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COP 30

Social movements and COP 30: transnational alliances against the global extractivist offensive

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While empty promises are repeated in Belém, a plurality of social, indigenous and environmental movements are promoting an internationalist agenda against extractivism and for climate justice from various meeting spaces.

There's activity in Belém. On one hand, at the official summit, which opened yesterday [10 November] and where, for two weeks, delegations from various countries will debate whether progress can be made in terms of mitigation, financing, and mechanisms for a just transition. On the other hand, in the various forums and meeting spaces where organisations and social groups from around the world, especially from Latin America, are trying these days to revitalise internationalist alliances to confront the global extractivist offensive.

In reality, not much can be expected from the official summit. For too long, the COPs have become a ritual in which the world's leading figures parade—this time, not even those from the countries with the highest emissions: China, the United States, India, and Russia—to issue solemn declarations of intent and promote new mechanisms that, when the summit curtain falls, have no effective translation into timelines and budgets. “We don't want it to be a marketplace of ideological products, we want something very serious and for the decisions to actually be implemented,” said the president of Brazil, acknowledging the ineffectiveness of summits that straddle greenwashing and business as usual.

From the other meeting spaces, however, it is possible to find renewed hope. In parallel to COP 30 —we could also say in opposition to the official summit— a multitude of indigenous, environmental, trade union, feminist and anti-capitalist organisations and movements have come together in Belém to rethink strategies and reactivate international bodies to strengthen the processes of struggle and resistance. Having learned from the World Social Forum and seeking to overcome the contradictions of progressive governments, the goal is to promote community self-organisation processes that rebuild the social fabric and look beyond the constant demands on the State.

The People's Summits

The People's Summits have been taking place for thirty years within the framework of the climate summits promoted by the United Nations. This year, after the three COP editions held in countries characterised by the criminalisation of the right to protest and the persecution of activists and organisations critical of governments, there has been a resurgence of interest from social groups in this forum. At the People's Summit in Belém, representatives from more than 1,200 organisations from around the globe will gather around one objective: “To strengthen popular mobilisation and converge on unified agendas: socio-environmental, anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist, anti-racist and based on human rights,” as the manifesto states.

The People's Summit will begin tomorrow, November 12, with a river “march” of more than 200 boats carrying some 5,000 people. With this nautical caravan, the movements participating in this alternative summit “unite to make their voices heard, across the waters, in protest against the COP decisions that perpetuate this model of territorial exploitation.” As one of the initiative's spokespeople said, “The waters of the Amazon bring the voices the world needs to hear: those of people who defend life, land and the climate.”

The dozens of talks, workshops, and assemblies taking place over four days as part of the People's Summit will culminate on Saturday, November 15, with a large demonstration, accompanied by decentralised actions in many other countries. On Sunday, November 16, the demands of the People's Summit will be presented at the COP plenary session.

At this event, the largest of all those that will bring together activists and social organisations around COP 30, one of the topics that will undoubtedly be a subject of debate is the relationship of the various social movements with progressive governments. Just three weeks ago, the state-owned company Petrobras received approval from the Lula government to exploit oil in deep waters about 500 km from the mouth of the Amazon River. In a city decorated for the occasion with thousands of colourful advertising posters highlighting the importance of caring for the Amazon, the gap between the usual rhetoric of green capitalism and the ever-postponed urgency of transforming the primary-export matrix will once again become evident.

But this forum is by no means the only one held in Belém outside of the initiatives sponsored by the Brazilian government. From November 8 to 11, the II Latin American and Caribbean Ecosocialist Meetings took place, in which two hundred grassroots activists from very diverse countries met to reflect, based on the experience of the struggles against land plundering, on strategies to strengthen a common internationalist front that can face the socio-ecological crisis. At the same time, from November 7 to 12, the IV International Meeting of People Affected by Dams took place, the result of an international coordination process of community struggles against large power plants and electricity companies that has been in existence for three decades.

Peoples against extractivism

On a planet mired in climate emergency and extreme inequality generated by the capitalocene (and by policies that greenwash capitalism), voices from different resistances against the extractivist model have joined the Peoples Against Extractivism coalition. This space was established in Belém on November 9 to unite and coordinate movements, communities and organisations that face dispossession and are committed to a profound transformation of the system that threatens life and land.

This international network has integrated experiences primarily from Latin America and Europe, although with a commitment to expanding its presence on the African continent. The coalition is made up of grassroots movements, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and peasants, as well as various mass social organisations. They all fight, from different fronts, against the same enemy: the extractivist model that perpetuates the continuous overexploitation of common resources and the expansion of production frontiers into territories considered “unproductive.” It is not limited to mining or oil; it also includes monocultures, agribusiness, biofuels, and energy megaprojects that consolidate a dependent model and generate a return to primary commodity exports in peripheral economies.

For this network, extractivism is not just an economic practice, but a form of the organisation of power within liberal democracies and a mechanism of domination that conditions the lives of communities. In this new phase of capitalist accumulation, the dispossession of peoples and their territories—cynically turned into zones of sacrifice—is imposed, now justified in the name of the energy transition. In “green military capitalism,” the European Union, the United States, and China compete for control of the minerals fundamental to sustaining the economic metabolism of the capitalist centre. In this accelerated race to secure access to critical raw materials, which does not represent any real progress in the ecosocial transition, mining currently stands as the most violent expression of extractivism: militarisation, forced displacement, racism, criminalisation and even murders of those who defend the commons.

The Peoples Against Extractivism alliance argues that protecting habitats and ecosystems is inseparable from the struggle against the neocolonial extractivist offensive. This internationalism begins with supporting the peoples of Ecuador, Panama, and Peru, where state repression has intensified in recent months with arbitrary arrests, militarisation of communities, and judicial persecution of environmental and social leaders and denouncing these actions. At the same time, in the face of the expanding extractive frontier, it is based on building alternatives from the ground up.

Territorial resistances are organised in defense of water, land, land and those who inhabit them, articulating different

struggles and demands. In Ecuador, Amazonian communities have halted oil projects; in Panama, after weeks of mobilisation the popular movement succeeded in stopping a mining concession; in Peru, peasant patrols keep alive the collective defense of common resources. These processes reposition the right to resist as a shared practice against extractive neocolonialism.

The planet and its communities cannot continue to wait for the goodwill of governments that promote the extractive frenzy. Faced with the dispossession of land, militarisation, and corporate impunity, this internationalist network aims to strengthen the defense of the land as a living body, because land is not a resource: it is the material basis of the life of the communities and the nature that inhabits it and, in the cases of indigenous peoples, the spiritual basis of life. Additionally, we have the right to resistance, self-defense, and self-determination of peoples, as pillars of environmental and social justice. And the construction of community-based alternatives, such as economies of solidarity, self-governance, feminist and agroecological networks, and many other practices promoted by grassroots organisations are essential.

Strengthening transnational counter-hegemonic networks is key to confronting corporate power and moving towards a future of dignified life and climate justice. As Pueblos contra el Extractivismo (Peoples Against Extractivism) reiterates in its arguments: our territories are not for sale, they must be defended.

11 November 2025

Translated by David Fagan for **International Viewpoint** from [El Salto](#).

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