

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC

### ON HUMAN RIGHTS-CONSISTENT CLIMATE ACTION IN 2026

This document provides recommendations for parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to the Paris Agreement which would help to put human rights front and centre of all climate action and decision making at COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye, in November 2026. To do so will result in more effective and more sustainable outcomes, remedies for unavoidable harms, and reductions in historic inequalities often stemming from racist and colonial legacies, while pointing the way towards climate justice for all. A full, fast, fair and funded fossil fuel phase out as part of a just and equitable transition towards renewable energy, and a massive scale up of finance in line with the polluter pays principle, together with reform of the global financial architecture, are urgent and essential, as are open and fully participatory civic space and the protection of human rights.

#### KEY HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMENDATIONS FOR CLIMATE ACTION IN 2026

- **Towards a just transition and fossil fuel phase out:**
  - All parties should demonstrate a commitment to phasing out fossil fuels, followed by concerted action, according to their historical responsibility and capacity. Ending all fossil fuel subsidies while ensuring an adequate standard of living for people with lower incomes who rely on subsidized fuel is an urgent first step.
  - All parties should develop human rights-compliant just transition pathways away from activities that produce substantial greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (such as fossil fuel-based energy and transport systems, carbon-intensive construction, meat production or nitrogen-based fertilizer heavy agricultural systems) with the meaningful participation of affected peoples and communities.
- **Towards scaled-up finance and climate reparations:**
  - High income countries most responsible for historical emissions, and all other states in a position to do so, should speedily increase their finance provision – primarily in the form of grants – and deliver on existing funding commitments to support lower income countries in reducing emissions, adapting to climate change, phasing out fossil fuels while protecting fossil fuel workers and others who may be harmed, and addressing loss and damage arising from climate change.
  - All parties should agree on an effective process to deliver a regular State of Loss and Damage Report and provide further guidance to the Board of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) to ensure that its operations are fully human rights compliant and that it adopts an ambitious, human rights-based resource mobilization strategy.
- **Towards greater protection of, and participation by, civil society including environmental human rights defenders:**
  - Parties should publicly recognize the important role of human rights defenders, including environmental human rights defenders (EHRDs), and other civil society actors in effective climate action.
  - COP host countries should facilitate access for all members of civil society who wish to contribute and should encourage and increase participation of Indigenous Peoples, affected communities and marginalized groups such as people living with disabilities.
  - Parties should consult meaningfully with civil society participants on climate action at local, national, regional and international levels.
  - As hosts or co-hosts of UNFCCC meetings, Germany, Türkiye, Australia and Fiji must ensure that all persons can freely express themselves, individually or in association with others, and peacefully demonstrate including about climate change and environmental issues, without discrimination or fear of reprisals before, during and after COP31.

## HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES FOR COP31

Protection of and respect for human rights are essential for effective climate action, as noted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, human rights harms will escalate dramatically if global heating is not kept within the 1.5°C target that the International Court of Justice has clarified is legally binding on all states. The window for this is narrowing rapidly, with 2015-2025 being the hottest 11-year period on record.<sup>2</sup> The Paris Agreement preamble includes references to human rights law and standards,<sup>3</sup> but, regrettably, attention to human rights in COP discussions and decisions since then has remained limited and even been opposed by some parties.

COP31 is an opportunity to inject human rights principles into key areas of climate policy, simultaneously improving their effectiveness while tackling global inequalities. Climate change, caused primarily by humans extracting and burning fossil fuels, is an injustice: it is the result of powerful people taking actions that inflict harm on everyone else. A **climate justice** approach looks at the root causes of the climate crisis and calls on powerful actors to address these imbalances and develop a future beyond fossil fuels that fully respects and protects human rights for all generations, now and to come. The future should not replicate the extractivism and discrimination of the present and the past. These practices not only deepen historical inequalities but also create new forms of exclusion and vulnerability.

To achieve climate justice demands, Amnesty International is urging parties to the UNFCCC to focus on the following priorities at COP31: an urgent **just transition away from fossil fuels** with an immediate end to fossil fuel subsidies; **scaled-up finance** for climate action that does not create further debt in lower income countries; greater **reparation for loss and damage** caused by the climate crisis; and **open civic space** within the UNFCCC process along with improved **protections for environmental human rights defenders** globally. This is not an exhaustive list but rather represents opportunities for real progress that can be achieved in 2026 that will go a long way to supporting other climate justice demands.

## A JUST TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS

Fossil fuels harm communities directly, such as through polluting nearby air and groundwater, as well as indirectly, through climate change.

Amnesty International's 2025 report *Extraction Extinction: Why The Lifecycle of Fossil Fuels Threatens Life, Nature and Human Rights* demonstrates how fossil fuel infrastructure poses risks for the health and livelihoods of roughly a quarter of the world's population that live within five kilometres of such sites.<sup>4</sup> The imperative to protect human rights by phasing out fossil fuels has also been made explicit by several UN treaty bodies<sup>5</sup> and experts.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, in its July 2025 Advisory Opinion on climate change, the International Court of Justice found that:

*“Failure of a State to take appropriate action to protect the climate system from [greenhouse gas] emissions — including through fossil fuel production, fossil fuel consumption, the granting of fossil fuel exploration licences or the provision of fossil fuel subsidies — may constitute an internationally wrongful act which is attributable to that State.”<sup>7</sup>*

In 2023 the Paris Agreement's first global stocktake (GST), mandated on a five-yearly cycle, marked a milestone in explicitly calling for a transition “away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical

<sup>1</sup> The Summary for Policymakers of the IPCC's synthesis report of its sixth assessment cycle states that “Adaptation and mitigation actions that prioritise equity, social justice, climate justice, rights-based approaches, and inclusivity, lead to more sustainable outcomes, reduce trade-offs, support transformative change and advance climate resilient development”. See: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/summary-for-policymakers/>, section C.5.2.

<sup>2</sup> World Meteorological Organization, “Earth's climate swings increasingly out of balance”, 23 March 2026, <https://wmo.int/media/news/earths-climate-swings-increasingly-out-of-balance>

<sup>3</sup> Paris Agreement, 29 January 2016, UN Doc. FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol30/0438/2025/en/>

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, “Joint statement by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, 14 May 2020, UN Doc. HRI/2019/1.

<sup>6</sup> OHCHR, “Fossil fuels at the heart of the planetary environmental crisis: UN experts”, 30 November 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/fossils-fuels-heart-planetary-environmental-crisis-un-experts>

<sup>7</sup> International Court of Justice, *Advisory Opinion: Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change*, 23 July 2025, [https://www.icj-cij.org/case/187 para. 427](https://www.icj-cij.org/case/187_para.427).

decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science.”<sup>8</sup> The first GST nevertheless lacks a clear follow-up mechanism, particularly in relation to a clear timeline for fossil fuel phase out. Amnesty International calls for a strengthening of the modalities for the second GST, due in 2028, to ensure meaningful participation, including through the creation of regional “GST People’s Assemblies” co-organized with civil society and Indigenous Peoples; reliance on the best available science, particularly the IPCC; alignment with climate finance targets; consideration of loss and damage separately from adaptation; and strengthening protection for EHRDs.<sup>9</sup>

Fossil fuel phase out, while urgent and necessary, must be done in a manner that protects the rights of affected individuals and communities, including those relying on the fossil fuel industry for income, those living near planned or existing renewable energy infrastructure, and others. A just and equitable transition is thus an integral part of climate action towards a defossilized future.

Given the lack of progress within the UNFCCC process on creating a roadmap for fossil fuel phase out, some states have turned to parallel initiatives to demonstrate their commitment to transition to renewable energy sources. Amnesty International welcomes the endorsement by 18 national governments – and many more sub-regional governments, cities and organizations – of the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, which aims to end the expansion of coal, oil and gas, and equitably phase out existing production to keep global warming within 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.<sup>10</sup> Amnesty International urges states that participated in the First Conference on Transitioning away from Fossil Fuels, held in Santa Marta, Colombia, between 24–29 April 2026,<sup>11</sup> to follow up on its findings and outcomes as a matter of urgency. It also calls on parties to engage constructively in the COP30 Presidency’s initiative<sup>12</sup> to develop a Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner (TAFF Roadmap).

## Recommendations

Amnesty International calls on all parties to:

- **Develop a robust process for operationalization of the Just Transition Mechanism, agreed at COP30 to “enhance international cooperation, technical assistance, capacity-building and knowledge sharing, and enable equitable, inclusive just transitions”,<sup>13</sup> with meaningful and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and civil society in all its diversity and adopt it at COP31 with a view to establishing the mechanism at COP32.**
- **Ensure human rights-compliant just transition plans, for all sectors and developed with the meaningful participation of affected peoples and communities, are included in all new or revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS).**
- **Ensure human rights-compliant critical mineral supply chains for the transition to renewable energy, in line with principles outlined by civil society<sup>14</sup> and the UN Secretary-General<sup>15</sup>**
- **Commit to a just transition away from fossil fuels, in line with each country’s responsibility and capacity, including by endorsing the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative and engaging actively towards the speedy negotiation and implementation of a treaty and with the COP30 Presidency’s TAFF Roadmap initiative, as well as by joining the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance<sup>16</sup> and Powering Past Coal Alliance,<sup>17</sup> if not already a member.**
- **End all subsidies for fossil fuels while ensuring an adequate standard of living for people with lower incomes.**

<sup>8</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 1/CMA.5: Outcome of the first global stocktake”, 15 March 2024, UN Doc. FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/16/Add.1, para. 28(d).

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International, *COP30: Human Rights Deprioritized But a Win on Just Transition* (Index: IOR 40/0684/2026), 5 February 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/0684/2026/en/>

<sup>10</sup> For information about the Fossil Fuel Treaty Initiative, see: <https://fossilfueltreaty.org>

<sup>11</sup> See: <https://transitionawayconference.com/>

<sup>12</sup> See UNFCCC, “COP30 Presidency Roadmaps”, <https://unfccc.int/cop30/cop30-presidency-roadmaps> (accessed 1 May 2026).

<sup>13</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 2/CMA.7, UAE Just Transition Work Programme,” (previously cited), para. 25.

<sup>14</sup> Amnesty International, *Powering Change: Principles for Businesses and Governments in the Battery Value Chain* (updated October 2022) (Index: ACT 30/3544/2021), 4 February 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT30/3544/2021/en/>

<sup>15</sup> The UN Secretary-General’s Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals, “Resourcing the energy transition: Principles to guide critical energy transition minerals towards equity and justice resourcing the energy transition”, 11 September 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/critical-minerals>

<sup>16</sup> See <https://beyondoilandgasalliance.org/>

<sup>17</sup> See <https://poweringpastcoal.org/>

- **Strengthen the modalities for the second global stocktake to ensure active and meaningful participation, including through the creation of regional ‘GST People’s Assemblies’ co-organized with civil society and Indigenous Peoples; reliance on the best available science, particularly the IPCC 7th Assessment Report; alignment with climate finance targets; consideration of loss and damage separately from adaptation; and strengthening recognition of and protection for EHRDs.**

## SCALED-UP FINANCE AND REPARATIONS

Adequate finance is crucial to help lower income countries carry out rapid transitions to zero carbon economies (mitigation), to adapt to climate change and to recover from unavoidable climate change-related loss and damage. Finance is also required to ensure they can protect their populations from human rights harms that result from the transition process itself. High income countries that have the greatest historical responsibility for climate change have the obligation to provide climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building under the UNFCCC framework to support lower income states in implementing their climate mitigation and adaptation plans. All states in a position to do so have an obligation to provide international cooperation and assistance for the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights to the maximum of their available resources, including in the context of climate change mitigation, adaptation, responding to climate change related loss and damage and in developing human rights-compliant just transition pathways.

The finance needs of lower income countries for climate mitigation and adaptation are estimated to be between USD 5 to 6 trillion cumulatively by 2030.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, high income, historically high emitting countries have repeatedly failed to meet their existing obligations to provide climate finance, including to deliver USD 100 billion for climate finance annually from 2020 to 2025 to lower income countries – an amount which, in any case, falls far below what is actually required.

The New Collective Quantified Goal for climate finance (NCQG) agreed at COP29 of USD 300 billion per year by 2035<sup>19</sup> remains wholly inadequate to meet the needs identified by lower income countries and will put the rights of millions of people at risk while perpetuating global inequalities.<sup>20</sup> These needs will only increase as the planet heats.

The implementation of the two-year Climate Finance Work Programme, agreed at COP30,<sup>21</sup> must therefore ensure balanced, predictable and needs-based finance across for all aspects of climate action, while addressing systemic barriers and enabling delivery of, and effective access to, public, grants-based finance at scale, including implementation of the COP29 call to triple outflows from multilateral climate funds.<sup>22</sup>

As well as continuously revising and implementing their NDCs and NAPs, lower income countries also need support to respond to existing and future loss and damage caused by climate change, where adaptation is insufficient or too slow to prevent climate harms. Loss and damage may include, among other things, loss of life, livelihoods, homes, land and cultural rights, as well as climate-change related displacement. Loss and damage funding needs in 2025 were estimated to be USD 395 billion.<sup>23</sup> Funding to respond to loss and damage can be considered a form of climate reparation when given as non-repayable grants rather than debt-inducing loans. The Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) was set up at COP27 in 2022 to finance “initiatives to help vulnerable communities recover from climate-related losses and damage resulting from incidents such as climate-change related extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and other climate-change induced crises”.<sup>24</sup> However, the FRLD is woefully underfunded<sup>25</sup> and concerns remain that important aspects of its operations, such as direct small grants to communities in need and a robust

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<sup>18</sup> UNFCCC, Standing Committee on Finance, *Addendum: Second report on the determination of the needs of developing country Parties related to implementing the Convention and the Paris Agreement*, 10 September 2024, UN Doc. SCF/2024/35/4, Annex I (unedited).

<sup>19</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 1/CMA.6: New collective quantified goal on climate finance”, 27 Mar 2025, UN Doc. FCCC/PA/CMA/2024/17/Add.1, <https://unfccc.int/documents/644937>

<sup>20</sup> Amnesty International, “COP29: Finance target is a blueprint for inequalities and violations”, 25 November 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/11/cop29-finance-target-is-a-blueprint-for-inequalities-and-violations/>

<sup>21</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 1/CMA.7: Global Mutirão: uniting humanity in a global mobilization against climate change”, 30 Mar 2026, UN Doc. FCCC/PA/CMA/2025/19/Add.1, <https://unfccc.int/documents/655270>, para. 54

<sup>22</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 1/CMA.6: New collective quantified goal on climate finance”, previously cited, para. 16

<sup>23</sup> M. Tavoni and others, “Economic quantification of Loss and Damage funding needs”, 3 June 2024, *Nature Reviews Earth and Environment*, 5, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-024-00565-7>

<sup>24</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 2/CMA.4: Funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including a focus on addressing loss and damage”, 17 March 2023, UN Doc. FCCC/PA/CMA/2022/10/Add.1, <https://unfccc.int/documents/626569> para. 3

<sup>25</sup> See <https://www.frlid.org/pledges>

Active Observer Policy, have not yet been put in place.<sup>26</sup> Amnesty International has previously called for the FRLD to take a more human rights-based approach to assessing and addressing loss and damage<sup>27</sup> and is urging the FRLD Board to put in place an ambitious and rights-based Resource Mobilization Strategy.<sup>28</sup>

Making climate action intrinsic to all financial flows, by ensuring that all financial investments support mitigation and adaptation, is a key objective of the Paris Agreement, stipulated under Article 2.1(c). The annual Veredas Dialogue on the implementation of Article 2.1(c) was established at COP30 to advance practical solutions for aligning financial systems with climate goals while respecting the needs of lower income states.<sup>29</sup> Yet there remain concerns that the Veredas Dialogue could become a ‘talking-shop’ with no clear pathway to change, and that it may be overly influenced by international finance institutions. The Veredas Dialogue should develop a clear vision and theory of change for Article 2.1(c) and propose solutions to achieve the necessary transformation of the international financial architecture that is needed to address historical imbalances of power in this arena that perpetuate inequities.

## Recommendations

Amnesty International recommends that:

- **To meet their obligations under environmental and international human rights law, all countries in a position to do so, especially high income countries most responsible for climate change, must rapidly provide adequate, new, additional and predictable finance – primarily in the form of grant equivalent public finance – to support lower income countries in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change, as well as to address loss and damage and to support just transitions that leave no one behind, while aiming to ensure a balance between funding for mitigation and adaptation, including by speedily fulfilling new and existing funding commitments.**
- **All parties should ensure that the Climate Finance Work Programme results in the provision of balanced, predictable and needs-based finance across for all aspects of climate action, while addressing systemic barriers and enabling delivery of, and effective access to, public, grants-based finance at scale.**
- **Parties should adopt a clear plan to triple outflows of multilateral climate funds by 2035 (compared to 2022), including by finding ways to decrease the administrative burden for lower income states, especially those with limited institutional capacity.**
- **Parties should adopt an effective process to deliver the regular State of Loss and Damage Report mandated at COP30.<sup>30</sup>**
- **Parties should provide further guidance to the Board of the FRLD at COP31 to ensure that all elements and conditions of the FRLD’s Governing Instrument, including access to small grants for communities, Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable groups and their livelihoods,<sup>31</sup> are fulfilled, that its operations, including the proposed Active Observer Policy are fully human rights-compliant,<sup>32</sup> and that it adopts an ambitious, rights-based resource mobilization strategy.**
- **The Veredas Dialogue must set out a clear pathway towards the collective achievement of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement that is led by the UNFCCC rather than international finance institutions, including necessary transformation of the international financial architecture.**

<sup>26</sup> Joint Open Letter: *A human rights-based long term operationalization of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage* (Index: IOR 40/0905/2026), 20 April 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/0905/2026/en/>  
See: <https://www.frlid.org/pledges>

<sup>27</sup> Amnesty International and Centre for International Environmental Law, *Human Rights as a Compass for Operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund* (Index: IOR 40/5773/2022), February 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/5773/2022/en/>

<sup>28</sup> Joint submission to the FRLD Secretariat, *Towards an Ambitious and Rights-Based Resource Mobilisation Strategy for the FRLD* (Index: IOR 40/0717/2026), 31 January 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/0717/2026/en/>

<sup>29</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 11/CMA.7: Sharm el-Sheikh dialogue on the scope of Article 2, paragraph 1(c), of the Paris Agreement and its complementarity with Article 9 of the Paris Agreement”, 30 Mar 2026, UN Doc. FCCC/PA/CMA/2025/19/Add.1, <https://unfccc.int/documents/655270>

<sup>30</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 11/CP.30: Review of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts” UN Doc. FCCC/CP/2025/12/Add.2, <https://unfccc.int/documents/655268>, para. 20

<sup>31</sup> UNFCCC, “Decision 1/CP.28 Operationalization of the new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4: Annex I, para.49 (d)

<sup>32</sup> For more detailed recommendations, see Amnesty International and Centre for International Environmental Law, *Human Rights as a Compass for Operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund* (previously cited).

## CIVIC SPACE AND PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The safe and meaningful participation of frontline and fenceline communities, EHRDs and other representatives of civil society in multilateral climate negotiations leads to fairer, more sustainable decisions. But too often, they are sidelined or excluded. When governments and institutions restrict protests, limit side events or block access to negotiations, they make climate policy less inclusive, less effective and less just. These challenges are especially visible at UNFCCC climate talks, where participation by civil society is frequently restricted even for those who are able to be physically present, while others are kept away due to the prohibitive cost of travel and accommodation, non-allocation of badges or visas, or because of access restrictions that prevent people living with disabilities being able to attend. The official recognition by the UNFCCC of a Disability Caucus in February 2026 marks a long-overdue commitment to include people living with disabilities and their representatives in discussions. The Disability Caucus is now pushing for full Constituency status to ensure that people living with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in decision making.<sup>33</sup>

Amnesty International has reported previously on the methods used at COPs to exclude civil society voices.<sup>34</sup> Including civil society is crucial to achieving the goals of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, as recognized by the Action on Climate Empowerment (ACE) framework which aims to empower all members of society to engage in climate action, through the six ACE elements – climate change education and public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, the COP process itself requires substantial reform, particularly to end ongoing ‘corporate capture’, whereby lobbyists from the fossil fuel industry and companies pushing risky and unproved climate ‘solutions’ undermine the essential fossil fuel phase out and crowd out the voices of communities and defenders. COP30 in Brazil was overshadowed by the largest ever concentration of more than 1,600 lobbyists working for the fossil fuel industry,<sup>36</sup> while Indigenous Peoples, affected communities, people living with disabilities and other marginalized individuals struggled to get a seat at the table.<sup>37</sup> Reforms proposed by civil society organizations include majority-based decision-making when consensus fails, a robust conflict of interest procedure to exclude industry lobbyists, greater protection of human rights by host countries and enhanced transparency and accountability for climate action.<sup>38</sup>

Within and beyond the UNFCCC process, EHRDs play a fundamental role in protecting ecosystems and the rights of their communities. Without their vital work, climate action is less effective and climate justice cannot be achieved. Yet, in many countries, EHRDs are subject to grave threats and abuses, including in countries that host UNFCCC meetings.

In **Germany**, the host of the Bonn Climate Conference, there have been concerns for several years over timely access to visas for registered participants,<sup>39</sup> as well as undue restrictions on some peaceful protests, including by climate activists and people protesting in support of Palestinians’ rights.<sup>40</sup> The climate justice movement recognizes that climate injustice and other kinds of injustice are inextricably intertwined. More than 80 NGOs, including Amnesty International, wrote to the German authorities in April 2026 to urge the provision of a separate UNFCCC visa system for those attending the Bonn Climate Conference.<sup>41</sup>

In **Türkiye**, the host country for COP31, Amnesty International and other organizations have long raised concerns over violations of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly that target human rights defenders and others.<sup>42</sup> Journalists reporting

<sup>33</sup> CBM UK, “Historic climate action win: Disability Caucus secures official recognition”, 27 February 2026, <https://www.cbmuk.org.uk/app/uploads/2026/02/IDA-Disability-Caucus.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Amnesty International, *Civic Space and Environmental Human Rights Defenders: Essential for Achieving Climate Justice* (Index: POL 32/0173/2025), 23 October 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol32/0173/2025/en/>

<sup>35</sup> See: Article 6 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; Article 12 of the Paris Agreement

<sup>36</sup> Kick Big Polluters Out, “Fossil fuel lobbyists flood COP30 climate talks in Brazil, with largest ever attendance share”, 14 November 2025, <https://kickbigpollutersout.org/Release-Kick-Out-The-Suits-COP30>

<sup>37</sup> Amnesty International, *COP30: Human Rights Deprioritized but a Win on Just Transition* (Index: IOR 40/0684/2026), 5 February 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/0684/2026/en/>

<sup>38</sup> Joint statement, *Reclaiming Climate Justice: United Call for an Urgent Reform of the UN Climate Talks*, 23 June 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/9530/2025/en/>

<sup>39</sup> See for example Climate Home News, “Climate campaigners have accused the German foreign ministry of ‘discriminatory treatment’ after dozens of delegates from Africa and Asia experienced trouble getting visas”, 14 June 2024, <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2024/06/14/visa-chaos-for-developing-country-delegates-mars-bonn-climate-talks/>

<sup>40</sup> Amnesty International, *Under Protected and Over Restricted: The State of the Right to Protest in 21 European countries* (Index: EUR 01/8199/2024), 8 July 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur01/8199/2024/en/>

<sup>41</sup> Letter on file with Amnesty International

<sup>42</sup> See Frontline Defenders’ page on Türkiye at <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/location/turkiye>

and Amnesty International’s 2025 analysis of the human rights situation in Türkiye at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/western-central-and-south-eastern-europe/turkiye/report-turkiye/>

critically about matters of public concern are targeted in abusive criminal investigations and prosecutions, and are subjected to arbitrary use of punitive pretrial detention under overly broad and vague criminal code provisions such as the 'disinformation law'.<sup>43</sup> Protests critical of the authorities are routinely banned and peaceful protesters subjected to excessive use of police force and arbitrary detention. Civil society organizations face punitive and burdensome audits and even closure for their legitimate activities.<sup>44</sup>

There are currently a number of campaigns around Türkiye involving protests by local communities in opposition to environmental destruction and degradation. These include İzköy/Akbelen (Muğla), where protests continue against coal mining and deforestation; Afşin–Elbistan (Kahramanmaraş),<sup>45</sup> where communities oppose coal-fired power plants due to health and environmental impacts; Soma (Manisa), where demands persist for accountability and safer conditions following the 2014 coal mining disaster in which 301 miners were killed;<sup>46</sup> as well as İzkdere (Rize) and the Kazdağları (Çanakkale) region, where local populations resist quarrying, mining and other large-scale extractive projects. These cases reflect a broader pattern of localized resistance against extractive industries across the country, including through the courts, despite the deepening erosion of the rule of law, in particular in relation to the independence of the judiciary. These communities are facing intransigence from the authorities, invariably favouring companies against local people.

A recent and disturbing example of Türkiye's crackdown on dissent is the pretrial detention on 31 March 2026 of Esra Işık, an EHRD in İzköy/Akbelen in the south-western province of Muğla, for her participation in a protest against forced expropriation of land and property in favour of a coal mining company.<sup>47</sup> At the first hearing of her prosecution on 27 April, her pretrial detention was extended even though the charges she faces would potentially result in a suspended sentence, if found guilty. This case and other similar attempts to silence EHRDs and civil society organizations opposing environmental devastation in Türkiye ahead of COP31 signal a seriously restrictive environment for their meaningful and safe participation in COP31 without fear of retaliation before, during or after the conference.

**Australia**, which will lead the COP31 negotiations, has also seen its fair share of criticism over the treatment of climate activists. In November 2023, Australia arrested and charged more than 100 protesters who used kayaks to block a coal port's shipping lanes in an event organized by the grassroots climate network Rising Tide.<sup>48</sup> In December 2025 a further 141 people, including 18 children, were arrested at another Rising Tide blockade in Australia.<sup>49</sup> Such a heavy-handed response to peaceful protests is deeply discouraging and more should be done to ensure the protection of EHRDs in Australia.

Similarly, Amnesty International and other NGOs have raised concerns regarding freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in **Fiji**, host of the Pre-COP meeting between 5 and 8 October 2026. Their concerns include Fiji's unduly restrictive laws and arbitrary restrictions on peaceful protests.<sup>50</sup> As co-hosts of COP31 meetings, Türkiye, Australia and Fiji should uphold the rights of all to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly before, during and after COP31.

The International Court of Justice's 2025 Advisory Opinion on climate change reaffirmed that countries have an obligation to protect procedural rights such as public participation and access to information, education and training on climate change.<sup>51</sup> Respect for these rights is essential for EHRDs to conduct their vital work, including protecting their homes, communities and livelihoods from climate injustice.

The launch at COP30 of the Leaders Network for Environmental Activists and Defenders (LEAD) provides a space to bring together governments, defenders, civil society, multilateral institutions, and other key actors in a shared space for dialogue and action to

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<sup>43</sup> Amnesty International, *Türkiye: End the crackdown on journalists*, (Index: EUR 44/0957/2026), 3 May 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/0957/2026/en/>

<sup>44</sup> Amnesty International, "Türkiye: Absurd charges against board of LGBTI+ organization must be dropped", 7 April 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/04/turkiye-absurd-charges-against-board-of-lgbti-organization-must-be-dropped/>

<sup>45</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Amicus Curiae Brief on Afşin Elbistan A Coal Plant Expansion Project*, 25 June 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/07/03/human-rights-watch-amicus-curiae-brief-on-afsin-elbistan-a-coal-plant-expansion>

<sup>46</sup> Transparency International, *Soma Mining Disaster: A Ten-Year Fight for Justice*, February 2025, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cepi/cases/soma-mining-disaster>

<sup>47</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Environmental activist's detention undermines Türkiye's role as COP31 co-host", 24 April 2026, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/04/24/environmental-activists-detention-undermines-turkiyes-role-as-cop31-co-host>

<sup>48</sup> Amnesty International, "Australia: More than 100 people charged after kayaking protesters block coal port ahead of COP28", 27 November 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/australia-protesters-climate-coal/>

<sup>49</sup> Human Rights Law Centre, "NSW police arrest of young climate protesters a serious overreach", 1 December 2025, <https://www.hrlc.org.au/news/rising-tide-nsw-protest/>

<sup>50</sup> See CIVICUS and others, *Fiji: Joint Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review 48th Session of the UPR Working Group* (Index: ASA 18/8337/2024), 18 July 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa18/8337/2024/en/>

<sup>51</sup> International Court of Justice, *Advisory Opinion: Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change* (previously cited), para. 260.

secure the recognition of EHRDs; strengthen their meaningful participation in multilateral decision-making spaces; increase their protection and reduce violence against them.<sup>52</sup> Support for this initiative is one way in which governments and institutions can recognize the important role of EHRDs.

## Recommendations

Amnesty International recommends that:

- **Parties publicly recognize the important role of human rights defenders and other civil society actors, including EHRDs, through public statements at UNFCCC meetings, by integrating explicit language on recognition and protection of human rights defenders into all relevant UNFCCC decisions and outcomes, and by joining the Leaders Network for Environmental Activists and Defenders (LEAD).**
- **Host countries, including Germany as host of the Bonn Climate Conference and Türkiye as host of COP31, should facilitate access to COPs and other UNFCCC meetings for all Indigenous Peoples and members of civil society, including EHRDs, who wish to contribute, including through provision of a specific UNFCCC visa process. They should encourage and increase participation of Indigenous Peoples and affected communities as well as other marginalized groups such as women and girls and people living with disabilities.**
- **The UNFCCC Secretariat should take further steps to grant formal UNFCCC constituency status to the recently recognized Disability Caucus to act as a focal point for people living with disabilities and to ensure that people living with disabilities can participate effectively in UNFCCC meetings without discrimination.**
- **Parties should consult meaningfully with civil society participants on all decisions and outcomes before and during UNFCCC meetings and during their implementation.**
- **Parties should mandate the UNFCCC Secretariat to establish a focal point for reprisals against human rights defenders participating in UNFCCC processes and adopt concrete mechanisms for prevention of, protection from and response to reprisals and attacks on EHRDs.**
- **The UNFCCC Secretariat and Türkiye should conclude the Host Country Agreement for COP31 as swiftly as possible and include robust human rights protections and guarantees for the availability and affordability of accommodation and visas for delegates. The Host Country Agreement must be made public immediately after signing, including through publication on the UNFCCC website.**
- **As host of COP31, Türkiye must ensure that all persons can freely express themselves, individually or in association with others, and peacefully demonstrate including about climate change and environmental issues without discrimination or fear of reprisals.**
- **All countries should ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society, including NGOs, environmental and other human rights defenders, journalists and activists, by repealing restrictive laws and policies, refraining from unduly restricting access to information, including about environmental and climate-related matters, and by releasing any individuals who are arbitrarily detained.**
- **Parties should reform the UNFCCC in line with civil society proposals to establish a majority voting procedure in instances when consensus fails, to prevent undue corporate influence – particularly of the fossil fuel industry and other polluting sectors – over the proceedings, to provide greater transparency and accountability over decisions and action taken, and to ensure that the process and decisions are fully human rights-compliant.**

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<sup>52</sup> See <https://lead-initiative.com/>