in every city where a government is deciding whether the circular economy will include the workers who made recycling possible, or replace them.

The IAWP stands with our compañeros and compañeras of FACCyR. We will be watching, and we will not be silent.

There is no recycling without waste pickers.



**Severino Lima Jr.**  
**President**  
Brazil



**Sushila Sable**  
**Vice President**  
India



**Maditlhare Koena**  
**Treasurer**  
South Africa



**Kabir Arora**  
**General Secretary**  
India