

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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URGENT FOSSIL FUEL PHASE-OUT CRITICAL TO PROTECT RIGHTS

Fossil fuels are the main driver of the climate crisis, the impacts of which are already hindering our rights to health, food, water, housing, work and even life itself. These impacts are even more severe for people facing marginalization, discrimination, poverty or oppression. Too often they also suffer the direct human rights harms of fossil fuel extraction, production and its related infrastructure in their local communities such as contamination of local water and food supplies, air pollution, biodiversity loss, forced evictions and other human rights abuses. Human rights defenders who oppose those projects often face attacks, harassment and criminalisation.

The dramatic rise in fossil fuel prices, exacerbated by Russia's horrific invasion of Ukraine prove that continued reliance on fossil fuels is unreliable, unaffordable and unsustainable. It is perverse that the fossil fuel lobby and others are taking advantage of the rising oil and gas prices to advocate for backtracking on fossil fuels phase out decisions or to further expand fossil fuels domestically. Such actions will contribute to increased carbon emissions and thus human rights harms, violating states' obligations to protect human rights. Instead, states can and must ensure that their people have access to affordable energy by implementing real solutions immediately to increase renewable energy capacity and to enhance the efficiency of energy use.

Scientists have already issued their "bleakest warning yet" on the climate crisis and people's human rights must be at the core of solutions to the climate emergency. All those who value human dignity and wellbeing must fully throw their weight behind the call for global climate justice, particularly in aid of the people most impacted and least responsible for the climate crisis. As noted by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, "fossil fuels are a dead end – for our planet, for humanity, and yes, for economies".

In its report published today on Mitigation of Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) clearly recognizes that we must have rapid and deep reductions in use of fossil fuels if we want to avoid reaching levels of global warming that would be catastrophic for humanity. It states that the continued installation of unabated fossil fuel infrastructure will 'lock-in' greenhouse gas emissions. It shows that removing fossil fuels subsidies will result in important emission reductions, along with increased public revenues. It recognises that financial flows are three to six times lower than levels needed by 2030 to limit warming to below 1.5°C or 2°C, particularly in developing countries, even though there is sufficient global capital. It indicates that accelerated international financial cooperation is essential. Alarmingly, it points out that public and private finance flows for fossil fuels are still greater than those for reducing climate change and helping affected people adapt. As noted by the IPCC, the quicker we phase out fossil fuels and take steps to reduce the consumption of energy, the less need there will be for large-scale deployment of mechanisms to remove carbon from the atmosphere, which cannot compensate for delayed emissions reductions in other sectors. This is essential to prevent human rights violations on a massive scale, as many of those mechanisms expose people, and particularly Indigenous Peoples and others facing discrimination, to forced evictions, food insecurity and other human rights harms.

This latest warning from scientists is clear: states must act individually and collectively to urgently phase out fossil fuels. Nationally, each state must rapidly implement a just transition away from fossil fuel production and consumption as quickly as possible based on their capacities and responsibility for emissions, commencing with eliminating fossil fuel subsidies (with the exception of clean cookstove programmes as an interim measure for people who do not yet have access to affordable electricity) and the most polluting fossil fuels and forms of production, such as coal, peat, fracking, tar sands, and immediately halting fossil fuel expansion. Internationally, states must cooperate to achieve a managed and equitable phase out of existing operating fossil fuel reserves and all coal, oil and gas production in all nations worldwide. This requires significant increases in international assistance to low-income countries to enable a swift and just transition.

This is why Amnesty international has recently joined 1,300 civil society organisations, 3,000 scientists and 101 Nobel Laureates in endorsing the call to adopt and implement a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, aimed at preventing the further expansion of fossil fuels, phasing out their existing production equitably and in line with keeping the global temperature rise at 1.5°C, and fast-tracking real solutions for a just transition that supports every worker, community and

country. Such a new global agreement, complementary to the Paris Agreement, is essential. Under their current plans, states are still planning to produce twice as much fossil fuels by 2030 than would allow for a livable planet.

It is more urgent than ever that the human rights community step up by collaborating with other constituencies to work with the communities and individuals on the frontlines of the climate struggle who are combating the key driver of the climate crisis: fossil fuels. Together, we must contribute our constituencies, power and skills to the fight for climate justice. The strength of a collective movement to overcome the climate crisis needs to match the gravity of the problem. We must change course now; the window of opportunity to act is closing.

BACKGROUND

The IPCC is the leading international body comprised of 195 member states and established to provide an objective scientific basis for analysing climate change's impacts on natural and human systems. The IPCC reviews and critically assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socioeconomic information relevant to the understanding of climate change produced in thousands of studies worldwide. All IPCC reports are reviewed and endorsed by all governments.

The report published today on climate change mitigation forms part of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). Previously published contributions to the AR6 were the report on the physical science basis published on 9 August 2021 and the report on climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerability published on 28 February 2022.

Amnesty International's analysis of the report on climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerability is available [here](#).