

International Climate Justice response to COP25 relocation

November 2019

In response to the announcement by Sebastián Piñera to suspend COP25 summit in Chile, we as international civil society reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Chile who are rising against austerity and growing inequalities; we condemn the violent repression and human rights violations from the government and the military against peaceful protestors.

In the past few weeks, mass protests have taken to the streets of Chile in response to the disastrous neoliberal economic and social policies that have deepened inequalities and injustices as well environmental conflicts across the country. Although the protests were sparked by a hike in transport fares, it is clear that the discontent of the Chilean people has much deeper roots and is very much linked to the ecological emergency and the crisis of inequality.

In response to the uprising, President Piñera has unfurled a wave of violent repression, releasing the military onto the streets, installing a curfew under the now lifted state of emergency, and attacking, torturing, raping, and killing non-violent protesters. This horrific repression brings back memories of 11 September 1973, when the people's democratically elected government was violently deposed, unleashing relentless neoliberal violence on the country ever since.

The Chilean government's decision to withdraw Santiago as the host city of COP25 is a desperate attempt to divert the attention of the international community away from the deeply intertwined social inequalities and environmental injustices impacting communities across the country, and the violent repression of the people opposing them.

The people and the movements of Chile won't be silenced, and we will keep on standing in solidarity with them and their demands for social, environmental, and economic justice. COP25 may leave Chile, but our attention will not. We will not allow for the relocation of the COP to Spain to allow for ever stronger state repression. We support the demands of the Chilean peoples and their organizations and movements, including the call for a constitutional assembly and for the Piñera government to withdraw troops from the streets and to stop the repression and horrendous human rights violations.

The social and political crisis unfolding in Chile cannot be isolated from the water crisis, or the broader ecological crisis. COP25 offered the opportunity to shine a critical light on the climate injustices affecting communities in Chile, where extractivist policies have created huge sacrifice zones. The country has been experiencing a historic mega-drought for the last decade as a result of the overexploitation of resources by industrial agriculture and mega-mining industries, coupled with a highly privatised water system and aggravated by an increasingly destabilised climate.

The demands of the people and the movements of Chile are intrinsically linked to the demands for climate justice, as there can be no climate justice without social and economic justice. The rebellion by diverse sectors of society against the neoliberal model in Chile is

indicative of its responsibility in producing inequality, deepening climate injustice, and undermining the public good.

Neo-liberal over-exploitation of natural and mineral resources in Chile has had a particularly harsh impact on the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, peasants, and workers, with large-scale violations of their human rights and their land and other rights. Indigenous groups have been disproportionately targeted, through draconian terrorism laws, for defending their communities, lands and water.

We stand in solidarity with frontline communities in Chile and everywhere. We reaffirm that climate justice means social, economic, and ecological justice. We condemn the violent repression of environmental defenders, the human rights and indigenous rights violations, and the increased crackdown on people and movements everywhere.

The decision of the UNFCCC and Spanish government to let Chile retain the COP25 Presidency while relocating the event to Madrid with just a month's notice, carries catastrophic consequences for civil society movements across the world. This is yet one more example of the purposeful isolation of democratic, grassroots movements from the world's most important decision-making spaces.

In such a Euro-centric context, which favours participants who have the capacity and resources to attend, we reaffirm that there can be no meaningful climate negotiations without meaningful participation from the Global South and global justice movements. We call for a shift from this current context to the facilitation of meaningful participation for Global South actors, for the centering of frontline and impacted communities' voices, of movements demanding social, economic, and environmental justice, and for COPs to put the needs and interests of people above capital.

Specifically, we call on the UNFCCC and Spanish governments to assist those organisations from the Global South who suffered significant financial losses as a result of the venue change and now face the daunting task of applying for Schengen visas and rebooking travel and accommodation.

We further call on the UNFCCC and especially the Spanish government to not allow the Chilean government to chair the COP25.

The Cumbre de los Pueblos and the Cumbre Social por la Acción Climática will go ahead in Santiago, and we stand in solidarity with groups facilitating these crucial spaces despite attempts from the regime to shut down Chilean movements and undermine international solidarity. Some of us will travel to Santiago, some of us will travel to Madrid, and many of us will not travel at all. Wherever we are, we will continue to demand climate justice and organise for system change.

Climate justice seeks to create 'a world where many worlds fit', a movement where many movements fit. In the face of increasing repression and crackdown on movements designed to divide us, we are more united than ever in the struggle for justice.

Signatories:

Aclimatando
ActionAid International
Amazon Watch
Aotearoa New Zealand Human Rights Foundation
Asia Indigenous Peoples Network for Extractive Industries and Energy
Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development
Association Adéquations
Colectivo de Geografía Crítica del Ecuador
Colectivo VientoSur
Cooperación entre Pueblos Americanos
Corporate Accountability
Corporate Europe Observatory
Earth in Brackets
Eco Justice Valandovo
Ecologistas en Acción
Engajamundo
Environmental and Climate Justice Hub
Friends of the Earth International
Gastivists
Gender and Water Justice
Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice
Global Forest Coalition
Global Justice Ecology Project
Green New Deal UK
Human Hotel
Indian Social Action Forum
Indigenous Environmental Network International
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy International
Italian Climate Network
Kikandwa Environmental Association
London Mining Network
Movimiento Ciudadano frente al Cambio Climático
Oil Change International
Organización socio ambiental Guardianes de Hierro
People & Planet
Plataforma Boliviana frente al Cambio Climático
Reclaim the Power
SustainUS
UK Youth Climate Coalition
War on Want
Women Engage for a Common Future International
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
WoMin African Alliance
Wretched Of The Earth
Young Friends of the Earth Macedonia
350.org

Signatories to add:

Asociación para la Recuperación del Bosque Autóctono
Fossil Free UK
BankTrack
MiningWatch Canada
The People's Justice Council
Zelena akcija/Friends of the Earth Croatia
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
Leave it in the Ground Initiative (LINGO)
SOAS Students' Union
Grassroots International
Comité Nacional de Lucha Contra el Cambio Climático, CNLCC, RD
FRIDA The Young Feminist Fund
TierrActiva Colombia
Climate Justice Edmonton
CEDENMA
Ninguna
Salva la Selva
Henares por el Clima
The People's Cultural Plan
Energy and Climate Policy Institute for Just Transition