

RULES

AUTONOMÍA★ZAPATISTA

CONSTRUCCIÓN COLECTIVA DEL TERRITORIO AUTÓNOMO



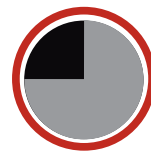
ENGLISH



2-6
people



+10
years
and up



30-45
minutes



For translation to other languages

ZAPATISTA AUTONOMY

Collective construction of the autonomous territory



**Designed collaboratively by people and
collectives in solidarity with
the Tour for Life, 2021.**

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INTRODUCTION

Zapatista communities have been fighting for more than 27 years, representing one of the cracks in the capitalist system and showing by their example that another world is possible and already exists.

On January 1, 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) took up arms and reclaimed thousands of acres of land in Chiapas that had been stolen by ranchers. After 10 years of clandestine organizing, the Zapatista communities declared war against the Mexican government, proclaiming “enough is enough!” to the theft and exploitation that indigenous peoples have resisted since the colonial invasion more than 500 years ago.

Since then, Zapatista communities have been building autonomy in their territory. Through assembly organization, mass participation and direct democracy, the support bases manage their own education system as well as their own health, communication, production, self-government and justice systems. With resistance and rebellion, thousands of Zapatistas organize and cooperate to collectively build more fair and dignified ways of life, respecting the diversity of ways of being, in coexistence with Mother Earth, for the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples and of women.

In this game your goal will be to collaborate to jointly build autonomy in a small simulation of the autonomous territory. In order to do it you will have to fulfill the **13 Zapatista demands**, following the **7 principles of leading by obeying**. However, it will not be easy: paramilitary groups, government plans, megaprojects and natural disasters will hinder your path.

COMPONENTS



1 board



20 markers indicating achieved goals (red stars)



10 food tokens



1 round marker
(Don Durito)¹



41 Context cards



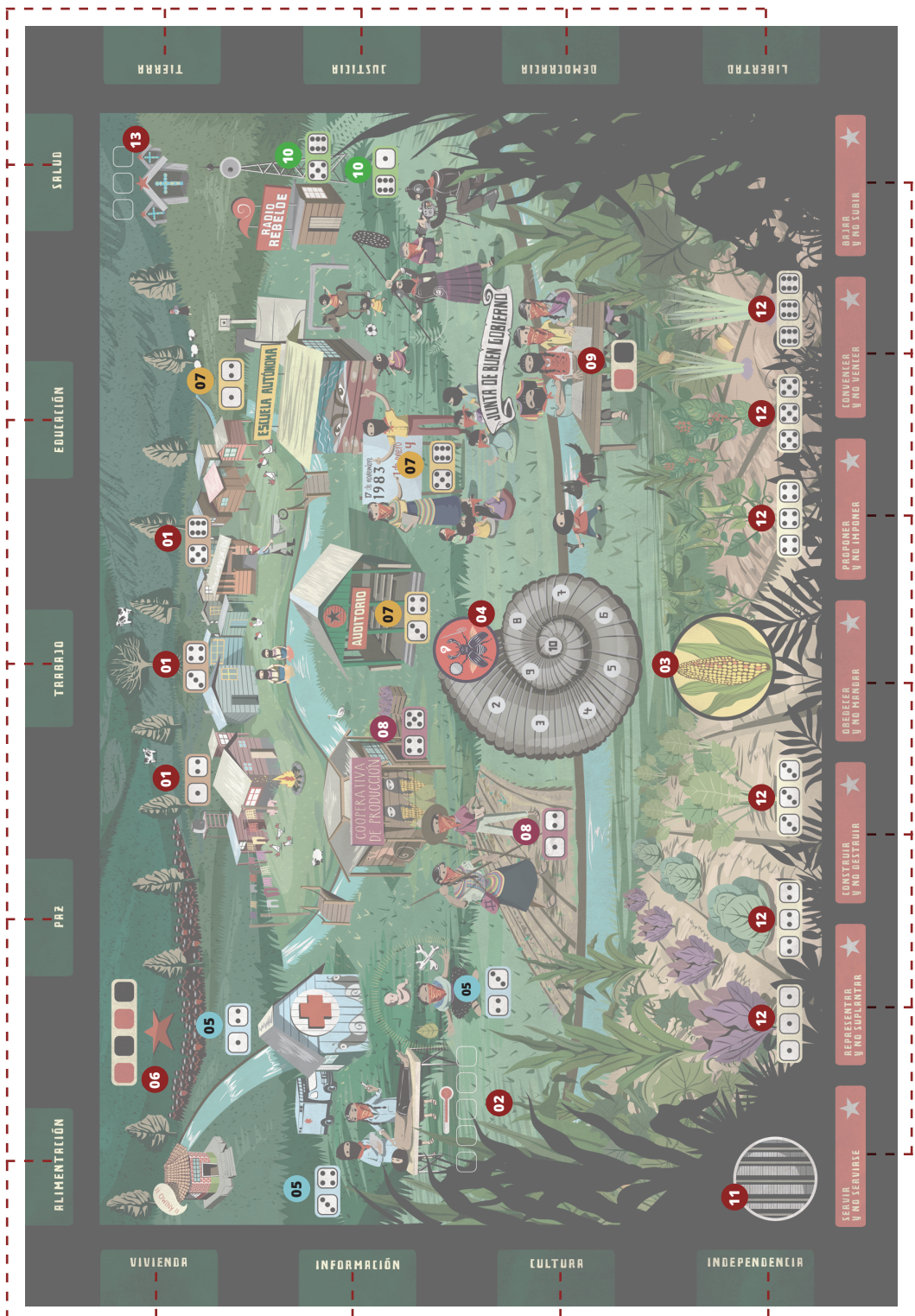
13 Demand cards



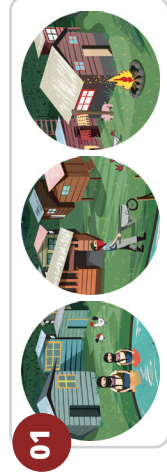
24 Dice: 12 red and 12 black

GAME BOARD

13 Zapatista demands



7 principles of leading by obeying²



Community



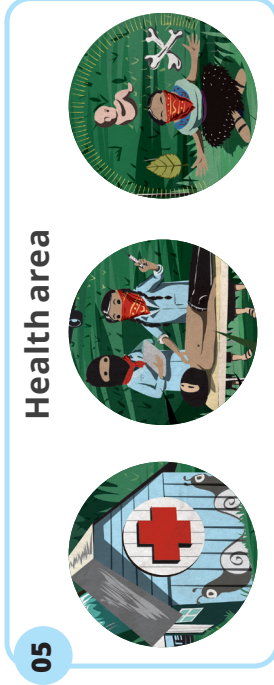
Infirmary



Food storage
area



Round counter



Health area

Autonomous
health center³

Health
promoters⁴

Midwives/bone-
setters/herbalists
(3 areas)⁵



Zapatista Army of
National Liberation



Education area

Auditorium

Education
promoters⁶

Autonomous
school⁷



Production area

Agroecology
promoters⁸

Production
cooperative⁹



Good Government Council¹⁰



Communication area

Community
radio¹¹

Communication promoters¹²



Bad
government
prison



12



Agricultural fields



13

Cemetery

PREPARATION

1. Place the **board** on a table.

2. Place **2 markers corresponding to an achieved goal (red star)** on the board: 1 in a part of the community and 1 in the autonomous health center.



3. Place **1 food token** on the board in the **food storage area**.



4. Place the **round marker** at the initial position of the round counter in the **center** of the board.



5. Place the **13 demand cards** on the **edges** of the board in their corresponding places, showing the objectives to be achieved in order to fulfill them.



6. Shuffle the **41 context cards** and place the deck of cards face down next to the board.

7. Distribute the **12 red dice** and the **12 black dice** **equally** among those who are going to play. For example, if 3 people are playing, give 4 red dice and 4 black dice to each person. These dice represent the **Zapatistas** and their labor force, which is needed to build autonomy.

Although we recommend that you play with between 2 and 6 players, if you play with 5 people then the distribution of dice is not even and one player will receive one die less. The same can happen if you play with a larger number of people. In these cases, you will have to decide how to distribute the dice fairly.

GOAL OF THE GAME

The goal of the game is to achieve the **13 Zapatista demands and the 7 principles of leading by obeying before the end of the tenth round of the game.** In order to do this, you will have to cultivate the land, build houses and community infrastructure, train the promoters, fight against threats, etc.

The 13 Zapatista demands are:

- ★ Land
- ★ Labor
- ★ Food
- ★ Housing
- ★ Health
- ★ Education
- ★ Independence
- ★ Democracy
- ★ Freedom
- ★ Information
- ★ Culture
- ★ Justice
- ★ Peace



Example of 3 demand cards.

Each demand is achieved when the two required objectives, indicated on the back of the card, are met.



For example, to achieve the demand “Education”, both the autonomous school and the education promoters have to be achieved.

The 7 principles of leading by obeying are:

- ★ To serve others, not serve oneself.
- ★ To represent, not to supplant.
- ★ To build, not to destroy.
- ★ To obey, not to order.
- ★ To propose, not to impose.
- ★ To convince, not to defeat.
- ★ To work from below, not seek to rise.

Each principle is achieved by convening the Good Government Council (how to convene it will be explained below).



GAME TURNS

The game is played in a **maximum of 10 rounds**.

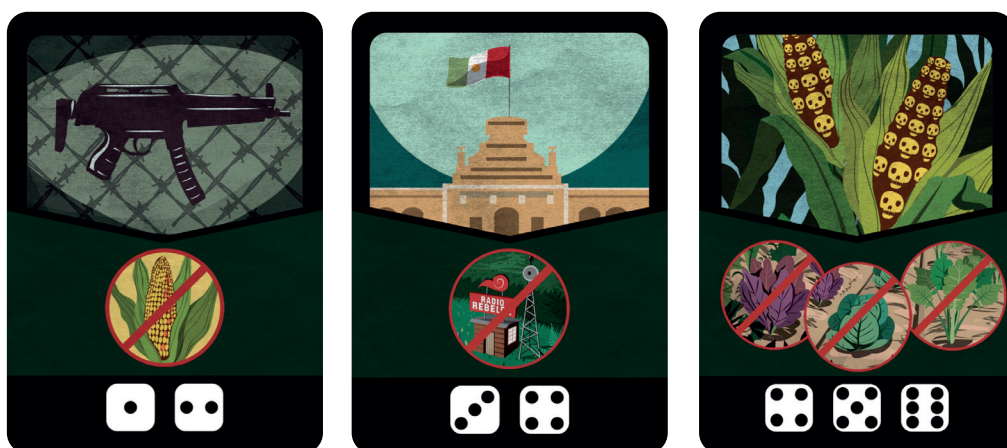
In each round, one person acts as leader. The first leader will be the youngest player, and in each round the position of leader will pass to the person on their left. The leader of each round is responsible for coordinating the round, proposing the strategy and facilitating the group's agreement on what to do together.

These three phases are carried out in each round:

- 1 Show **context** cards.
- 2 Roll and place the **dice**.
- 3 Round **resolution**.

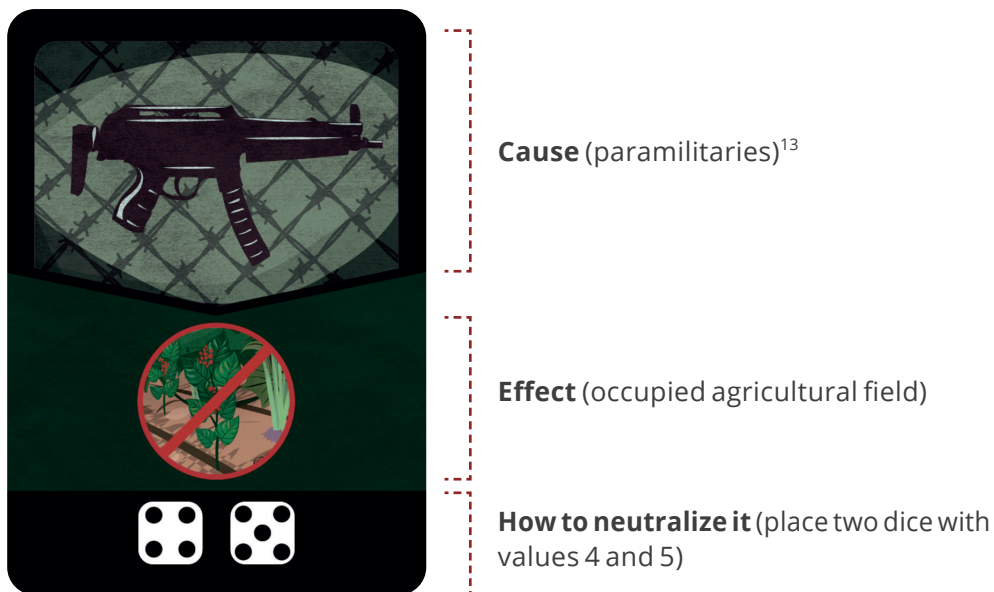
1. Show context cards

At the beginning of each round, the round leader **draws 3 context cards** from the context deck next to the board and places them face up next to the board.



Example of 3 context cards.

Each context card is composed of different parts:

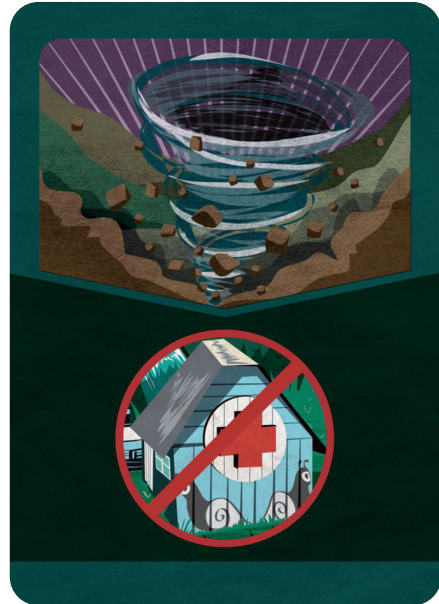


Context cards take effect **immediately** as soon as the card is played.

For example, this card represents the threat of a paramilitary group occupying one of the agricultural fields (you have to place it on the agricultural field it represents and it will make that field unplatable). The context card will be neutralized when two dice (a 4 and a 5) are placed on it (this can happen in the middle of the round). If the card is not neutralized, its effect will continue the next rounds and it will be added to the 3 new context cards.

Some context cards do not have dice printed on the bottom. This means that they **are eliminated after applying their effect**.

For example, in this card a hurricane destroys the health center (you have to remove the goal achieved indicator from that location) but you don't have to do anything to remove it from the board once the health center has been destroyed.



2. Roll and place dice

Simultaneously roll all your dice out of the board. Every player has to know which are her/his/* dice. Decide collectively how to place them on the places that have a die printed on them to indicate that you want to perform that action. At this point, everyone playing the game can **simultaneously** place their dice, working together to achieve the different objectives. An action will not be performed until all the necessary dice are placed. You cannot perform an action partially. Actions will be performed at the end of every round.

The possible actions are:

a) Plant crops: in order to cultivate the fields, place the **three corresponding dice** representing the process to obtain food (to plow - to farm - to harvest):



Keep in mind that at the end of each round **4 units of food will be required** to feed your support bases and that for each unit of food missing 1 Zapatista **gets sick**.

b) To neutralize threats: to neutralize a threat and eliminate it from the board you must place all the corresponding dice.



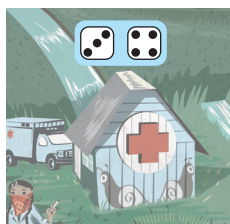
For example, to expel the paramilitary group from the field they have occupied, place one die with value 4 and another with value 5 on the card and at the end of the round they will be expelled.

c) To build: to build part of the community, the school, the health center, the auditorium, the radio or the cooperative, you have to place **all** the corresponding dice.

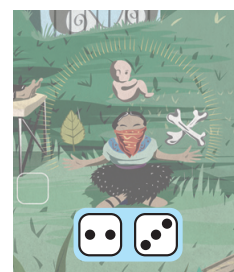


For example, if you have a die with a 1 and another die with a 2 and the part of the community with values 1 and 2 is unbuilt, you can place those dice on it and at the end of the round this part of the community will be built (place a goal achieved marker in that place).

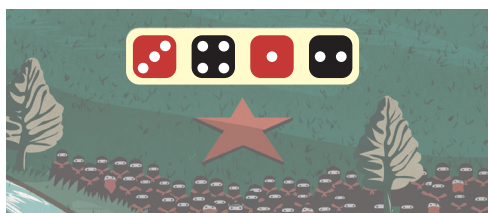
d) To train: to train the health promoters, education promoters, communication promoters, agroecology promoters, and midwives/bone-setters/herbalists, you have to place **all** of the corresponding dice.



For example, if you have one die with a 2 and another with a 3, you can place them on the midwives/bone-setters/herbalists area. At the end of the round place a goal achieved marker to indicate that they are trained.



e) EZLN: to ask for support from the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) you need to place **2 red dice and 2 black dice** (no matter the number) on their location.



Each time you ask for support to the EZLN, at the end of the round you can **free** all the dice that are in **prison**. These dice are distributed among the people who have fewer dice at that point in the game.

Important: Some Zapatista demands require support from the EZLN. In each round **only one** of the Zapatista demands that require the EZLN can be achieved.

f) **Achieve 1 of the 7 principles of leading by obeying:** place **1 red die and 1 black die** (no matter the number) on the **Good Government Council** to achieve one of the principles of leading by obeying (place a goal achieved marker to indicate that it has been achieved).

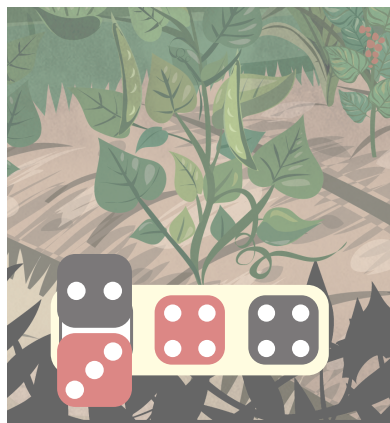


Some Zapatista demands require the Good Government Council to be convened. In each round **only one** of the Zapatista demands that require the Good Government Council can be achieved.

Important: only **one Council** can be convened per round and it is necessary to achieve **the 7 principles of leading by obeying** to win the game. Therefore, you can only play 3 rounds without calling the Council during the 10 rounds of the game **or you will not win!**

Combination of red and black dice

You can **combine 1 red die and 1 black die of any value** to achieve the desired number. This symbolizes the strength of Zapatista women and men collaborating to achieve any value.



For example, if you want to plant this field and you only have two dice with values of 4, you could place the two dice with values of 4 and then place one red die and one black die, regardless of their values, to convert them into the missing 4.

When you have placed all the dice or there are no places to place the remaining dice, you have reached **the round resolution**.

3. Round resolution

At the end of each round you must:

1. Perform the indicated actions with the dice:

- **Remove** from the board all the context cards that have been completely neutralized (all its dice are filled).
- **Build the school**, health center, cooperative, radio, auditorium and the parts of the community that you have achieved with the necessary dice. In order to indicate that the building has been built, remove the dice and place a goal achieved marker (red star) on the dice icon.
- **Train** the promoters who have both of their dice filled. Remove the dice and place a goal achieved marker (red star) on the dice icon.
- If you have convened the **Good Government Council**, place a goal achieved marker (red star) on one of the **7 principles of leading by obeying**.
- If you have activated the **EZLN**, **release all dice from prison**. **Distribute** the released dice among the people who have fewer dice.
- **Heal the sick:**

Take out 1 die from the infirmary if you have both the **health center** and the **health promoters** or **midwives/bone-setters/herbalists**.

Take out 2 dice from the infirmary if you have the **entire health area** (health center, health promoters and midwives/bone-setters/herbalists).

The elements on the board that belong to the health area have the outline of the dice in light blue.

Distribute the healed dice among the people who have the fewest dice.



- Place in the **food storage area** as many **food** units as fields you have cultivated (fields with all their dice occupied). In addition, if you have the **entire production area** (the cooperative built and the agroecology promoters trained), place an extra food unit in the storage area. *The elements of the board that belong to the production area have the outline of the dice in maroon.*

2. Feed the community, removing **4 units of food** from the food storage area at the end of each round. If you do not have enough food stored, for each unit of food missing, 1 Zapatista **gets sick** (place 1 of the dice of the round leader in the infirmary).

3. Check the achievement of the Zapatista demands. If the requirements of any demand are fulfilled, flip over your card to indicate that it has been achieved. Remember that you will only be able to achieve **one** of the demands involving the EZLN or the Good Government Council each time you convene them.



For example, if you have at least one unit of food after feeding the community and you have trained the agroecology promoters, you will have achieved the "Food" demand.

Important: the "Freedom" demand can only be achieved if the EZLN is convened when **there are no** Zapatistas in prison and **not** every time the EZLN is convened to get Zapatistas out of prison.

4. Check if you have reached the **End of the Game**. If not, prepare for the next round:

- **Collect the dice** from the board that are not in the infirmary, prison, or cemetery.
- **Advance the round marker one position** in the center snail.
- **Pass the deck of context cards to the next round leader** (to the left). Start the next round by flipping over 3 context cards.

If at the beginning of the next round...

- **You have the whole communication area** (community radio + communication promoters), **you can defend yourselves against a megaproject.**¹⁴

The elements on the board that belong to the communication area have the outline of the dice in green.



If **only one** megaproject appears in the context cards, the negative effect does not affect you. If two or three megaproject cards appear, the second and third ones do affect you.



- **You have the whole education area** (the school + the education promoters + the auditorium), **you can defend yourselves against a government project.**¹⁵



If **only one** government project appears on the context cards, the negative effect does not affect you. If two or three government project cards appear, the second and third ones do affect you.



END OF THE GAME

If at the end of a round you have achieved the **13 Zapatista demands** and the 7 principles of leading by obeying, **you have won the game!** Congratulations!

If any demand or principle is missing and you have completed 10 game rounds, **you have lost the game!** Fortunately, this is only a game and true **Zapatista autonomy** does not depend on it.



LEVELS OF DIFFICULTY

In order to decrease or increase the difficulty of the game, there are several modifications that can be made before starting to play, as it is indicated in the following table.

	Easy level	Medium level	Difficult level
Initial buildings	Part of a community Autonomous school Autonomous health center Community radio	Part of a community Autonomous health center	None
Initial food	3	1	None
Deck of context cards	Remove 3 cards that imprison, kill, or sicken Zapatistas	All cards	Remove 3 red context cards (solidarity volunteers, Tour for Life, Day of the Dead, etc.)

CONTEXT CARDS

Blight



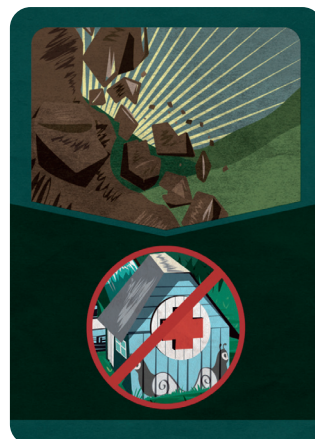
Food loss (remove 1 unit of food from the storage area)

Drought



Food loss (remove 1 unit of food from the storage area)

Landslide



Health center is destroyed

Storm



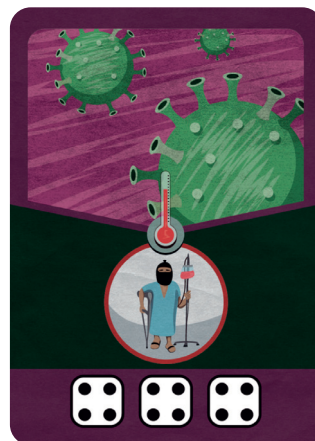
Part of the community is destroyed

Military attack¹⁶



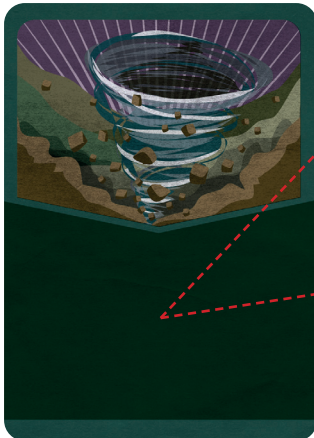
1 Zapatista imprisoned (place 1 die of the round leader in prison)

Disease



1 Zapatista gets sick (place 1 die of the round leader in the infirmary)

Hurricane



School is destroyed



Health center is destroyed

Paramilitary attack



Agricultural field is occupied (the land remains occupied and cannot be planted until the threat is neutralized)



Production cooperative is destroyed



Food loss (remove 1 unit of food from the storage area)

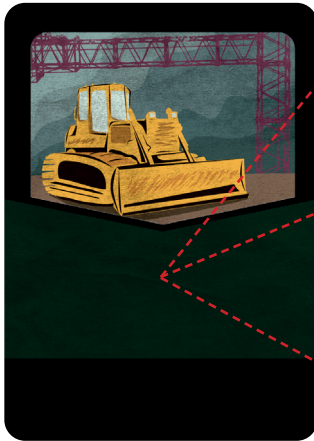


1 Zapatista killed (place 1 die of the round leader in the cemetery for the whole game)



Health center is destroyed

Megaproject



Chemicals used in a megaproject make 1 Zapatista sick (place 1 die of the round leader in the infirmary)

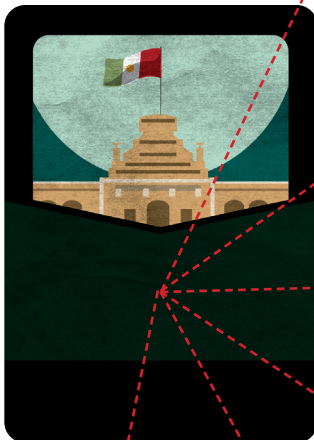


Part of the community is destroyed



Agricultural field is occupied (the land remains occupied and cannot be planted until the threat is neutralized)

Government project



1 Zapatista gets sick (place 1 die of the round leader in the infirmary)



Community radio is disabled



The work of education promoters is hindered



The work of the midwives/bone-setters/herbalists is hindered



The work of the agroecology promoters is hindered



Infiltrated die: the government infiltrates a person among the support bases and destabilizes the organization (the round leader rolls 1 of their dice and all dice with that value (belonging to any of the players) are useless during this round)



GMO corn

Nearby genetically modified agricultural fields contaminate 3 of the agricultural fields (you will not be able to cultivate them until you neutralize the card)



Solidarity Volunteer

A solidarity volunteer arrives in the autonomous territory and brings her labor force but also consumes food (Remove 1 unit of food from the storage area and use this card as 1 extra red die with a value of your choice in this round)



Solidarity Volunteer

A solidarity volunteer arrives in the autonomous territory and brings his labor force but also consumes food (Remove 1 unit of food from the storage area and use this card as 1 extra black die with a value of your choice in this round)



International Gathering of Women Who Struggle¹⁷

A women's encounter generates alliances but consumes food (remove 1 unit of food from the storage area and use this card as 2 extra red dice with a value of your choice in this round)



"Other"¹⁸

One of your support bases is assumed to be "other" (each round and until the end of the game, 1 of the dice of the round leader can choose its gender)



Tour for Life

The Tour for Life generates political alliances below and to the left but consumes food (remove 1 unit of food from the store and use this card as 1 extra black die and 1 extra red die with a value of your choice in this round)



Day of the Dead¹⁹



The dice of the cemetery can be played during this round (at the end of the round, the dice return to the cemetery)

National Indigenous Congress²⁰



The National Indigenous Congress is an alliance that provides support (use this card as 2 extra dice with a value of your choice in this round: 1 red and 1 black)

* If you lose 1 unit of food and **you have no food** in the storage area, for each unit of food missing, 1 Zapatista **gets sick**. Place 1 die of the round leader in the infirmary.

** If the context cards destroy already-constructed buildings or disable active promoters, remove the **goal achieved marker** (red star) from its location. If they were not constructed or active, this card does not affect you. You will be able to rebuild the buildings and retrain the promoters once you neutralize the card or the card's effect wears off. This can happen in the **same round**.

For example: a hurricane destroys the health center at the beginning of the round but during the round it is rebuilt and at the end it is used to heal the Zapatistas in the infirmary.

The unused dice for each Zapatista who gets sick, imprisoned or killed, **belong to the round leader**. In the next round, the last round leader will have fewer die available.

GLOSSARY

1. Don Durito of the Lacandona Jungle

Character from the stories of Subcomandante Marcos. It is a beetle from the Lacandona Jungle who studies neoliberalism.

2. Principles of leading by obeying

Core political principles of self-government and administration of justice guiding the Good Government Council.

3. Autonomous health center

Health care space that combines traditional and western medicine, based on a holistic approach to health and illness, respectful of indigenous cosmovisions.

4. Health promoters

Zapatista women and men who work in the health centers of the autonomous territory. They exercise their positions as a service to the community and without remuneration.

5. Midwives/bone-setters/herbalists

Mostly Zapatista women with knowledge and skills in healing using traditional medicine.

6. Education promoters

Zapatista women and men who administer the primary and secondary schools in the autonomous territory. They exercise their positions as a service to the community and without remuneration.

7. Autonomous school

Autonomous educational space where Zapatista children and youth learn. The educational content is based on and respects the reality of the communities, without colonial impositions.

8. Agroecology promoters

Zapatista women and men who promote agroecology in the autonomous territory. They exercise their positions as a service to the community and without remuneration.

9. Production cooperative

Space for storage and sale of goods produced in the autonomous territory.

10. Good Government Council

Made up of women and men of the Zapatista communities, this is the highest instance of self-government and justice in each Zapatista zone. Its members are elected by assembly and exercise their positions on a rotating basis, unpaid and revocable in the event that they do not comply with the popular mandate.

11. Community radio

Radio managed by Zapatista broadcasters who broadcast their own content of interest to the communities.

12. Communication promoters

Zapatista women and men who are in charge of the Zapatista organization's media. They exercise their positions as a service to the community and without remuneration.

13. Paramilitary groups

Illegal armed groups created, trained and financed by the government. They do its dirty work, hiding the government's participation in intimidating, threatening or attacking organized communities.

Since the mid-1990s, the Mexican government has carried out counterinsurgency actions to weaken Zapatista autonomy using multiple paramilitary groups.

14. Megaproject

Large extractive or infrastructure projects that require large capital investments. They are a clash between the capitalist model and the traditional ways of life of indigenous communities, who live in balance and respect with Mother Earth. Megaprojects dispossess the population of a territory, particularly indigenous peoples, of land and common goods, repressing those who oppose them.

15. Government projects

The Mexican government provides economic or in-kind aid to the population. Far from being assistance that promotes emancipation and improved quality of life, it conditions the population to a political party and makes them dependent.

16. Militarization of the territory

As part of the counterinsurgency strategy, the Mexican government militarizes areas surrounding Zapatista communities. Thousands of army and National Guard troops intimidate and harass the Zapatista population, trying to regain control of the territory.

17. International Gathering of Women Who Struggle

Held on two occasions (2018 and 2019), it brought together thousands of organized women from below and to the left from all corners in the world. In these meetings, women agreed to live and fight so that no woman will ever again be afraid.

18. Other

Concept coined by Zapatismo to refer to gender and sexual diversity.

19. Day of the Dead

Every November 1st and 2nd in Mexico the Day of the Dead is celebrated. The souls of the deceased return to the world of the living to live with their loved ones and feed on the sweets and food that their relatives offer them.

20. National Indigenous Congress (CNI in spanish)

Constituted in 1996, the National Indigenous Congress is an organization of the original peoples, nations and tribes of Mexico that fights for the self-determination and autonomy of indigenous peoples. After more than five centuries of colonialism and theft, the NIC continues to struggle to exercise its ways of collective organization and to build autonomy in its territories.



WRITE YOUR OWN RULES

We invite you to appropriate this game and to modify, invent, dream... and organise your own rules.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dashed lines, typical of primary-ruled notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.



