

COP31 Briefing Note

Working Group on Environment & ESCR

ESCR-Net | International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

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Reclaiming Climate Justice: Our Common Agenda for COP31

We enter the COP space with a clear understanding that access to these negotiations is a privilege, while the frontline communities confronting the climate crisis are largely excluded from the spaces where decisions about their lives, territories and futures are made. COP31 is therefore a contested political space where we bring the demands, knowledge and power of peoples confronting climate colonialism, extraction, militarism, patriarchy and corporate impunity.

At COP31, we call on States to center feminist and intersectional analysis; operationalize just and equitable transition; ensure access to justice, remedy and reparation; deliver reparative climate finance and debt justice; confront militarism and hold the military-industrial complex accountable; protect human rights defenders; and strengthen binding corporate accountability.

This briefing note reflects ESCR-Net's collective analysis and priorities, through a members' consolidation process for COP31. It draws on lessons from various global negotiation spaces and members' wider struggles for climate justice and human rights. Our demands are interconnected and rooted in peoples' right to self-determination and the need to confront the structural drivers of the climate crisis.

1. Center Feminist, Intersectional Analysis and Protect Defenders

Key issues: The climate crisis is not gender-neutral. It is shaped by intersecting systems of colonialism, patriarchy, militarism, and extractive economies that place disproportionate burdens on women and gender-diverse people particularly across the Global South. Climate justice therefore requires addressing structural and historical inequalities, redistributing power, wealth and care, and more broadly centering the knowledge, lived realities, and leadership of frontline communities. This leadership depends on the ability of diverse social movements to organize and mobilize safely. Yet, COP31 takes place amid growing repression and shrinking space for civil society, with human rights defenders facing increasing crackdowns and other forms of reprisals [across the globe](#), particularly in [Türkiye](#). The safety and meaningful participation of communities and civil-society organizations is therefore central to whether COP31 can meaningfully reflect, deliver and strengthen peoples-led climate action.

Our demands for COP31:

- Guarantee a safe and inclusive COP31 for human rights defenders and civil-society organizations, particularly by supporting [Peoples' Climate Summit](#) and other solidarity actions in and around Antalya. Participation, collective actions and aspiration of peoples' movements must be integrated into the formal COP spaces.
- Ensure the [COP31 host-country agreement](#) is implemented in full compliance with international human rights standards, including by protecting human rights defenders and civil-society organizations from surveillance, intimidation and criminalization, and safeguarding freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.
- Embed gender-transformative, intersectional and human rights-based approaches across climate negotiations, and ensure that policies and financing respond to the differentiated and cumulative impacts of the climate crisis particularly on women, gender-diverse people and other historically oppressed and subjugated communities.
- Recognize, value and redistribute unpaid and underpaid care work, particularly care for the environment, and strengthen women's collective care systems as foundations for climate action that upholds intergenerational justice and the rights of communities defending present and future generations.

2. Operationalize a Just and Equitable Transition

Key issues: A just and equitable transition must center social and reparative justice, and intergenerational equity. It must be rooted in democratic processes that realize the substantive and procedural rights of frontline communities, decolonize dominant approaches by centering community-led solutions, knowledge, and self-determination, while rejecting [false solutions](#). At COP30, Parties agreed to develop a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM). At SB64, Parties initiated discussions on its operationalization but did not agree on its structure, functions or institutional placement. COP31 now faces the urgent task of turning the JTM into an effective instrument for implementation, ensuring that it is not reduced to a technical coordination platform detached from realities of the frontline communities living through the transition.

Our demands for COP31:

- Establish a clear and time-bound pathway to phase out fossil fuels, with clear milestones, accountability and differentiated responsibilities, while ensuring that Global South countries have the policy space, finance and other means of implementation to pursue just and equitable transitions that uphold their right to development, energy democracy, livelihoods and peoples' self-determination.
- Ensure just transition policies confront the interconnected systems of fossil-fuel extraction, militarism and militarization that drive climate and social injustice, and place access and control over resources and transition pathways in the hands of the frontline communities most affected by these systems.
- Adopt a clear and ambitious decision operationalizing the JTM, including a defined mandate, timeline, resources and accountability measures. Ensure that the JTM is grounded in historical responsibility, reparative justice, gender justice, intergenerational equity, and that these principles guide its policies, implementation, evaluation and accountability.
- Ensure the right to self-determination and Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as non-negotiable standards underpinning full and effective participation of the frontline communities in the design,

decision-making, implementation and evaluation of the mechanism. Particularly, wherever policies or projects affect Indigenous Peoples' rights or governance systems.

- Reject false solutions, including green and blue extractivism, carbon markets, debt-creating approaches, and unilateral trade measures that impose new forms of colonial control on Global South economies. Ensure that the mechanism instead delivers accessible, public, grant-based and non-debt-creating finance, with direct access for developing countries and affected communities.

3. Confront Militarism and Hold the Military-Industrial Complex Accountable

Key issues: Militarism and militarization are major drivers of fossil-fuel dependence, ecological destruction, and forced displacement. Military operations, infrastructure, and supply chains remain inadequately accounted for in climate reporting and accounting, while arms manufacturers and financial institutions continue to benefit from systems of occupation, militarization and extraction. Across the Global South, militarization also accompanies critical-mineral extraction, energy corridors and so-called green and blue projects that dispossess and criminalize communities.

Our demands for COP31:

- Recognize demilitarization as a precondition towards climate justice by confronting the links between militarism, conflict and occupation, fossil fuels and the military-industrial complex, and reject the securitization of energy corridors and extractive projects imposed in the name of energy or national security. There can be no climate justice without demilitarization.
- Require mandatory comprehensive, transparent and disaggregated reporting of military greenhouse-gas emissions, including from operations, infrastructure and supply chains, and hold military-industrial complex accountable through mandatory emissions-reduction, climate disclosure and human rights due-diligence requirements.
- Ensure climate finance and transition policies do not finance, enable or legitimize occupation, conflict, military aggression, genocide, war or the destruction of peoples and ecosystems, and redirect public resources from militarization, arms production and surveillance toward reparations, public services, and peoples-led solutions.
- Address the environmental and human rights impacts of weapons and military technologies, including the destruction of the natural environment caused by white phosphorus, and support a demand for the comprehensive ban on its production, transfer and use; while amplifying the demands of other movement-led initiatives such as the [Global Energy Embargo for Palestine \(GEEP\)](#).
- Recognize ecocide as a grave international crime and address the ongoing environmental destruction in Gaza and Southern Lebanon within the context of Israel's wider genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people. States must condemn these practices, establish binding legal and regulatory mechanisms to hold military forces and occupying powers accountable for environmental destruction and military-related emissions, and ensure

full reparations for affected peoples and communities, including ecological restoration and remediation of contaminated lands and ecosystems.

4. Operationalize Climate Reparations, Access to Justice and Remedy

Key issues: Climate governance continues to deny and fragment responsibility for the harms experienced by the frontline communities. Reparations must extend beyond financial compensation to include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, guarantees of non-repetition, ecological restoration, and restoration of collective self-determination. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion on States' obligations in respect of climate change, alongside relevant regional jurisprudence, provides important legal foundation, but the practical architecture for implementing reparations remains to be built through political struggle, international processes and domestic legal action.

Our demands for COP31:

- Ensure UNFCCC instruments and climate-finance mechanisms are aligned with international human rights standards on remedy and reparation, drawing on the ICJ Advisory Opinion and relevant regional human rights jurisprudence to strengthen the recognition of State responsibility and obligations to prevent, address and repair climate-related harm.
- Operationalize the legal implications of the ICJ Advisory Opinion by ensuring that international, regional and domestic accountability processes reinforce one another, and that breaches of States' climate obligations can be pursued through effective pathways to accountability and remedy.
- Guarantee concrete, enforceable and accessible pathways for remedy and reparation alongside independent, transparent and adequately resourced grievance and accountability mechanisms for communities affected by fossil-fuel, critical-mineral, renewable-energy and other climate-related projects and policies.
- Strengthen domestic courts, administrative bodies and legal organizations as first lines for accountability, while developing political, legal and institutional mechanisms through which affected communities can invoke State obligation and secure their right to reparation.

5. Reclaim Reporative Climate Finance and Debt Justice

Key issues: Climate finance remains embedded in a global financial architecture shaped by colonial extraction, unequal trade, debt-based economic domination and concentrated wealth in the Global North. With little to no progress at COP30 and SB64, fundamental questions on who must provide finance, in what form, at what scale, with what accountability, and to whom, remain unresolved. Climate finance must be grounded in legal obligations and reparative justice, and not treated as a charity, investment or profit-seeking scheme.

Our demands for COP31:

- Cancel illegitimate, odious and colonial debt and establish a time-bound pathway for comprehensive debt relief as a form of climate reparations, while ensuring that climate finance contributes to debt relief rather than deepening debt dependency.
- Reject the rebranding of loans, private investment, debt swaps or development assistance as climate finance, and prohibit double and triple counting across climate, development and humanitarian budgets.
- Ensure the scale up of climate finance toward at least USD 1.3 trillion annually from the Global North to the Global South, grounded in Article 9.1 as a binding obligation of developed countries to provide new, additional, adequate, predictable, public and grant-based climate finance to developing countries. In line with this obligation, ensure direct access to finance for affected communities confronting climate harm, rather than relying solely on government or intermediary channels.
- Ensure that Article 2.1(c) does not displace Article 9.1 obligations or shift responsibility for climate finance onto developing countries including through their domestic public budgets. Climate finance shall be provided by developed countries in response to the needs and priorities of developing countries and the frontline communities that have contributed least to the climate crisis.
- Ensure that the Climate Finance Work Programme produces a concrete implementation pathway, with clear responsibilities, annual milestones, transparency requirements and accountability for delivery, and establishes direct, transparent and accessible pathways for communities and grassroots organizations to access climate finance.

6. Dismantle Corporate Capture and Strengthen the UN Treaty to Regulate Corporate Power

Key issues: Corporate capture continues to shape climate negotiations and policies. Fossil-fuel, extractive, financial and arms industries influence climate action through voluntary commitments, [false solutions](#) including market-based mechanisms and green-growth narratives, while corporate partnerships, sponsorship, lobbying and access to decision-makers reinforce their influence within climate governance spaces. We must confront corporate capture in climate governance, which directly undermines and sabotages real climate action. Voluntary approaches have not addressed corporate impunity, underscoring the urgent need for enforceable legal frameworks and binding obligations to ensure corporate accountability.

Our demands for COP31:

- Engage in the process and support a stronger [UN legally binding instrument on business and human rights](#) to end corporate impunity and [protect peoples' rights to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment](#). As negotiations move toward an expected final draft in 2027, States must seize this opportunity to secure strong [legal elements](#) and framework to hold corporations liable for violations and abuses of human rights across the value and supply chain, as well as expand access to remedy for affected peoples and communities. This is essential as a means to strengthen coherence across the UNFCCC, human rights, biodiversity and other

multilateral processes, and ensure that States and negotiators connect these processes to advance coordinated, rights-based implementation, including with regard to the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

- Adopt conflict-of-interest safeguards modeled on Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to protect climate policymaking from corporate interference. Kick out fossil-fuel and other polluting industry representatives from UNFCCC negotiations, recognizing the fundamental conflict between their business interests and effective climate action. At the same time, prevent business lobbying and influence in climate negotiations, institutions, and policy-making spaces at all levels of State engagement.
- Mandate corporations to disclose supply chains, financing relationships, and climate-related impacts, particularly on the frontline communities, and reject corporate-led narratives and mechanisms that commodify justice, such as net-zero claims, debt swaps, and unproven technologies, including carbon offsetting and removals.

Our Approach to COP31

COP31 must advance implementation of just climate actions while confronting the systems that continue to produce climate harm. We carry mandates from, and are accountable to, the social movements and communities we represent in this global negotiation space. Our advocacy connects just and equitable transition, debt justice, access to remedy and reparation, corporate accountability, and demilitarization as interconnected struggles for systemic change. We seek to connect formal negotiations with the lived realities of the frontline communities, struggles and solidarity spaces beyond the COP, ensuring that communities, whether they are present in Antalya or not, can shape the decisions made at COP31.