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COP 30

Brazil, COP30 and the extractivist paradox

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With each passing day, the evidence—not only scientific but also empirical, as seen in [the floods in] Valencia last year—confirms the ecological emergency. Not as a phenomenon of a grim future, but as a present reality. The UN Secretary-General himself, António Guterres, stated that 2024 was "a masterclass in climate destruction." This statement was part of his opening address at the COP29 global climate summit in Baku, exactly one year ago.

Once again, the COP —Conference of the Parties—, the meeting of the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is meeting again to supposedly make political decisions at the international level to combat climate change or reduce its effects. This time in Brazil, in a context characterised both by the worsening effects of the ecological crisis and by the growing climate denial championed from the White House by Donald Trump it has the symbolic weight of being held in the Amazon.

Brazil is using the global climate crisis to try to position itself as the champion of green capitalism. This move is largely driven by internal political maneuvering, serving as an antagonist to the climate change denialism of the far-right Bolsonaro movement a year before the presidential elections, while simultaneously positioning Brazil as a regional and international player. All this is happening within a context marked by a European Union that is abandoning the facade of the Green Deal to show a more khaki, militaristic face of "Rearm Europe", as well as by the growth of denialism championed by the Trumpian international.

COP30, held in Belém, will show the limits of Brazilian soft power in leading the global environmental agenda while increasing oil production, expanding the fossil fuel frontier, and boosting agribusiness that exacerbates the climate crisis and its extreme weather events. In fact, a month before the climate summit, Petrobras, the Brazilian state-owned oil company, obtained a license to drill in the Amazon River basin. This operation will make Brazil the world's fourth-largest oil producer, behind only the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Russia.

In fact, the last two COP meetings were held in Baku, Azerbaijan (2024), and Dubai, United Arab Emirates (2023), countries with an economy centered on fossil fuels, showing the existential contradictions of this type of summit. In the case of Dubai, the CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) used his position as host president of the international meeting to close oil deals. While in Baku, fossil fuel lobbyists had over 1,700 representatives, a far greater number than the delegations from the countries most vulnerable to climate change. These are examples that illustrate the corporate capture of COP and some of its structural shortcomings in serving as a useful forum for addressing the ongoing ecological crisis.

But it's not just fossil fuels that seem to be outside COP's control, but also other extractive activities such as mining or agribusiness. Brazil has avoided acknowledging the role of intensive agriculture in deforestation, the country's main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. This reality, once again, clashes with the veneer of green capitalism that the country is trying to sell at this summit, with its flagship measure, the Tropical Forest Forever Fund (TFFF). A public-private initiative aims to create US \$125 billion fund (\$25 billion from governments and \$100 billion from multinational corporations), administered by the World Bank, to invest in financial markets, distributing its annual returns—estimated at around \$4 billion—among the countries that preserve their forests. Finance Minister Fernando Haddad himself stated that the fund is "Brazil's main initiative" at COP25.

Promoting a Tropical Forest Fund while, a few weeks later, the European Union-Mercosur trade agreement is scheduled to be signed —popularly known as a "cows for cars" agreement. While the EU aims to improve access to the Mercosur market for its multinational automotive, automotive parts, energy, beverage and financial services

companies, in return the Mercosur countries want greater access to the European market for their raw materials, beef and chicken, soybeans, sugar and ethanol for biofuels, among other products. We cannot ignore that livestock farming is the biggest driver of deforestation in the Amazon, with 63% of deforested areas occupied by pastures.

This COP will be the first since Donald Trump returned to the White House. In an unequivocal statement of intent, the United States will not only abstain from participating in this weekend's leaders' summit, but will also refrain from sending high-level representatives to the technical negotiations at the Belém summit, which begin this coming Monday. Thus, he demonstrates his utter contempt for multilateral forums, reaffirming climate change denial as a defining characteristic of the global reactionary wave. In fact, Argentine President Javier Milei, the most prominent figure of the reactionary international movement in Latin America, will follow Trump's example and also boycott the COP in Belém.

An ultra-right-wing denialism that serves the lesser-evil logic of green capitalism. A concave mirror in which to magnify the image of speculative funds for tropical forests, avoid criticism of oil exploration in the Amazon, or even defend the European Union's military khaki green. A way of shrinking the scope of what is possible for climate mitigation policies while amplifying the influence and importance of denialism, bestowing upon them the label of anti-establishment at a time of growing discontent.

But these days in Brazil, it's not just the lobbyists of green, khaki, and fossil capitalism who will be there, or the government representatives who come in a liturgical way to sign up, like someone who visits the church year after year on All Saints' Day to light a candle for the deceased and cleanse their conscience until next year. Various grassroots initiatives and meetings will also be developed, aiming to establish broad alliances between social, political, and trade union organisations that reject this violent and predatory model, as well as its greenwashing of lesser evil.

Faced with the impotence of denialism and the green veneer of extractive capital, it is essential to build a new eco-territorial internationalism, from the ground up and closely linked to community processes. In this context, this weekend in Belém, coinciding with the summit of heads of state from around the world, was the launching of Pueblos contra el Extractivismo (Peoples Against Extractivism) —a platform for grassroots organisations that confront mining and extractivism in all its forms. They denounce every project that destroys life in these territories, not as isolated threats, but as concrete manifestations of the dynamics of militarised green capitalism.

Because, faced with a scenario of climate emergency, eco-social crisis and the advance of a reactionary internationalism at the service of the interests of the super-oligarchs, we cannot continue to rely on summits that have become zombie structures parasitised by lobbyists of capital. We need to confront the dictatorship of profit to win victories that place life and territory at the center. Peoples Against Extractivism was born as a humble initiative in service of popular struggles against the logic of extractivism. At the same time, many other initiatives are taking place in Brazil these days, from the post-extractivist forum in São Paulo to the ecosocialist gatherings and the People's Summit in Belém. These proposals go beyond the functional blackmail between climate change denial and green capitalism, broadening the scope of what is possible.

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

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