

# FRACTURES

## INTERNATIONALIST TEACH-IN SUMMARIES

30 APRIL-18 JUNE 2025



### Amidst the global fractures, can we save our planet?

Summary of FRACTURES session 6, 4 June.

Our sixth conversation was with:

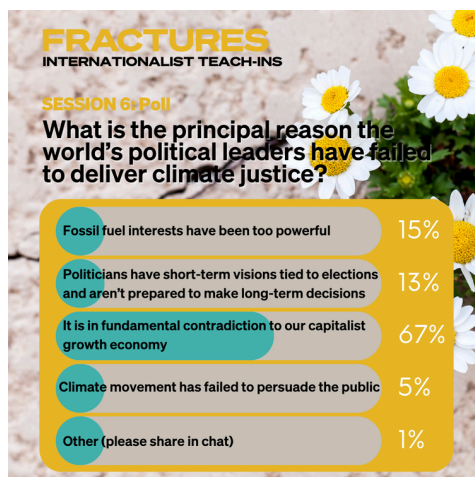
- **Tasneem Essop**, Executive Director of Climate Action Network International
- **Julia Steinberger**, Professor of Societal Challenges of Climate Change at the University of Lausanne
- **Maureen Santos**, FASE, Brazil
- **Lavinia Steinfort**, TNI researcher and co-author of *Reclaiming Energy* (2024)

#### Content below

- Poll: Biggest block to climate justice
- Key points from the session
- Thoughts on strategy
- Comments in the chat
- Further resources

### Poll: What is the principal reason the world's political leaders have failed to deliver climate justice?

This was a poll where more than one answer is definitely required, but still this showed the audience felt strongly that capitalism was the biggest obstacle to climate justice.



# State of the climate justice movement

- **Julia:** We're now in the 'they fight you' stage of climate resistance—fossil fuel and capitalist interests are actively pushing back. Neoliberalism is not dead; it has simply adapted and remains embedded in fossil fuel lobbying and disinformation networks (e.g., global neoliberal Atlas Network). **Climate justice and economic justice therefore are inseparable**—both face common adversaries – so must unite their struggles. There is hope: existing technologies can create better lives within planetary boundaries—if overconsumption and inequality are addressed.

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- **Tasneem:** The climate movement has matured— it is more united in system critique and linked with broader social struggles (debt, human rights, anti-militarism). **However, the movement faces increasing repression**—especially targeting those fighting the biggest existential threats of fossil capitalism and genocide (e.g., Palestine). Our adversaries, rooted in colonialism, capitalism, and neoliberalism—are both united and adaptable, able to mutate in the face of public pressure and willing to use ever more violence. Global North continues to evade responsibility for emissions and finance, while Global South leaders mimic neoliberal models. It's a **mixed picture but powerful resistance is coming** from local communities and Indigenous peoples (e.g., anti-pipeline struggles), regional campaigns like Don't Gas Africa, global youth-led protests like Fridays for Future and legal victories through climate litigation. Collective organizing and transnational solidarity remain critical.

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- **Maureen:** Brazil's COP30 will be a battleground between civil society, polluters and polluting nations, and a host government divided on environmental justice. As the summit is happening in the Amazon, it is an emblematic moment to center Indigenous and grassroots struggles that are usually marginalised in official negotiations. A 'People's Summit' is being organized autonomously to centre climate justice and link local struggles with global movements. Civil society is uniting around six thematic axes (Territories and sovereignty; reparations, environmental racism and opposition to false solutions; Just, popular, and inclusive transitions; Anti-oppression, democracy, and internationalism; Just cities and urban peripheries; and Feminist resistance and women's territorial struggles). Despite being led by a progressive government, Brazil is still enacting anti-environmental laws due to pressure from conservative forces and corporate lobbies. We are looking to build a movement not just on COP but for the long-term.

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- **Lavinia:** TNI's involvement with struggle for energy transition has exposed **how important the issue of ownership and accountability is in finding climate just solutions**. Current trends are expanding energy systems—not transitioning them—despite heavy public subsidies. We therefore need to reclaim energy from profit-driven systems to democratic, public control.

# Thoughts on strategy going forwards

- **Julia:** The backsliding of politicians on climate action highlights how democracy is under attack by elite economic interests and therefore the importance of climate and social justice movements linking their struggles. Authoritarian and neoliberal forces oppose climate action precisely because it requires democratizing economic power. **The case for systemic change is strong—but poorly communicated. There's a need to connect the dots between climate breakdown, inequality, and the erosion of democratic rights.** We need to show how the vast majority of humanity really has common interests and use this to build broad-based coalitions for transformation.

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- **Tasneem:** We don't start from a blank slate – we can **learn from past struggles**. Now is a **time to escalate to smash the system**, which demands **deep organizing, especially among working-class and marginalized communities**. It also requires driving wedges into the popular base of support for the right, to address the needs and insecurities of ordinary people. **Just transition is a crucial strategy** to bring in broader constituencies—by centering justice in climate, labor, and economic planning. The genocide in Gaza has prompted climate justice movements to deepen alliances with anti-militarist organizations, Palestinian solidarity groups and broader anti-imperialist movements. The campaign for the Loss and Damage Fund, where all the movements converged to make that their number one priority, is a case of how collective movement power can compel reluctant governments to make concessions, underscoring the value of participating in flawed but critical international forums.

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- **Lavinia:** **Dual-power approach needed, both democratising the state and building community ownership to ensure real accountability.** Example of Tunisia, where despite an authoritarian government, civil society is fighting both privatization and authoritarianism by reclaiming public energy control with some success.

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- **Maureen:** Experience in Brazil highlights the difficulties of working under even seemingly progressive governments that simultaneously support and obstruct climate justice, revealing the **importance of autonomous grassroots mobilization that is adaptable and able to bridge local-global divides**. Building alliances across diverse struggles strengthens the broader fight for climate justice, economic equality, and social freedoms in an increasingly hostile political environment.

## Other thoughts from Q&A

- **Julia:** **Degrowth and post-growth are not just idealistic—they're scientifically necessary.** Economic growth does not drive well-being; need satisfaction does. To address precarity also felt in the global North, **need a four part communications strategy:** 1. It's not your fault — the system was built by elites; 2 You've been lied to — disinformation campaigns obscure the truth; 3. Humans are not selfish by nature — we're capable of cooperation and; 4. A better world is possible and achievable — scientifically and politically.

- **Maureen:** Should civil society still engage with COP, given how corporate and state-led it has become? It's a debate that resurfaces every year, especially in the Global South. **COP is clearly embedded in capitalist structures, but we don't go because we believe in it—we go to expose it, to pressure, to organize, to resist.** National policies often reflect international agreements, so monitoring the process matters but civil society must retain an autonomous space and not rely on COP as the primary arena of struggle.
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- **Tasneem:** Militarisation must be opposed by climate movements both on principle and for practical climate reasons - Emissions from war are immense (e.g., Israel's assault on Gaza), military budgets divert funds from climate action and need to link with anti-war and anti-imperialist struggles.

## Where is the hope? Where is the light coming in?

- **Julia Steinberger:** The convergence of climate and Palestine solidarity
- **Maureen:** The solidarity from global civil society
- **Lavinia:** Young climate activists are bolder and more intersectional than ever
- **Tasneem:** Despite repression, the resistance is growing stronger and more conscious, particularly among youth.

## Comments in the chat

Alistair A: i feel we need to understand the centre and centre left as our major obstacle to building a mass movement - we need to take them on with an explicitly anti-growth - anti net zero - campaign

Andrew L: I think it's important to double down on \$1.5 trillion loss and damage reparations — but at the same time pushing for immediate-term strong reforms locally (including or especially in the Global South).

María LP: The problem is not just the fossil fuel industry, but capitalism itself, included the colonial use of natural common goods for profit of the rich colonial countries. Being from Argentina, we are seeing the devastation extractivist industries are producing in the extraction of lithium, which is part of the 'green energy transition', of which many social democrat European governments are proud.

Anders E: Unless we decide how to drastically increase the prices of fossil fuel in a socially just way - you will get nowhere

Adele T: The Genocide and ongoing colonial, illegal occupation in Palestine has propelled systems literacy in a way we haven't seen before. ... However, our ability to organise on a large-scale is prevented by a many-headed monster, e.g. 1) a electoral-political and NGO class operating within silos 2) the reality of our post-truth world and evolution of the media/learning landscape where it is entirely possible to inhabit an entirely separate reality (Trumpism); 3) absolute unwillingness of the majority in the global north to give up material comforts

Steve L: In the UK we are seeing significant state repression against peaceful activists. Confidence in both major parties is now at an all time low. And yet it is difficult to see a way forward.

Serwah A: I wonder if it is possible to depend on the Global North for funding and seriousness [given] the underlying current of self-interested expansionism at all costs that many of those in the Global

North have historically embraced - from human migration from Africa to imperialism colonialism to capitalism to neoliberalism to climate degradation.

Michael T: I think we need a wide spectrum of approaches, but I think it is essential to tie the polycrises together and not always put climate breakdown at the centre. Also find ways to counter the common mindset that ecological change means personal sacrifice instead of empowerment. The 'commons' should be our focus.

Farzana B: Do we really make multilateral institutions work through our collective power? So far global condemnation of genocide in Gaza has not resulted in stopping of Israel to commit crimes

Serwah A: Want to challenge the use of the word 'light'. First it is the juxtaposition between lightness and darkness and the colorist implications. But also it does not recognize what we get from the darkness in the cycle of a day. Darkness allows us rest and reprieves from the demands of capitalism. It also historically forced us to be in deep relationship with our surroundings and trust our environments to take care of us. It is one of my pet peeves in the wellness community.

## Further reading and listening

Julia:

- What we are up against - the secret history of the making of the climate crisis <https://jksteinberger.medium.com/what-we-are-up-against-2290ba8c4b5c>
- Post-growth: the science of wellbeing within planetary boundaries [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(24\)00310-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(24)00310-3/fulltext)
- Providing decent living with minimum energy: A global scenario' <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378020307512>
- Paper (preprint) on need satisfaction decoupling well-being from economic growth. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-5355955/v1> led by the amazing Lea Tamberg, part of the REAL project, REAL - A Postgrowth Deal. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-5355955/v1>

Tasneem:

- Climate Action Network here: <https://climatenetwork.org/>
- Just Transition: A climate, energy and development vision for Africa [https://justtransitionafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Just-Transition-Africa-report-ENG\\_single-pages.pdf2](https://justtransitionafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Just-Transition-Africa-report-ENG_single-pages.pdf2)
- Hidden strategies used by the West to keep Africa poor as they develop using Africa's resources: Interview with Fadhel Kaboub, Associate Professor of Economics, Denison University. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOOTWrtU7k&ab\\_channel=LynnNgugi3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOOTWrtU7k&ab_channel=LynnNgugi3)
- This changes everything you thought about the end of World War II: Hamza Hamouchene, TNI. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc6eizZBdCc&ab\\_channel=TransnationalInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc6eizZBdCc&ab_channel=TransnationalInstitute)
- <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/carbon-footprint-israels-war-gaza-exceeds-100-countries>
- TNI report on climate impacts of militarism: <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/climate-collateral>

Lavinia:

- Reclaiming energy report - <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/reclaiming-energy>
- The future is public report - <https://www.tni.org/en/futureispublic>
- Trade Unions for Energy Democracy: <https://www.tuedglobal.org/>

## And some parting quotes:





### **Julia Steinberger**

'Democracy is the big threat here—because democracy comes with claims for redistribution, for social justice, and for not destroying the planet.'

### **Tasneem Essop**

'Our adversaries are not just the fossil fuel industry—they are the very state machinery, with corporate and oligarchic hands behind it.'



'If the system is dying, we should be doing the best we can to smash it.'

'The most repressed movements today are those fighting two existential crises—climate collapse and genocide.'



### **Lavinia Steinfort**

'We need to match our system critique with system-level solutions.'



### **Maureen Santos**

'The light comes when we see all the solidarities coming from civil society around the world.'

[www.tni.org/fractures](http://www.tni.org/fractures)

