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Caucasus

# Statement against Azerbaijan's Authoritarianism, COP29 and Green Capitalism, Wars, and Regional Slide into Authoritarianism

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**Caucasus Feminist Anti-War Movement—C-FAM is an emerging movement of feminist and anti-war/peace activists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Unified in our defiance, C-FAM originated from a powerful solidarity action to confront the greenwashing practices at COP29 taking place in Azerbaijan on November 2024, one of the largest events in our region in recent times. Our movement embodies the principles of feminism, anti-militarism, anti-war, anti-authoritarianism, anti-nationalism, and anti-capitalism, opposing oppressive systems that perpetuate inequality and violence.**

We advocate for the radical decolonization of the South Caucasus, rejecting the oppressive binary imposed by Western and Russian influences, which fractures our region and suppresses its true potential. C-FAM is committed to dismantling the pervasive nationalist and patriarchal structures that fuel conflict and exploitation in our homelands.

Our activism is rooted in intersectionality, recognizing that the liberation of one is inextricably linked to the liberation of all. We strive to forge a new geopolitical consciousness that prioritizes local voices and sustainable, community-led development over foreign intervention and corporate agendas.

C-FAM calls for transformative change through direct action, educational outreach, and international solidarity. We aim to re-envision our region's future free from the shackles of neo-colonialism, militarization, and authoritarian rule, fostering a culture of peace and egalitarianism. We fight to create a South Caucasus that is autonomous, resilient, and grounded in the values of freedom and equity for all its peoples.

Together, we reject the false dichotomy between the West and Russia, advocating for a third path—one that is crafted by and for the people of the South Caucasus, reclaiming our region's agency and redefining its place in the world. We believe peace is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of justice.

Our protest in Georgia during the opening day of the COP29 summit on 11th of November 2024 is a testament to our shared resistance and the growing demand for a just future. We come together to expose the devastating impacts of authoritarianism, green capitalism, and the entrenchment of oppressive regimes across the region. As a coalition of feminist anti-war voices from across the Caucasus, we are challenging the narrative that seeks to isolate our struggles from global movements for justice. We reject the complicity of both local and international powers in maintaining systems of exploitation and demand an end to the erasure of our experiences and the voices of those most affected.

Below, we share our full statement, outlining the core demands and messages of our movement. We hope it resonates with those who share our vision for a world that prioritizes freedom, equality, and sustainability over profit and oppression.

## **Collective Statement by the Caucasus Feminist Anti-War Movement**

Against Azerbaijan's Authoritarianism, COP29 and Green Capitalism, Wars, and Regional Slide into Authoritarianism

In the face of oppression, we raise our voices for those silenced. In the wake of greenwashing, we tear down the mask of exploitation. In the shadow of war, we demand justice for the people of the Caucasus: Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Talysh, Lezgins, Avars, Tats, Kurds, Chechens, Kabardins, Tatars, Abkhazians, Ossetians, Cherkess, in total more than 50 ethnic groups that inhabit our homeland.

Today, we stand united—Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian activists, along with allies around the world—demanding an end to the systems of oppression that devastate our lands and communities.

We, a coalition of activists, came together to let our voices be heard and deliver several messages to the World.

Together, we declare:

## **1. Stop Azerbaijan: A COP29 Host that Masks Authoritarianism with Greenwashing**

The Azerbaijani regime has captured people into an open-air prison. It's land borders are closed for four years since 2020 under the pretext of the COVID pandemic. The regime wants to have full control over our bodies and our minds. It imprisons the ones who think differently, it exiles the ones who are declared to be ethnic and political others, it prevents the ones who are in the country to leave and find refuge elsewhere, it drowns people in poverty and oppresses dissent by taking the loved ones of those dissenting as hostages.

Those who speak out — journalists, activists, feminists, or the brave souls without labels in villages like Söyüdlü and Nardaran — are met with police brutality, imprisonment, and, in some cases, risk of disappearance without even an illusion of a trial. This isn't just political persecution; it is the systematic erasure of voices who dare envision a freer Azerbaijan. But as we see today, the regime fails to silence us all as we are among the people who refuse to surrender their existence and thus, continue to resist.

We stand here for our friends and comrades in Azerbaijani prisons:

For Sevinj Vagifqizi

For Nargiz Absalamova

For Elnara Gasimova

For Bahruz Samadov

For Iqbal Abilov

For Farid Mehralizada

For Gubad Ibadoghlu

For Afiyaddin Mammadov

For Fazil Gasimov

For Aykhan Israfilov

For Elvin Mustafayev

For Mahammad Kekalov

For Ulvi Hasanli

For Hafiz Babali

and the other 300 political prisoners.

As these political prisoners languish behind bars, tortured in silence, the world looks away. For decades, the world has looked away and tolerated a dictator who oppresses its own people. These powers have not only tolerated a dictator but made his very reign possible by pumping his clan with oil money. It is only in the moment when this dictatorship has become dangerous for neighboring countries that some are opening their eyes. Aliyev failed to resolve this conflict for almost 20 years in power. His way was to start a war with Armenia and ethnically cleanse Armenians. However, even then we see how profit can make the those who have a voice indifferent again.

Today, we say: No more. Authoritarianism cannot be “greenwashed.” The hypocrisy must end. We call on COP29 attendees to demand the release of political prisoners in Azerbaijan and reject all forms of complicity in Aliyev's oppression. Environmental justice must mean freedom, not oppression masquerading as sustainability.

## **2. End Our Region Being a Battleground for Capitalist and Imperial Interests**

Since the first wells of oil were drilled in Azerbaijan, our region has suffered under the yoke of imperial forces. Today, both Russia and the West, and regional powers like Turkey exploit our region for profit and control, deepening divisions among our people. Under the guise of “green energy,” the West seeks new extractive markets, while Russia and Turkey cling to their imperial ambitions. Our countries are used as pawns — sites of conflict and profit, torn apart by outside interests. Nothing much has changed over a century: colonial and imperial logic of “divide and rule” continues.

Yet today it has a new mask- a “green and sustainable” one. Under the name of green energy – a new brand for extractivism cloaked in sustainability rhetoric and entrenched in profit – Allies in the Global North aim to profit from the transit of green energy and goods from the Global East. But for “in-between” empires like Russia – we are only an asset and an ex-colony – the periphery of Empire, that it can't lose.

Being on the crossroads of empires and world capital means bloodshed, war and enormous grief to us – indigenous peoples of these lands. Our national elites are in the same club with colonial powers and capital and will never be on our side. They will never hesitate to impose war and devastation upon us to hold their power. This is what the Azerbaijani regime did in 2020 by waging a war, and later in 2023, by ethnically cleansing Armenians from their homes. Let us be clear: Azerbaijan's plans to transform Nagorno-Karabakh into a so-called “Green Zone” is an exploitation agenda built on ethnic displacement, raw material extraction and resource monopolization.

To the profiteers: our region's "green transition" must not come at the expense of our people, nor should it deepen inequality or exploit our resources. We demand a transition that serves the people, not global corporations or empires.

### 3. Keep the Local Tyrants Accountable

Imperialism screws us over, but that doesn't make our homegrown dictators any better. These so-called leaders only bring devastation, insecurity, and poverty. After more than 20 years of Aliyev's rule — following the 30-year reign of his father — the people of Azerbaijan have only endured suffering: lacking decent food, healthcare, jobs, education, and freedom.

In Georgia, it's been over a decade of suffering under the rule of the Georgian Dream and Ivanishvili. The people have faced broken healthcare, precarious jobs, and a neoliberal economy that offers nothing but misery. Now, Ivanishvili wants to strip away freedom of speech and assembly, hiding behind the excuse of a "Global War Party" conspiracy, which conveniently lets Russia elude any responsibility for its war in Ukraine and its chaos in our region.

These wannabe monarchs hold a massive chunk of our economies in their pockets. Ivanishvili alone controls a third of Georgia's GDP, while Aliyev and his family, let alone his daughters, sit on an estimated \$13 billion — almost half of Azerbaijan's national budget.

To our so-called leaders, we say: The people deserve dignity, not dictators.

### 4. Stand with the Caucasus: Not Isolated, but an Essential Part of Global Struggle

South Caucasus countries—Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia—are not in isolation and very much depend on world politics, but it is not a one-way street.

Today, the Azerbaijani regime is desperate and thus, claiming regional power. They try to host COP29, influence elections in Georgia, actively engage in politics in Turkey, have a stronghold in Central Asia, buy off European politicians, engage in illegal lobbying in the USA, and of course, force Armenia into political submission after the defeat in 2020. What is most vile is its ongoing role in and support for the genocide in Gaza by supplying Israel's oil and gas. More than 40,000 people are massacred by the Israeli regime with the support of the Azerbaijani regime, and its State Oil Company – SOCAR – is shamefully complicit in this.

We are not separate from global politics, from what is happening in the rest of the world. We feel the chaos and turbulence of international relations more than people in the metropolises.

We, the people of the Caucasus, reject the greed, violence, and hypocrisy of our elites and their global allies.

## Our Call to Action

We call upon all people, movements, and leaders to recognize that Azerbaijan's regime is the antithesis of justice. Let us join together to expose these crimes, to amplify the voices of the silenced, and to reclaim our discourse of social justice. Only a world that prioritizes freedom and equality over profit, and community resilience over capitalist growth, can sustain life on this planet.

To those who try to divide us, we say:

We will not choose between genocidal and non-genocidal fascism.

We will not choose between Russia and The West.

We will not choose between starvation and a false freedom.

We will not choose between your imposed traditional values and your "civilized" values.

We reject these false dichotomies. We say: A plague o' both of your houses.

Our struggle is global, our solidarity unbreakable, our commitment unyielding. No more silence. No more complicity.

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