

# COMPETITION, CRISIS, & CHANGE

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION TODAY



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Published by:



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**IBON INTERNATIONAL  
2026**



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## INTRODUCTION

# MONOPOLY CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

Global growth has stagnated at 2.7% since 2023, and the future of the global South remains bleak as the region continues to grapple with the burdens of high debt-servicing and the limitations of external development financing.<sup>1</sup> Critiques of the efficiency of globalised supply-chains, the precarity of labour conditions, and the overall volatility of the neoliberal architecture continue to mark the current economic landscape.<sup>2</sup> In an uncertain economic and political environment, protectionism is rising in the North led by ultranationalist right-wing parties that further exposed the crises of hyper-globalisation and the inherent contradictions of the capitalist model.<sup>3</sup>

Persistent wealth inequality has been a highlight over the recent years. The wealth of the richest 1% also increased in 2025, now equivalent to 14.6% of global GDP. Oxfam estimates that the global North controls 69% of global wealth while the South shares the remaining 31% despite being home to 71% of the world's population.<sup>4</sup> In the midst of a stagnating global economy, the rich keep getting richer and the poor continue to suffer.

Wages remain the primary source of income for households. Global averages display an increase in nominal wages, yet the reality of wage inequality continues to push the poorest households further into poverty.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the wealth of the richest 1%, average real wages for most of the global South regions across decades have yet to see significant growth. Real wage growth is as low as -0.1% in the Arab region, 0% in Africa, and at best 1.5% for Latin America and the Caribbean, and 1.5% in Asia and the Pacific—excluding China—from 2006 to 2024.<sup>6</sup>

Global unemployment was at a 30-year low of 5% in 2024, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).<sup>7</sup> However, this historical low hides widening wage inequality, youth unemployment, and a quickly growing informal sector, especially in the global South. In high-income countries, 18% of low-waged workers are migrants. Around the world, 402 million are willing to work but do not have jobs. Informal work has become an important sector making up more than 75% of all employment and even reaching more than 90% of the workforce in several countries.<sup>8</sup>

The jobs problem is a gendered problem, faced by 22.8% of all women, compared to men (15.3%), in low-income countries.<sup>9</sup> Among those counted as low-paid wage workers globally, 50.4% are women, and 92% are informal employees.<sup>10</sup> Women are also more impacted by crises. Around 708 million women are prevented from joining the labour force, citing care responsibilities as the reason. This accounts for a third of the total working-age persons outside the labour force with the majority of the affected women located in the global South.<sup>11</sup>

The erosion of workers' rights is markedly a global South problem: nine of the ten worst countries for workers in 2024 are in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Bangladesh, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Guatemala, Myanmar, Philippines, Tunisia, Turkiye).<sup>12</sup> Multinational corporations from the North dominate the South not only in terms of market share but also in financial and physical investments. Securing large private investments has, historically, meant the violation of labour and human rights, such as union busting, land-grabbing, intimidation and harassment, extrajudicial killings, oftentimes with the aid of armed state agents.<sup>13</sup>

### *Rising militarism, declining multilateralism*

Multilateralism is under increasing pressure as geopolitical conflicts, trade wars, and the climate crisis remain unresolved.<sup>14</sup> Multilateral institutions have responded with false solutions to critical issues—a likely outcome when these spaces accommodate those responsible for the crises.

In the recently concluded Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), civil society organisations highlighted the need to address unsustainable debt burdens in developing countries as well as major reforms in the International Financial Architecture.<sup>15</sup> Even as developing countries continue to cope with the steep financial costs and human impacts of foreign loans, aid, and investments, the global North continues to fumble on its accountability to its former colonies. International aid in official development assistance fell by 9% in 2024.<sup>16</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projected a 9%–17% drop in development aid for the global South in 2025, and it sees a further decrease in the coming years given the rise of protectionism in the North, most notably in the US. Northern countries shifting to protectionism are working to secure their national economic interests amidst the ongoing crises while maintaining a stranglehold on neocolonies in the South.

Massive debt coincides with austerity in the global South. More than half of the world's poorest countries have cut public spending to make way for debt servicing.<sup>17</sup> Social protection coverage in low-income countries only applies to 10% of these countries' vulnerable populations.<sup>18</sup>

Development priorities lay elsewhere as military spending continued to get the largest share (\$2.72 trillion) of global spending in 2024.<sup>19</sup> The five biggest spenders were the

United States, China, Russia, Germany, and India, which accounted for 60% of world military spending. Total military spending in Asia and the Pacific amounted to \$629 billion, a 46% increase from 2015, where Chinese incursions and US warmongering threaten a full-blown conflict between the two powers, endangering the countries in the region.

Complicity in the face of ongoing genocides in Palestine, Sudan, and Kurdistan, and the countless cases of human rights violations all over the world have also marked the international community over the past years. Wars of aggression, directly or indirectly supported by the US, persist against various countries in the global South.<sup>20</sup>

In Israel-occupied Gaza, more than 10% of the population have been injured or killed by Israel Occupational Forces using weapons supplied by the US.<sup>21</sup> Israel received USD 3.8 billion worth of financial assistance from the US in 2023, making them the top recipient of US military aid.<sup>22</sup> No Israeli leader has been held accountable for the atrocities.

The inadequacy of current multilateralism to broker solutions to crucial political and economic issues has also aided the resurgence of right-wing, authoritarian regimes that pose an even larger threat to the already fragile state of global democracy and sustainable development.<sup>23</sup>

### *Asserting people's sovereignty*

The continued aversion of developed nations to the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” prevents any significant step forward for genuine development, especially in countries governed by right-wing climate change denialists.<sup>24</sup> The top polluters in the world, historically and currently, are concentrated in the global North.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, the global South has had more to lose in terms of the equal share in the direct benefits of fossil fuel use, including

industrial base building and energy consumption.<sup>26</sup> Southern countries continue to bear the brunt of the effects of changing weather patterns and rising temperatures. Little positive change can be expected when fossil fuel lobbyists far outnumber those advocating for real solutions in spaces where resolving the climate crisis should be priority.<sup>27</sup>

Crisis means an intensification of exploitation in the name of profit. The global neoliberal order is in peril. US hegemony is in decline and facing mounting obstacles in the inter-imperialist bid to secure power.<sup>28</sup> As the United Nations' Agenda for Sustainable Development nears its 2030 deadline, and with less than 20% of the goals on track, the challenge of pushing for genuine development currently rests on the people of the global South.

Crisis generates people's resistance. The urgency to build stronger people's movements that will go against the resurgent tide of right-wing authoritarianism grows larger.<sup>29</sup> As the crisis of monopoly capitalism pushes the Northern states to turn to protectionism once again to maximise profits, the peoples of the global South are presented with opportunities to assert sovereignty. South-South cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit and non-interference can challenge neocolonial ties and may allow for an expansive policy space to discuss sovereign industrialisation, democratised development, and find ways to prevent another reorganisation of the same exploitative systems.

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# FREE TRADE FOR CAPITAL AMID HUNGER AND GENOCIDE

In the face of global hunger, genocide, and the climate crisis, free trade is promoted as usual. It has meant freedom for capital, while tying the Global South to commodity dependence and entrenching the Global North-South divide in development. Despite rising global food production, 733 million people face chronic hunger. The UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported low global growth, across developed economies, emerging BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates), and developing countries. High public debt among developing countries, which grew by 70% between 2010 to 2023, constrains fiscal and policy spaces towards sustainable development and climate justice.

Trade liberalisation enforced primarily by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and free trade and investment agreements, as well as policy prescriptions by the IMF and World Bank, have eliminated trade barriers in favour of Northern capital and states, and fostered commodity dependence of Southern economies. Such trade rules have decimated Southern agriculture, production, and industries, worsened labour conditions, and intensified resource extraction, land grabs, and consequent climate and ecological impacts.

The WTO continues to lose credibility, and is increasingly challenged by developing countries. The WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) in February 2024 failed to address developing countries' long-standing concerns on unfair rules on agriculture, fisheries subsidies, and import safeguards that undermine local production, livelihoods, and food security, while benefiting big agribusiness, industrial fisher, and big

commodity traders. MC13 even expanded Northern corporate agenda through a plurilateral agreement on Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) as a way to attract foreign investment and further integrate the Global South into global value chains, and supposedly catalyse sustainable development. South Korea, the United Kingdom, the European Union (EU), China, together with the WTO Director-General pushed for the IFD.

Despite the downward trend in foreign direct investments (FDIs) and the failure of FDI-oriented policies to facilitate technology transfer and know-how to developing countries, 86% of investment policy measures implemented in developing countries continue to favour investors through incentives and liberalisation. FDIs have stagnated since the 2008 global financial crisis. In 2023, FDI flows to developing countries fell by 7% to USD 861 billion. FDIs are largely concentrated in resource extractive projects such as commodity sectors, critical minerals, and renewable energy. Increasing demand for critical minerals for digital and renewable energy technologies risks further resource extraction in and consequent social and ecological harms to commodity dependent economies in the Global South. Meanwhile, developed countries implemented investment measures that were restrictive and less favourable to foreign investors "to address national security concerns."<sup>11</sup>

The majority or 74% of least developed countries remain dependent on commodity exports, which means at least 60% of their export revenue comes from raw materials (energy products, agricultural goods, and minerals). Commodity dependent economies are vulnerable to unpredictable changes in

commodity market prices which could shrink revenues, affect public investments and debt payments, and, overall, stunt development.

The financialisation of global commodities, characterised by the increasing role of financial actors and expanding financial activities in the global commodity market to increase corporate profits, drives market volatility and corporate profiteering, while shortchanging commodity dependent economies. UNCTAD reported that “2023 marked the second most profitable year in history for the commodity trading industry”<sup>2</sup> with estimates of total annual profits at over USD 100 billion as financial speculation boosted the profits of commodity trading giants Archer-Daniels-Midland Company, Bunge, Cargill and Louis Dreyfus, that control up to 70% of global food markets. Financialisation is also linked to the trend of mass layoffs, and race to the bottom wages and labour conditions.

During trade disruptions due to conflict and geopolitical tensions, corporations rake in even more profits by leveraging their market monopoly through markups which inflate consumer prices, passing on higher production and trading costs to consumers. In the context of the war in Ukraine, corporate profits of energy companies ExxonMobil and Shell, food and commodity companies Kraft Heinz, Archer-Daniels-Midland and Bunge, and mining companies Glencore and Rio Tinto surpassed inflation. Meanwhile, real wages and labour share in countries’ incomes have declined across the globe for decades. Household incomes have dropped by 8% since 2020 due to inflation.

Bilateral and mega-regional trade deals led by global powers continue to be negotiated and ratified without public participation and oversight. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement supported by the European Union, the World Bank, UNCTAD, among others, appeals to Pan-Africanism to

promote discredited trade liberalisation. Signed by 54 out of 55 African Union countries, it aims to “liberalise 97% of inter-African trade in goods, and set rules on trade in services, intellectual property, investment and e-commerce.”<sup>3</sup> Critics warn about investment policies and climate protocols partial to foreign investments that will greenwash resource extraction and land grabs; the expansion of SEZs that compromise labour conditions and environmental regulation to attract foreign investment; intellectual property provisions threatening local seed sovereignty and agriculture, and access to medicines; an invasive and extractive digital trade; and dispute settlement mechanisms that will undermine countries’ sovereignty. The EU has pledged EUR1.1 billion to support the AfCFTA and 70 projects across various areas, including trade in goods, intellectual property rights, digital trade, trade in services, investment, among others, that aim to further African economic integration. The EU is Africa’s largest trading partner, accounting for 33% of the total trade of Africa in 2023. The trade between the two continents also increased by 27% since 2013 to EUR 367 billion in 2023.

The China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has flooded Southeast Asia with cheaper Chinese imports and hit local production and livelihoods such as in Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. RCEP covers China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and the 10 ASEAN member states of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Competition among global powers plays out in trade. US President Donald Trump is likely to withdraw from the previous Biden administration’s Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, while applying stringent protectionist policies. Trump made use of emergency powers to impose an additional 10% tariff on Chinese imports, 25% tariffs to

its largest trading partners, Mexico and Canada, with a lower rate of 10% for Canada's energy imports, and reciprocal tariffs on every country that taxes US imports. Trump's 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminum imports also affect Canada and Mexico, among other countries supplying steel to the US. China responded with increased tariffs on American imports including coal, crude oil, and critical minerals. Canada, Mexico, and the EU are threatening retaliatory measures. Experts say that Trump's measures against Canada could be a negotiating tactic to gain greater control over the latter's energy resources.

Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanisms under FTAs allow corporations to file a legal case against developing countries that were unable to meet policies conducive for big business, undermining their sovereignty and draining their resources. By 2023, there were a total of 1,332 ISDS cases, 70% of which were brought against developing countries including LDCs. The Global ISDS Tracker shows that USD 114 billion have been paid by governments to corporations, with fossil fuel companies benefitting the most, raking in USD 80.21 billion since 1998.<sup>4</sup> Corporate gains from ISDS are almost equivalent to the climate finance shelled out by rich, polluting countries in 2022.

Free trade as usual has become untenable in the context of the genocide in Palestine, expanding war in the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region and Africa, geopolitical tensions among global powers, and a worsening climate crisis, and is being challenged by social movements and states in the Global South. Armed resistance across the WANA region against the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza has disrupted trade in the Red Sea. Trade unions and activists have also organised strikes, boycotts, and direct actions, such as in the US, UK, Canada, India, and Greece, to prevent and block trade, especially of arms, to Israel. Trade disruptions

due to conflicts, such as in WANA and the war in Ukraine, and climate change impacts, such as the drought in the Panama Canal, upset supply chains, raise trade costs, consumer prices, and threaten food security especially of import-dependent countries.

Shifts in trade policies related to climate and sustainability concerns largely greenwash resource exploitation, and pass the burden of decarbonisation to the Global South and strain their resources for climate adaptation. The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) which imposes carbon tariffs on carbon-intensive imports such as steel, cement, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity, and hydrogen could make trading with the EU costlier, affecting developing countries such as Mozambique, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Zimbabwe, Moldova, and Albania that rely on the EU as a major trade partner. CBAM ignores the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, potentially harming countries that do not have capacities to comply with EU environmental standards. China, India, Brazil, and South Africa have voiced opposition against CBAM.

The UNCTAD promotes carbon markets as a way for LDCs to earn revenues to complement climate finance, citing their "significant land-based mitigation potential".<sup>5</sup> Yet, it also admits that "the anticipated benefits of carbon markets – such as technology transfer, education and community development – are uncertain for LDCs."<sup>6</sup> Fundamentally, it acknowledges that carbon markets are misaligned with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and do not address LDCs' development needs.

Carbon offsets can be traded between two parties in carbon markets to allow the first party to continue emissions by reducing the emissions of the other party. Carbon emissions trading is criticised for allowing

polluting corporations and rich countries to buy their way out and shift the burden of emissions reduction to the Global South. Carbon offsetting does not significantly contribute to emissions reduction, but even add to greenhouse gas pollution and ecological harm. A 2016 EU-commissioned study showed that 85% of the projects under the Clean Development Mechanism,<sup>7</sup> the first and largest carbon trading scheme, “have overestimated their emissions reductions and supported no ‘additional’ low-carbon

capacity in developing countries.”<sup>8</sup> Carbon offset projects also make use of unproven and harmful carbon capture technologies, and are involved in land grabs, displacement, and human rights violations. For instance, Dubai-based Blue Carbon acquired millions of acres of land and forests across Africa in Tanzania, Zambia, Niger, Zimbabwe, and Kenya for its carbon offset projects. It also has projects in Papua New Guinea, Dominica, the Bahamas, St. Lucia, and Pakistan.

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# DEVELOPMENT FINANCE UNDER A SYSTEM OF PLUNDER

Crippling debt continues to be the bane that is keeping much of the peoples of the global South in unequal footing with the states of the North. Rooted in colonial histories and perpetuated by the present-day international financial architecture, primarily through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, loans are framed as tools for development. Yet the reality of debt is often entrenched in structural dependency, compromised sovereignty, and systemic inequalities.<sup>1</sup>

## *The chains of austerity and debt*

In 2024, global public debt reached USD 102 trillion, with developing countries' debt making up nearly 30% of the total.<sup>2</sup> Countries in the global South are constrained by debt servicing, and people suffer the negative impacts. Developing countries' net interest payments on public debt rose to USD 921 billion in 2024, marking a 10% increase from the previous year.<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) adds that debt burdens are exacerbated by a combination of slow, minimal growth and high interest rates. While much of the world's external debt is owed by Northern countries, developing countries face higher borrowing costs and financial risks. On average, the interest cost of external borrowing for developing countries is three times more than for developed countries.<sup>4</sup> As a consequence, Southern countries carry out IMF-sponsored austerity measures in a futile contract to continue loans that will supposedly maintain funding for development initiatives.

In Africa, public sector workers in six countries are left bearing the brunt of austerity measures as incomes have fallen by around 50% over the last five years.<sup>5</sup> Wages could not keep up with costs of basic necessities such as food, shelter, education, and health. A staggering 84% of public school teachers have reported a 10%–15% drop in their incomes.<sup>6</sup> Many teachers are overwhelmed with the lack of facilities and materials, with some spending out of their own pockets to provide for their students' learning needs.

Health sector workers also face the challenges of a weak public health system. In Nigeria, the most populous country in the continent, the government has allocated 20.1% of its national revenue towards debt servicing while only a meager 4% was invested in public health, way below the 15% minimum set by the African Union.<sup>7</sup> A study by ActionAid in Africa highlights that budget cuts in the healthcare system have resulted in shortages in medicines, poor infrastructure, and a general decline in the quality of medical services.

As fewer and fewer resources are allocated in public services, women and girls are disproportionately affected, often carrying the burden of unpaid care work left by a failing social protection system.<sup>8</sup> Budget cuts in education have kept more young women and girls from attending school and are compelled to perform tasks at home. According to the ILO, unpaid care and domestic work is valued at around 9% (USD 11 trillion) of global GDP, with women contributing approximately 6.6% of the total compared to men at 2.4%.

The UNCTAD has stated that austerity measures do not solve the problems caused by a growing public debt and has only contributed to worsening inequalities. In fact, developing countries faced negative net resource transfers in 2023, having to pay USD 25 million more to their external creditors than they received in fresh disbursements.<sup>9</sup> As a consequence, more than 3 billion people are living in countries that spend more on debt than on public services.

### *Funding cuts, financial colonialism*

To add, Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the OECD has consistently been failing to meet the standard 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) aimed at financing development in the South.<sup>10</sup> Only Denmark (0.71%), Luxembourg (1.00%), Norway (1.02%) and Sweden (0.79%) have exceeded the 0.7% target. The OECD also projects that further overall declines in ODA may be seen beyond 2025 following the announcement of aid cuts from France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.<sup>11</sup>

Private capital mobilisation has increasingly become a major narrative to supposedly fill in the financing and investment gaps for development, a push that has been beneficial for finance capital and supported by elite-led governments in the global North and South.<sup>12</sup> Private investments have significantly increased over the last decade, reaching an all time high of USD 70 billion in 2023.<sup>13</sup> The 2025 Global Sovereign Debt Monitor reports that about 60% of all outstanding claims against 130 countries of the global South are held by investment funds, banks, insurance companies and other private entities, most of which are located in the North.<sup>14</sup> The same report underscores that private investments in the South are usually concentrated in a few upper-middle and high income countries, citing a lack of secondary markets for bonds in poorer economies. The OECD claims that even with the large volume of private finance

flowing into developing countries, this still remains below the needed amount to achieve any significant and sustainable development.

Loans, especially from private lenders, and foreign investments risk reinforcing ultra-dependence and foreign capital accumulation in the South.<sup>15</sup> This has been the case for most countries in the region where colonialism has created dependent economies specifically designed for the development of wealthy countries' corporations and finance. While global foreign direct investments (FDI) have shown a 29% decline from 2023 to 2024, developing countries saw marginal increase in 2024.<sup>16</sup> This uncertain and volatile landscape continues to favor short-term private investments that prioritise profit repatriation and quick gains, to the detriment of more vulnerable economies.<sup>17</sup>

About half of the global stock of FDI is still covered by old generation International Investment Agreements (IIAs) that have exposed developing and least developed countries to Investor-State Dispute Settlement cases.<sup>18</sup> More than half of the new cases filed in 2024 were against developing or least developed countries, and international investors in the construction, manufacturing and extractive sectors accounted for over half of the corporate claims.<sup>19</sup>

With conditionalities such as tax exemptions for large foreign companies, trade liberalisation, and the insistent privatisation of public services, and under the pressure of chasing repayment deadlines, the global South is always bound to drain more wealth and resources to the North. Unequal trade relations lead to more economic losses for developing countries that export cheaper primary commodities and import more expensive manufactured goods. From 2018 to 2023, net profit inflows to the North reached USD 3.1 trillion.<sup>20</sup> In less than two decades since 2005, the United States alone has repatriated USD 3.6 trillion in profit from the

South back to the US economy.<sup>21</sup> Developing countries also lose an average of USD 2.2 trillion every year because of illicit financial outflows.<sup>22</sup>

While governments and multinational corporations based in the global North secure their interests through protectionist policies, on one hand, the other hand continues to drain the wealth of the South. Allowing policy

space for the global South to decide development initiatives based on contexts, strategies, and industrial and agricultural transformation may help in setting the path towards economic independence. Ultimately, a fundamental overhaul of the current neoliberal international financial architecture assures a sustainable future for all.

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# CLIMATE IMPERIALISM AMID ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

The world faces a turning point in the breaching of different ecological limits. The year 2024 was the warmest year on record,<sup>1</sup> following 2023. The year 2025 is expected to be among the top three warmest years of the world. The world will likely breach the Paris Agreement's limit to the rise of world temperatures,<sup>2</sup> of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

## *Planetary boundaries breached*

To limit global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius, according to recent calculations,<sup>3</sup> annual emissions from 2025 onwards should not breach 80 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide in total. In 2024 alone, emissions already reached 41.6 billion tonnes.<sup>4</sup> At this rate, the 80 billion tonne “carbon budget” will be exhausted in two years. Failure to curtail global warming is expected to drive food insecurity, displacement, and impacts felt mostly by peoples in the global South.

Other aspects of planetary health, which scientists use to assess the planet's ability to support life, have also been breached due to “fossil fuel combustion, land-use changes, and pollution.”<sup>5</sup> In 2025, seven of nine interconnected Earth processes exceeded their limits: climate change; biosphere integrity, due to extinctions and resource extraction; land systems change, due to deforestation; freshwater change, amid rising floods and droughts; chemical cycles in soil, air, and water, because of pollution and fertilizer overuse; ocean acidification; and the unregulated entry of chemicals and plastics into the environment.

An unsustainable development and economic model is at the root of the problem. It is a

system driven by the power of billionaire investors and finance capital mostly based in Northern countries, as well as by Northern states and their militaries. A more brazen push for extraction has driven the commodification of nature at the expense of people and the planet.

## *Climate imperialism in a burning world*

Research from the last five years still shows that industrialised countries account for 90% of the overshooting of emissions beyond planetary limits.<sup>6</sup> High-income countries are still responsible for 74% of excess use of the planet's materials from extraction, production, consumption and waste.<sup>7</sup> Northern policy discourse tends to deflect historical responsibility by shifting blame to China and Russia as present-day emitters, neglecting Northern corporations' offshoring of their manufacturing and supply chains to China's borders in the last few decades.

Northern historical contributions to emissions can also be understated by calculations based on present-day borders. Certain Northern countries' contributions to climate change were larger when accounting for direct colonial rule in the 19th to 20th century, which drove the exploitation in colonised territories. The United Kingdom's total emissions from 1850 to 2023 almost doubled—from 76.4 billion tonnes of carbon emissions to 133 billion tonnes—when counting colonial emissions in present-day India, Myanmar, and at least 44 other British colonies.<sup>8</sup>

Companies based in the global powers are still driving this climate imperialism. Oil and gas corporate giants have been profiting from

Trump's anti-climate stance and disrupted Russian supply due to the war with NATO and Ukraine.<sup>9</sup> In 2025 the world's ten biggest oil and gas corporations are Saudi Aramco (Saudi Arabia), ExxonMobil (US), Shell (UK), PetroChina (China), Chevron (US), TotalEnergies (France), Reliance Industries (India), Sinopec (China), CNOOC (Hong Kong, China), and Petrobras (Brazil).<sup>10</sup>

Peoples in the global South already bear the heavy burden of increased extreme weather events, rising sea levels, destruction of ecosystems, and deforestation, among others. On climate impacts alone, a 2025 research covering almost two decades (1993–2022) shows that six of the ten countries most affected by extreme weather events are from the global South (excluding China): Dominica, Honduras, Myanmar, India, Vanuatu, and the Philippines.<sup>11</sup> This is despite many global South countries' smaller roles in the continuing crisis. To compare a single year, the Caribbean island country of Dominica's carbon emissions in 2023 were at 69,300 tonnes, miniscule compared to US emissions of 5.03 billion tonnes.<sup>12</sup>

The US military remains to be a major fossil fuel consumer.<sup>13</sup> US-backed military aggression, aside from grave violations of peoples' rights and international humanitarian law (see militarism section), is also harmful in terms of emissions. These emissions are poised to increase with the rise of right-wing parties and NATO countries' increased military budgets and build-up. NATO re-armament alone can create an additional 200 million tonnes of emission a year.<sup>14</sup>

The US-armed and supported bombings by Israel in the first 60 days of its siege against the people of Gaza generated 281,000 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide, similar to burning at least 150,000 tonnes of coal. By mid-2025, the calculated carbon footprint of the first 15 months of Zionist siege was around 31 million tonnes, greater than the emissions of more

than a hundred countries.<sup>15</sup> The genocide in Gaza also meant ecocide,<sup>16</sup> the destruction of olive groves, vegetation, and generally of Gaza's ecosystem and habitats; severe air pollution; the soil and water contamination from armaments. The siege created an area that is "no longer livable."

The same few Northern countries enmeshed in historical and present imperialism are also poised to continue oil and gas expansion. Based on current oil and gas expansion plans, four countries, namely the US, Canada, Norway, and Australia, are expected to generate 70% of emissions from new oil and gas fields in the coming decade.<sup>17</sup> Of this percentage, 58% is just by the US, as Trump doubles down on fossil fuel expansion as it attempts to "reshore" industries.

Behind the expansion of the fossil fuel industry and unsustainable economic activities are big banks and other financial institutions.<sup>18</sup> In an analysis of 65 big banks, 45 increased their direct financing of the fossil fuel industry from 2023 to 2024—that is, greater financing, lending and underwriting for the extraction, distribution, and trade of fossil fuels and related infrastructure. In the span of just one year, the biggest US bank backer, JP Morgan and Chase, increased dirty energy financing by 39%. Citigroup, meanwhile, increased their financing by 50%. Despite ecological crises, US-based banks lead in the financing of fossil fuels, committing USD 289 billion in 2024, 33% of the total for that year. Following the lead of US banks are those by entities in Europe (23% of the total in 2024), Canada (15%), China (14%), and Japan (12%).

Behind the biggest corporate entities are the richest 1% of billionaires, who are themselves responsible for 16% of global carbon dioxide emissions in 2024. The richest 10% of people in the world account for half. Emissions of the 50 world's richest people through only their investments and luxury jets and yachts are

larger than the emissions of the world's poorest 155 million people, according to a 2024 Oxfam study.<sup>19</sup> The majority of these ultra-rich live in Northern countries.

### *False solutions and corporate capture*

The same entities most responsible for the climate crisis are dominating global policy-making institutions. In the UNFCCC's COP30 in Brazil, for instance, there are around 1,605 lobbyists from the oil, coal and gas industry and their corporations, with one in every 25 COP30 attendees coming from these representatives of big business.<sup>20</sup> This corporate capture by the fossil fuel industry has been a trend even just for the past three years: at COP29, 1,700 corporate lobbyists were present compared to around 1,000 combined delegates of the 10 most climate-vulnerable countries.<sup>21</sup> At COP28 in 2023, they outnumbered all country delegations except those of the UAE and Brazil.

The corporate capture of the official climate talks shape the policy discourse in these spaces. Activists and civil society have long been criticising the lack of urgency in Northern fossil fuel phaseout and unambitious cuts in their emissions, allowed by the voluntary nature of the commitments in the current Paris Agreement. Almost a decade since the Paris Agreement's entry into force in late-2016, and despite the need to cut emissions by 45% within 2030,<sup>22</sup> actors most responsible for the climate crisis are not implementing real cutbacks on emissions. Fifty oil and gas companies that pledged to decarbonisation at 2023's COP28 also launched, in 2024, new oil and gas projects equivalent to 5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide pollution.<sup>23</sup>

Corporations and Northern countries' failures are in direct contrast to what Brazil said should be a "planned and just transition." This failure is partly shaped by the acceptance of the policy norm of "net zero" emissions,

which allows further Northern fossil fuel burning if they can also take away a similar amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Global South activists have, at the same time, continued to assert the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, requiring industrialised nations to deliver real emissions cuts without offsets or false "solutions," and to provide grants-based public finance and technology transfers to support Southern countries.

Activists have also decried corporate lobbyists' promotion of false "solutions" which reinforce the unsustainable economic system driving the crisis, obscure Northern historical responsibility, and pass the burden onto the South.<sup>24</sup> These could range from unproven technology "fixes," market-based approaches like carbon trading, and so-called nature-based solutions. A common thread is the role of finance capital, big private sector, and the profit motive (see Box 1). Some examples include Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) bonds, financial products that create new debts, and the promotion of blended finance, or the use of public money to attract or subsidise risks for private investment.

The push for carbon offsets—such as forced reforestation—also risks increasing land and resource-grabbing in the global South.<sup>25</sup> The promotion of false solutions, for activists, also distract and marginalise real solutions that originate from peoples in the global South themselves. In the case of land use, real solutions could include agrarian reform and addressing the systemic causes of climate vulnerability through diversifying economic production to shift away from corporate plantation economies.

*Box 1. BlackRock, greenwashing, and agribusiness plunder*

Aside from banks, Wall Street investment companies and funds play significant roles in driving unsustainable economic models. These entities manage assets of their investor clients, such as pension funds, and reinvest them elsewhere. Three US-based asset managers, BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, dominate as the largest shareholders in 88% of the biggest 500 companies in the US stock exchange.<sup>26</sup> The largest among them is BlackRock. Corporate and investor assets under its management are currently valued at USD 13.4 trillion.

BlackRock, as early as 2016, used environmental, social, and governance (ESG) language. Its founder and chairman, Larry Fink, said that “climate risk is investment risk. But [BlackRock] also believe[s] the climate transition presents a historic investment opportunity.” BlackRock elevated climate change as a crucial issue in its 2021 investment strategy,<sup>27</sup> and at most, wanted to encourage the corporations they manage to release low-carbon transition plans.

More recent evidence shows that in practice BlackRock’s activities amounted to greenwashing. The asset manager’s ESG funds are said to have invested around USD 2.3 billion in big fossil fuel companies—including Total, Shell, and Chevron—from 2023 to 2025.<sup>28</sup> BlackRock has also been called out for being a top ten shareholder in 20 agribusiness companies with records of deforestation, violence against Indigenous Peoples, violations of land rights, labour rights violations, and corruption.<sup>29</sup>

In 2025, less than two months since Trump’s election, BlackRock exited a Wall Street investor group that focused on “green” investments.<sup>30</sup>

***Imperialist “green protectionism” in the North, commodification of nature in the South***

The intensifying competition among global powers and the re-emergence of ultra-right wing forces shape some current shifts. Western states’ past economic reliance on China is unraveling, replaced by “green protectionism” in the years after the pandemic crisis. The industrialised countries attempt to expand and protect their domestic renewable energy and green technology sectors, as a means to conduct geopolitical and economic competition against China. In the military sphere, Northern states are spending more on military build-up and war. Competition among these states are driving resource extraction anew, treated as matters of “resource security” or “energy security.” At the same time big businesses in the past five years have created new demand and markets for everything “green” and digital, as corporate concentration increased in the technology sector.<sup>31</sup> Developing, profiting

from, and monopolising these technologies also became an aspect of competition.

The shifts in the global powers and the creation of new markets have intensified the inequality of North-South relations, in four aspects, as described by a group of academics: 1) a Northern “claim on unlimited raw materials” through a green pretext for extractivist plunder; 2) a forced “conservation” in the South through carbon offsetting projects as the North reneges on their historical responsibility for ecological crises; 3) the dumping of toxic and electronic waste in the South, and; 4) market signals for large-scale exports of expensive renewable technologies to the markets of the global South. In short, climate imperialism appears as a falsely “green” capitalism.

For the global South, a critical minerals market and a greater demand for extraction has been a key trend. Western capital is an outward search for untapped critical raw

materials, or critical minerals—metals, rare earths, and other elements needed for the production of renewable technologies and weapons in demand. Increased land-grabbing is also a danger;<sup>32</sup> in one estimate, around 20% of land-scale land deals today are related to “green” projects such as carbon offsets that require large swathes of land and displace rural communities.

Nature and the environment in the global South are to be further commodified, as goods for sale and export. Southern countries and their territories enter the picture from a decades-old position of being a raw material source. In 95 of 143 developing countries the majority of exports (60% and above) are still agricultural, energy, or mineral commodities—dominated by food products, oil, and metal ores.<sup>33</sup> In Africa, 20 out of the continent’s 54 countries are already dependent on mining exports alone, making up 65% of all goods exports in West Africa and 57% in East Africa.

This dependence is expected to deepen due to the critical minerals rush, as the global South holds around 70% of “transition minerals reserves,” such as “72% of cobalt, up to 64% of lithium, around 71% of nickel, up to 64% of copper and around 87% of rare earth minerals,” according to Oxfam.<sup>34</sup> Around 70% of the world’s cobalt is known to be sourced from the southern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Around 55% of nickel production comes from a few Asian countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines and nearly 50% of lithium comes from the reserves in Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. Mineral exports form 81.5% of overall commodity exports of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 55.6% in Chile, and 50.1% in Bolivia.<sup>35</sup>

The new wave of mineral demand comes with at least three interlinked factors: the return of Western states to industrial policies, their growing military build-up, as well as the development of new digital technologies.

First, the US and its allies require critical minerals for their economic strategies and military build-up. The US under Biden ratified the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in 2022, launching tax credits for electric vehicles and other incentives for domestic renewable technologies. While many of these incentives were reversed under Trump,<sup>36</sup> the US government still enforces a minerals-heavy economic policy as it tries to revive US-based capitalist production. The current US trade war and tariff offensive requires the capture of new materials as it attempts to reshore production and decouple from China. By late 2025, the Trump administration expanded its list of priority materials for “defense, manufacturing, and clean energy technologies,” adding copper, metallurgical coal, uranium, boron, lead, phosphate, potash, rhenium, silicon, and silver.<sup>37</sup>

Other powers have also followed suit in green technology and re-industrialisation strategies. The EU developed a policy for carbon taxes for EU imports, in the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, and later a Green Deal Industrialisation Plan. Japan launched their Green Transformation initiative in 2023. Australia in 2024 ratified the Future Made in Australia Act.

Second, NATO states, from the US to its EU members, are scrambling for “defence-critical raw materials” required to produce certain military equipment,<sup>38</sup> such as aluminium, beryllium, cobalt, gallium, germanium, graphite, lithium, manganese, platinum, titanium, tungsten. These have different military uses in the production of aircraft and missiles, tanks and corvettes, submarines, superalloys of jet engines, as well as artillery and ammunition.<sup>39</sup> The Trump-era US policy on prioritising uranium as a critical raw material came at a time when the US president has declared the continuation of nuclear technology testing in the US.<sup>40</sup>

Third, the growing deployment of digital

technologies in consumer, military, and economic use also shapes the rush for minerals. Data centres behind AI processes as such consume significant energy and emissions, and have notable ecological impacts.<sup>41</sup> But different critical minerals are also needed to construct these data centres, from their serverboards, circuits, heat sinks to prevent overheating, to their microchips and processors.<sup>42</sup> Minerals are also needed to power these. At the level of global powers, the China and US trade war in semiconductor production drives more mineral extraction, as control over this also shapes advantage in military technology.<sup>43</sup>

These dynamics have been brewing in the last five years. During the pandemic big businesses found an investment case in “green,” “sustainability,” and climate-oriented technologies and financing, as one way of regaining profits amid and after the lockdowns. But traditional Northern powers found that their push for market dominance

in clean energy technologies was already challenged by China.<sup>44</sup>

The Asian power, itself embroiled in tensions over maritime resources in Southeast Asia, has become a threat for Western economies partly due to its prior state intervention in the domestic economy. China heavily expanded investment in solar power, electric vehicles (EVs), and batteries from 2022 to 2023, with a 40% growth.<sup>45</sup> Industrial policy tools, such as subsidies, preferential access to critical minerals, and compulsory technology transfers, benefited Chinese firms compared to foreign corporations. Production in China eventually came to a situation of overproduction, with supply outstripping the weak domestic demand. The Asian industrial power has to find markets elsewhere, driving the export of low-cost solar panels, batteries, and electric vehicles, and driving Western states’ wariness about their corporations’ capacities to compete.

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# US-LED MILITARISM AND THE RISE OF THE FAR-RIGHT

The United States under President Donald Trump is brazenly engaging in conflicts across multiple regions. In less than three years, countries in Latin America, Africa, West Asia, and the Asia-Pacific have witnessed a rise in attacks from the US and its allies. Countries asserting their sovereignty against US imperialism are targeted through economic sanctions and outright military interventions. This intensifying militarism amid an economic crisis indicates a growing need for the United States to salvage its sharply declining global dominance. Yet, within its own borders the US government is also forced to deal with growing waves of dissatisfaction and dissent.

World military spending surged to USD 2.7 trillion in 2024,<sup>1</sup> a 9.4% increase compared to 2023, driven by the US-backed genocide in Palestine, the US-Russia war in Ukraine, intensifying conflicts in Africa involving Western and Russian actors, and US-China rivalry in the Asia Pacific.

The US remains the biggest military spender in 2024 at USD 997 billion, equivalent to 37% of global spending.<sup>2</sup> Between 2020-2024 it accounted for 43% of global arms exports.<sup>3</sup> In 2024, the US raked in USD 336 billion from arms sales, or 49% of the total revenue of the world's top 100 arms companies.<sup>4</sup> Thirty-nine of the biggest arms companies are based in the US, including the top five: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon Technologies, Northrop Grumman, Boeing, and General Dynamics. The US military is omnipresent with around 750 military bases in at least 80 countries. Japan hosts the most bases (120), followed by Germany (119), and South Korea (73).<sup>5</sup>

The escalation in world military spending and the deteriorating state of multilateralism coincides with the expansion of far-right power in the US, Europe, and the Global South. This political shift has led to increased attacks against migrants, reversals of women's rights, and the suppression of the democratic rights of the people. Far-right ideology espouses white supremacy, xenophobia, elite authoritarianism, unilateralism, militarism, and prejudice against women and the LGBTQIA+.<sup>6</sup> Far-right parties are in power in the US, India, Argentina, El Salvador, Italy, Hungary, and Israel and are gaining influence in Croatia, Finland, Slovakia, Germany, Portugal, France, Austria, Russia, Brazil, and Japan.

## *America First, a more brazen militarism*

The foremost far-right figure, US President Donald Trump, is exerting his influence to pressure its traditional allies to increase military spending. The NATO Summit in June 2025 pledged to allocate 5% of members' national gross domestic product to military spending by 2035.<sup>7</sup> NATO justified that this was necessary to deal with Russia's threats and "terrorism." Since 2002, NATO members have committed 2% of GDP to military spending, but only a few members were able to meet the commitment until last year. In 2025, 23 members met the military spending goal. The Trump administration has also advised its allies in the Asia-Pacific to increase their military spending in line with its goal to challenge China's power in the region.<sup>8</sup> Increasing military spending comes at the expense of social spending for health, education, social services, climate action, and aid commitments.

The reelection of Donald Trump ushered in more anti-democratic policies curtailing the rights of immigrants and minorities in the US.<sup>9</sup> Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents along with members of the National Guard were deployed in major cities and terrorised communities as they arrested suspected undocumented immigrants without due process, following Trump's pronouncements of tighter border security.<sup>10</sup>

United States foreign policy under the Trump administration remains unyielding in its unilateralist and interventionist pursuits.<sup>11</sup> Trump's November 2025 national security strategy is explicitly "America First" claiming Latin America as a US backyard, containing China in Asia, and in expanding US energy and minerals investment in Africa.<sup>12</sup> The US has become more brazen in flouting supposed global norms on human rights, women's rights, international humanitarian law, and climate policy. The supposed multilateral system has been undermined by the decades of double standards that allowed the US and global powers to be absolved from accountability.

Trump has admitted to authorising the CIA to orchestrate a regime change in Venezuela, which in January 2026 culminated in the abduction of president Nicolas Maduro.<sup>13</sup> The US government has also bombed Venezuelan vessels, and killed those onboard, under the pretext of a war against alleged drug smugglers crossing the border.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, the US has refused to lift the decades-old economic embargo against Cuba despite the United Nations General Assembly repeatedly calling for an end to the blockade. Trump has also repeatedly threatened that Cuba would be next in the series of US takeovers.

Latin America has also seen the rise of right-wing leaders who capitalised on growing inequality, economic uncertainty, and anti-crime rhetoric.<sup>15</sup> Right-wing leaders have won positions of power in Argentina, Costa Rica,

Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, and Chile.

In El Salvador, president Salvador Nayib Bukele, who has described himself as the "world's coolest dictator," built a mega-prison dubbed as the "Center for the Confinement of Terrorists" aimed at striking fear among criminals.<sup>16</sup> This has been heavily criticised by human rights activists who have accused Bukele of committing large-scale human rights violations. With more than 75,000 people in prison, El Salvador now holds the record for the highest incarceration rate in the world.<sup>17</sup>

In Brazil, the right-wing governor of Rio de Janeiro ordered what turned out to be the deadliest police raid in the country's history.<sup>18</sup> More than 130 people were killed as police swept through neighborhoods during its anti-drug operations. The massacre came just weeks before the 30th Conference of Parties (COP30) held in the Brazilian city of Belem. In Chile, the incoming right-wing president, José Antonio Kast, has previously praised the Pinochet military dictatorship.

Domestically, the Trump administration, in line with racist and fascist ideologies, has launched an aggressive anti-immigration policy that has criminalised immigrants, and subjected them to arrest, detention, and deportation without due process, and other violent attacks by state forces. This is considered as part of "homeland defense" which has been prioritised by the Trump administration since last year and has been affirmed in its latest defense strategy.<sup>19</sup>

Since 2025, the National Guard and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have been deployed en masse across the country primarily to act on anti-immigration policy, and also to repress protests. In the state of Minnesota, at least 3,000 people, including children, have been detained in January 2026 from anti-immigration

operations. State forces have conducted arrests even in schools and churches. Thousands of victims have been arbitrarily deported to and detained in El Salvador, Costa Rica, and South Sudan. Pro-Palestine activists have also been particularly targeted. The US has also imposed a travel ban to 75 countries.

### *US-led wars and the struggle for sovereignty and self-determination*

#### *Palestine*

US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza has killed 71,660 Palestinians or one in every 33 people in the city, with thousands more dead from disease, hunger, loss of basic infrastructure, and other social impacts. Since the ceasefire was implemented in October 2025, at least 500 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli occupation. UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese's report on the situation in Palestinian territories exposed that multinational corporations are sustaining and profiting off Israel's genocide in Gaza.<sup>20</sup>

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2026, the Trump administration announced its plans for Gaza, through the "Board of Peace" (BoP) established in November 2025 and a "master plan" for reconstruction of the city. Trump's "Board of Peace" and reconstruction plans have been widely criticised for excluding Palestinian leadership, disregarding their rights and sovereignty, and prioritising US and Israel's interests. The "Board of Peace" was established in line with a UN Security Council Resolution to supposedly facilitate the US-led "Gaza peace plan." But at the WEF, the US has announced it as a mechanism for global conflict resolution, challenging the UN's mandate, and even offering states permanent membership for a fee of USD 1 billion.

At the BoP, Trump leads as chairman for life, along with an executive board composed of

former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair; Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner; US Secretary of State Marco Rubio; the US special envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff; Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan; World Bank Group President Ajay Banga; and US deputy national security adviser, Robert Gabriel.<sup>21</sup> At least 50 countries have received invitations to join the board, but only 24 countries have confirmed, including Israel.<sup>22</sup> Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes in Gaza. The reconstruction plan which envisions dividing Gaza into "residential" and "coastal tourism mixed" zones<sup>23</sup> aligns with the logic of occupation – of displacing Palestinians, erasing their way of life, including of significant cultural and historical sites, to give way to the interests of US-Israel and complicit corporations.<sup>24</sup> Hamas, which governs Gaza, has opposed the US' reconstruction plans.

#### *Venezuela*

On January 3, 2026, the US launched a military airstrike on Venezuela and kidnapped Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and First Lady Cilia Flores on grounds of so-called charges related to "narco-terrorism." Moreover, US President Donald Trump expressed the objective to access Venezuela's oil reserves which are considered the largest in the world. At least 83 people were killed in the US military intervention, including nearly 50 Venezuelan troops and 32 Cuban troops. Trump's actions have been condemned for violating Venezuela's sovereignty and the UN Charter. The US' attacks on Venezuela was preceded by military build-up in the southern Caribbean, military strikes on vessels in the Caribbean sea on grounds of stopping drug trafficking, and a blockade on sanctioned oil tankers.

Maduro and Flores were indicted on charges related to drug trafficking, to which they both

pleaded not guilty. After Maduro's kidnapping, Venezuela's Vice President Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as acting president. Under US pressure, Rodríguez has made a USD 2 billion oil deal with the US and has submitted a reform to the country's law to allow foreign investments in oil.<sup>25</sup>

The US' intervention in Venezuela was widely condemned by several countries, from Venezuela's neighbors, Colombia, Cuba, Nicaragua, and Brazil, to other states such as Chile, China, Iran, Mexico, North Korea, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, and Spain.<sup>26</sup> EU leaders, the UN Secretary General, and international trade union formations also criticised the intervention for violating international norms and Venezuela's sovereignty.<sup>27</sup>

Trump expressed threats of replicating similar attacks on Colombia, Mexico, Cuba, and Iran. He has also spoken about annexing Greenland, which is a semi-autonomous territory of Denmark, identifying it as strategic to its economic and geopolitical competition against Russia and China.<sup>28</sup> Greenland is a strategic location for the goal of intercepting missiles in case Russia plans to launch an attack against the US. It is also accessible to new shipping routes, and has critical mineral resources that are needed for digital and military technology. Trump's threats over Greenland have been widely opposed by EU governments.

### *Cuba*

After the January attacks against Venezuela, the US turned to increased economic and political pressure against Cuba. In the same month, US President Trump issued an Executive Order imposing tariffs on any country directly or indirectly supplying Cuba with oil and petroleum products.<sup>29</sup> The gaps in fuel supply resulted in a crisis across the economy, driving power outages, decline in social services, and even setbacks in tourism.

The US under Trump reinstated Cuba's status as a "state sponsor of terrorism" in 2025.

The Caribbean island of Cuba has been in the stranglehold of US embargoes since 1962. The economic pressure has been mounting since the US Cold War bid for regime change in the island, after Cuba's nationalisation of formerly US-owned businesses. Economic sanctions expanded the initial blockade throughout the six decades. Impacts include increased mortality among women, a rise in underweight births by 23%, malnutrition, and inability to access healthcare.<sup>30</sup> One Cuban government estimate measures the economic losses at USD 933 billion, when accounting for exchange rate changes.<sup>31</sup>

The majority of countries in the United Nations are against the sanctions. In late 2025, 193 states in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) voted on a resolution to lift the economic, commercial, and financial blockade against Cuba, only with seven states opposing and 12 abstaining. The US, Israel, and Ukraine are among those opposed. This is the 33rd consecutive year that the UNGA has called on the lifting of the sanctions.<sup>32</sup> UNGA resolutions, however, are merely recommendatory and are non-binding.

### *Iran*

Only weeks after the bombing of Venezuela and the abduction of President Nicolás Maduro, the United States and Israel engaged in a joint bombing operation of Iran that killed top state officials, including its supreme leader Ali Khamenei, along with hundreds of civilians. A US missile strike hit a girls' elementary school and killed more than 170 people, most of whom were children.<sup>33</sup> The March 2026 attacks come after a series of threats issued by Trump against the Iranian government, citing that a regime change in Iran was inevitable and would be "the best thing that could happen."<sup>34</sup>

Iran has responded with missile and drone strikes against US territories in the Arabian Peninsula. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian vowed to stop attacks if those nations were to refuse cooperation with the US and Israel.<sup>35</sup>

Iran sits on top of around 209 billion barrels of oil reserves, representing roughly 12% of global reserves and 24% of those in West Asia. Current proven reserves reveal Venezuela with the most oil at 303 billion barrels, followed by Saudi Arabia with around 267 billion. Iran also holds 34 trillion cubic meters or about 17% of the global total natural gas reserves, making it the second largest in the world.<sup>36</sup> The US-Israel war on Iran has resulted in the global skyrocketing of oil prices. International supply lines have been heavily affected as the Strait of Hormuz continues to be a maritime flashpoint. With the recent attacks on Iran as well as in Venezuela, the United States could potentially take control of more than 30% of the world's oil reserves.

#### *Rojava, Kurdistan*

The Kurdistan Workers' Party began a process of disbandment and disarmament in July 2025 after imprisoned Kurdistan Workers' Party leader Abdullah Öcalan called for an end to the four-decade armed struggle of the revolutionary Kurdish people.<sup>37</sup> While Kurdish forces in Turkey have started laying down their weapons, independent units in Syria and Iraq have maintained their struggle for self-determination.<sup>38</sup>

In January 2026, the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, or more commonly known as Rojava, came under intense military assault from the US-backed Syrian government, along with Turkish-backed militias and ISIS-linked militants.<sup>39</sup> The systematic attack on Kurdish communities comes in the aftermath of the Western-supported overthrow of the Assad regime,<sup>40</sup> and a US statement on ending its

prior support for the Syrian Democratic Forces, the military force of Rojava.<sup>41</sup> Dozens have been killed since the Syrian offensive began on January 13. The democratic aspirations of the people of Rojava are in danger, as the current US-backed Syrian regime under Ahmed al-Sharaa has since pushed for Kurdish forces' "integration" into the Syrian government – with the Syria-SDF agreement lauded by the US.<sup>42</sup>

#### *Sudan, Nigeria, and the Alliance of Sahel States*

In Sudan, in North Africa, clashes between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese military over the past two and a half years have claimed thousands of civilian lives and displaced millions more.<sup>43</sup> Amnesty International has reported rampant human rights violations, gender-based violence, and ethnic violence against communities in the Darfur region. With oil and critical minerals at stake, some analysts are revealing foreign influence in the ongoing war.<sup>44</sup>

In West Africa, the United States in cooperation with Nigerian authorities bombed Northwest Nigeria in December 2025, in the name of operations against Islamic State militants.<sup>45</sup> US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth stated that the attacks were in response to the alleged killings of Christians in Nigeria.<sup>46</sup> However, the Nigerian government has denied that the coordinated offensive was based on religious conflict.<sup>47</sup>

Still in West Africa, the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) consisting of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso was established in 2023 on the principles of opposing neocolonialism and advancing mutual defense, following a series of military coups in their respective countries. The three members of the alliance have since withdrawn from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the platform that maintained regional affairs for the last 50 years. As conflicts in the Sahel continue to affect civilian communities, AES members

have vowed to unite against armed groups in the region.<sup>48</sup> With the alliance's push towards economic and political sovereignty, a strong anti-West stance, and with its departure from ECOWAS, the AES has been threatened with military intervention by US ally Nigeria.<sup>49</sup>

#### *US and China's tensions in Asia-Pacific*

The bid for control over the Asia-Pacific region continues to intensify. Under its National Security Strategy, the US is determined to preserve military superiority over the First Island Chain to deter any threat to its interests in the region. It has also encouraged its allies in the region to "step up and spend much more for collective defense" by allowing the U.S. military greater access to ports and other facilities and to spend more on their own defense.

Meanwhile, Beijing has responded by aggressively increasing its military presence in the region. The Philippines has become a focal point in recent years with multiple confrontations between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and navy personnel. Tensions rose further in May 2025 when China's Coast Guard water-cannoned and rammed a Philippine government vessel in the disputed Spratly Islands.<sup>50</sup> The Philippine government has sought greater military support from the United States by granting temporary rotational access to four new "military sites" under the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.<sup>51</sup>

In the last three years, US presence has also expanded in the Philippines to project against China: from installations of Typhon missile launchers which can reach China and Russia, to the rotational deployment of US army and Marines. The 40th Philippine-US "Balikatan" exercises (literally, shoulder-to-shoulder) saw 10,000 US troops and a projection of US military power.<sup>52</sup> More than 500 US-Philippine military activities are planned for 2026.<sup>53</sup>

#### *Counterinsurgency in the Philippines, India, West Papua*

The US continues to conduct its "War on Terror" in 78 countries.<sup>54</sup> The US has already spent around USD 8 trillion in its post-9/11 wars, killing around 940,000 people from direct war violence, and more from the impacts of war. Thirty eight million people have been displaced in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, and the Philippines. Various states continue to embark on counter-insurgency operations that are condemned for serving global powers' and corporations' interests.

In the Philippines, US military presence is growing also amid the Philippine government's continued counter-insurgency operations against Maoist armed movements. The Marcos Jr. administration's new counter-insurgency plan, the National Action Plan for Unity, Peace and Development (NAP-UPD), has been criticised for reinforcing the role of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), an agency with a record of threats and rights violations against people's organisations, civil society, and even prominent personalities.<sup>55</sup> US military aid to the Philippine government is expected to be around USD 2.5 billion in the next five years,<sup>56</sup> with new US commitments condemned due to long-standing concerns about military violations of rights and international humanitarian law.<sup>57</sup>

In India, the Modi administration's counter-insurgency programme, Operation Kagaar, has been branded as the state's "final mission" against the Maoist armed movement.<sup>58</sup> The government set March 31, 2026 as the operation's deadline. The operation has expanded militarisation in Indigenous Peoples' territories, and killed at least 300 people since 2024 – affecting especially Adivasis in India.<sup>59</sup> At least 1000 individuals have been arrested. For activists calling an end to the counter-insurgency

programme, Operation Kagaar has mainly facilitated land grabs against Indigenous Peoples in the name of targeting “Maoists”.

The government of India has imported 34% of its arms from Israel from 2020 to 2024, second to Russia (36%) and France (33%).<sup>60</sup> India is also part of the US-led Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, engaged in security and counter-terrorism intelligence cooperation.

Indigenous Peoples and activists bear the brunt of counter-insurgency in West Papua, a region controlled by the Indonesian

government. Repression continues as Prabowo Subianto, a former military official, was elected as Indonesia’s president in 2024. Human rights violations from drone attacks and bombings have been documented,<sup>61</sup> as well as extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances.<sup>62</sup> Militarisation has also facilitated corporate extraction: from the Grasberg mine and its gold and copper reserves, controlled by PT Freeport Indonesia, to the Tangguh gas field operated by a consortium of British Petroleum, China National Offshore Oil Corporation, and Mitsubishi.<sup>63</sup>

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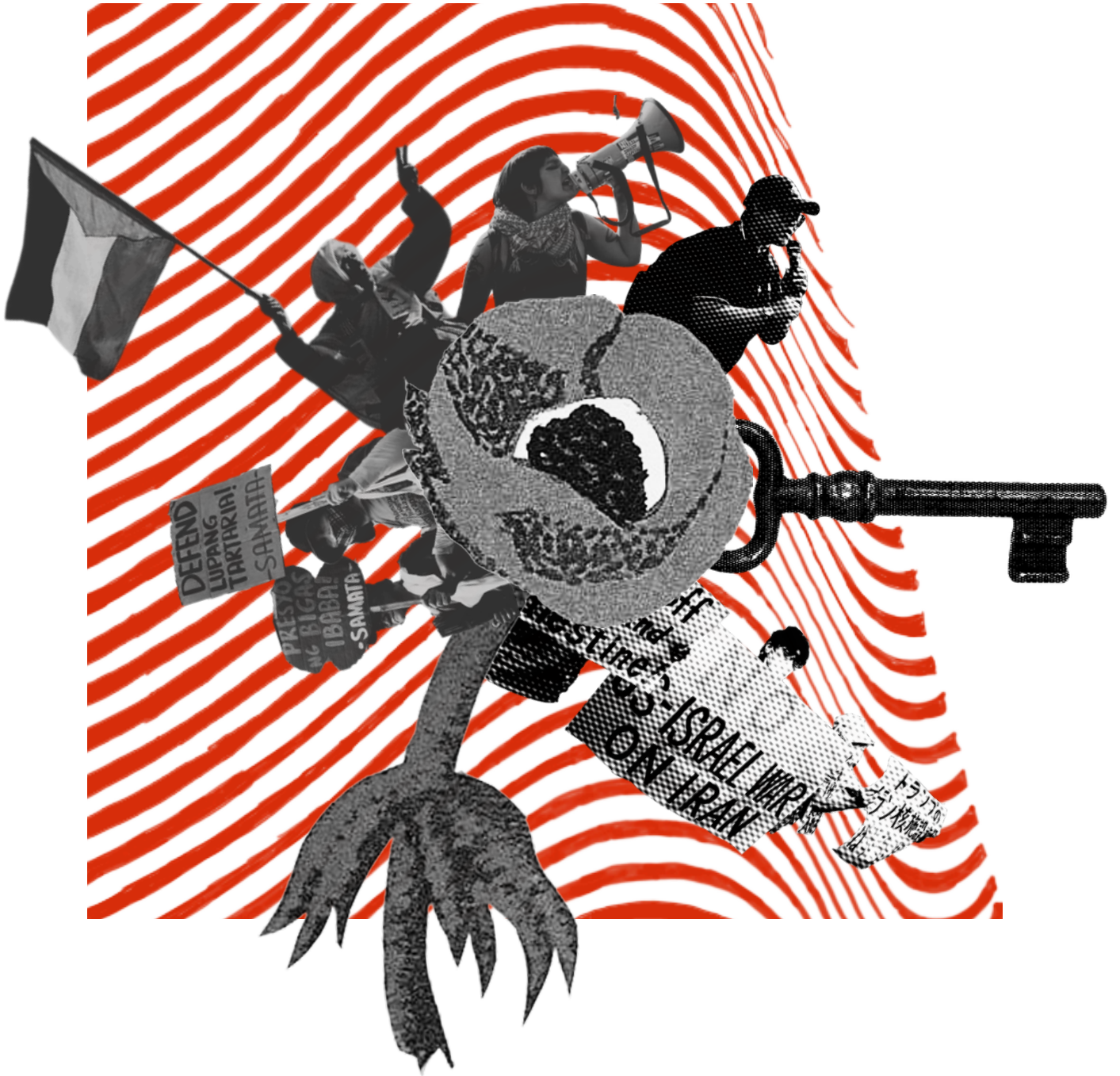
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# PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE: FROM DISCONTENT TO LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The years 2024 and 2025 were charged times for the peoples of the world. The global North's neoliberal offensive have continued to siphon resources from the South, burying the region in further debt and driving ecological crises. Amid a declining share of wealth going to labour in the same year, wealth captured by the world's richest accelerated three times faster than in 2023.<sup>1</sup> Workers, particularly in the global South, confront widening wage inequality and precarious working conditions.

Over 70 countries held their elections in 2024, making it the biggest global election year in history.<sup>2</sup> The election supercycle ushered in the rise of authoritarian governments who capitalised on high global economic uncertainty and intensifying geopolitical tensions to justify repression. Defense spending, particularly of world powers, skyrocketed, signaling further assault on peoples as they compete for power. These menacing conditions contextualise peoples' deepening discontent.

Peoples' assertions across the globe toppled oppressive states and threatened power structures. More than 160 significant anti-government mass mobilisations, where majority are election-related, emerged in 2024;<sup>3</sup> over 140 more demanding redress for economic, social, and political grievances erupted in the following year.<sup>4</sup> While authorities have scrambled to foil these growing movements, the youth, workers, peasants, women, and other sectors across the world, especially in the Global South, have had significant gains in the past two years.

## Asia

In South Korea, some five hundred thousand

people rallied for the impeachment and imprisonment of its then-president Yoon Suk Yeol over his short-lived martial law declaration in December 2024.<sup>5</sup> The country's largest labor union also staged an indefinite general strike to demand Yoon's resignation.<sup>6</sup> Protests recurred after a court cancelled Yoon's arrest warrant in March 2025, just a month after he was imprisoned.<sup>7</sup> Anti-US demonstrations erupted in October 2025, where protesters denounced the APEC summit for its unequal trade deals favorable only to US interests.<sup>8</sup>

Youth-led mobilisations in Bangladesh, which will encourage future actions across the region, have toppled Sheikh Hasina's 15-year reign by August 2024. Bangladeshi youth cried political patronage over the discriminatory quota system, which drew frustration from students in the context of high youth unemployment and rising inflation in the country.<sup>9</sup> Over a year later, the International Crimes Tribunal in Dhaka sentenced Hasina to six months in prison and charged her with crimes against humanity.<sup>10</sup>

Across Indonesia, nationwide protests have erupted in 2025 to reject Subianto's contentious political and economic policies. In February, the government's USD 19 billion spending cuts amid a lack of social support sparked the people's ire.<sup>11</sup> The momentum was sustained in March over a law revision that would alarmingly expand the military's role in public affairs.<sup>12</sup> By August, people had been brimming with rage. Mobilisations ruptured after state forces killed a food delivery rider, a symbol of Indonesia's precarious gig economy, while legislators granted themselves USD 3,075 monthly allowances.<sup>13</sup> People destroyed public infrastructure and

torched a government building to show their discontent with political elites.<sup>14</sup>

The youth was also in the frontline of demonstrations in Nepal. With a youth unemployment rate of 20.8%, frustrations grew over the country's corruption, economic crisis, and disparity, as seen in politicians and their families' lavish lifestyle.<sup>15</sup> The government banned several social media platforms to impede the people from organising and sharing information under the pretext of controlling misinformation and hate speech.<sup>16</sup> Government officials including the Prime Minister resigned in fear of the escalating protests,<sup>17</sup> while the social media ban has since been lifted.<sup>18</sup>

In the Philippines, workers of Nexperia Philippines Inc. staged a four-day strike against the multinational semiconductor company for union busting and mass lay-off in early 2025. Led by the Nexperia Philippines Inc. Workers Union (NPIWU), the workers clinched victory: the strike costed the company PHP 1 billion (USD 17 million) loss, and won the workers an above PHP 50 daily

wage increase and reinstatement of some union officers.<sup>19</sup> Peoples' movements in the Philippines also decry continuing human rights violations. An international solidarity mission in October 2025 tackled militarism under the US-backed Marcos administration<sup>20</sup> and itself faced the intimidation of state forces.

In September, large demonstrations erupted across the Philippines after corruption issues related to flood control projects were reported. Workers joined the youth, peasants, and the larger mass movement in demanding accountability from the corruption of the US-backed Marcos Jr. government. Some 80,000 marched in Manila towards the Malacañang Palace where state forces violently tried to undermine the mass action.<sup>21-22</sup> Through a camp-out and protests, peasants carried similar anti-corruption demands alongside their assertion for genuine land reforms.<sup>23</sup> Students from various universities also conducted campus walkouts to "sustain public pressure".<sup>24</sup> State forces failed to curtail another large anti-corruption rally in November, where multisectoral groups showed up in numbers.

*Box 2. Climate crisis, corruption, behind the cyclone of protest*

In the Philippines, the president's 2025 State of the Nation Address berated the country's public works department for alleged corruption in flood control and mitigation programs. Every year, about 20 tropical cyclones enter the country, with about 8 to 9 making landfall.<sup>25</sup> But different communities face dysfunctional flood control infrastructure, with flooding projects ranging from those declared completed despite being unfinished to ones that are weakly constructed.

The Marcos and Duterte factions, who occupy the presidency and vice-presidency respectively, have used the issue to smear each other. A report by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, however, shows common interest and responsibility: both Marcos Jr. and Vice President Sara Duterte received millions of 2022 election campaign donations from and have ties with contractor firms involved in the corruption scandal.<sup>26</sup> Amid the independent probe of Congress into the issue, it was revealed that several incumbent senators and house representatives have also benefited from election campaign donations of government contractors.<sup>27</sup> Beyond minor resignations and reshuffling in Congress, no other significant actions have been taken for systematic accountability. With such conflicts of interest within the government, people have taken to the streets in late 2025 to call for accountability.

## *Africa*

In Kenya, the Ruto government's attempt to add a 16% value-added tax hike to some essential items and other austerity measures was short-lived after Kenyan people marched in Nairobi to reject the IMF-backed 2024 Finance Bill in June. The pressure from the demonstrations, where state forces killed at least 39 people and injured some 300, prompted Ruto to backtrack from signing the bill.<sup>28</sup> Kenyan people continue to assert their demands to scrap rather than amend the bill, and to free the economy from foreign dictates.<sup>29</sup>

In Nigeria, people also raged against austerity measures in August 2024. The IMF forecasted a 3.3% economic growth in the country following the Tinubu administration's economic reforms,<sup>30</sup> which contrasts the 34% inflation rate and high unemployment.<sup>31</sup> Nigerian people called for a 'ten days of rage', demanding a reinstatement of fuel subsidies amid the plunging economic conditions.<sup>32</sup> Government suppression killed at least 24 and imprisoned another 700 individuals.<sup>33</sup> While Nigerian president Tinubu signed a law that doubled the national minimum wage, Nigerian people remain confronted with unemployment and a depreciated Naira currency.

The people of Angola have likewise spewed IMF-imposed policies in August 2025, a year after similar demonstrations erupted across the region. The protests began as a strike by taxi drivers after a structural reform increased fuel prices up to 50%, which later on progressed into actions questioning the widening inequality in the country despite its abundance of oil reserves.<sup>34</sup> The Lourenço government answered the people's anger with violence, killing at least 30 individuals and arresting more than 1,500.<sup>35</sup>

Anti-government protests also sparked in Madagascar against the country's third-term president Andry Rajoelina, punctuated by his

ouster and a military coup. As the coup leader was seated as the new president, movements continued to express discontent.<sup>36</sup>

In Togo in West Africa, protests in mid-2025 were directed against the government's constitutional reforms that removed term limits benefitting the ruling "political dynasty" of president Faure Gnassingbe.<sup>37</sup>

In West Africa the current military-led governments of Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali have formed and developed the Alliance of Sahel States since 2023. The Alliance's founding was based on their exit from the Economic Community of West African States which they see as promoters of Western powers' interests.<sup>38</sup> In late 2025, the three countries launched a Sahel Investment and Development Bank. Countries in the Alliance have forced out both US and French military forces from their territories,<sup>39</sup> while potentially looking towards Russia instead. As the two-year old alliance continues, the extent of its aspirations for sovereignty will still unfold.

## *Latin America and the Caribbean*

In Argentina, consecutive protests and strikes occurred against the right-wing president Milei's austerity measures in the past two years. In 2024, students and teachers joined road blockades and conducted classes in the streets after Milei vetoed a bill that would have increased university funding.<sup>40</sup> In 2025, women marched in Buenos Aires to decry the aggravating rights violations in the country after the government intended to remove legal recognition of 'femicide' and gender-based killings,<sup>41</sup> and slashed funds for programs and institutions dedicated to address gender-based violence.<sup>42</sup> Workers and union members also called for a general strike that disrupted the operations of shipments and deliveries, banks, hospitals, and public transport including airports; it stopped economic activity estimated to cost USD 880 million.<sup>43</sup>

Across Chile, thousands of artisanal fishers and coastal communities blocked a highway and torched tires in protest of a fishing bill that privileges export-oriented industrial fishing companies in March 2025.<sup>44</sup> While the Boric government presents the new bill as a replacement of the 2013 Longueira Law that privatised 92% of Chile's fisheries,<sup>45</sup> it applies the same market-based solution—individual transferable quotas—that is disadvantageous for small-scale fishers.<sup>46</sup> Chilean people demand the abolition of the quota system and to make some fish catch, such as the Chilean hake, anchovy, and squid, exclusive for artisanal fishers.<sup>47</sup>

Peruvian youth and workers mounted demonstrations in September 2025 against US-backed president Dina Boluarte and the corruption and impunity of her repressive government. The Congress impeached Boluarte in an attempt to contain the people's discontent, and appointed José Jerí, a right-wing politician with corruption allegations, as interim president.<sup>48</sup> Jerí declared a state of emergency amid sustained protests, signaling the people's desire for a system overhaul and not a mere ouster; they chanted: "Everyone must go!"<sup>49</sup>

In Venezuela, people have signed up to join the Bolivarian Militia amid US sanctions and military buildup in the country. Under the pretext of countering narcoterrorism, the US has escalated its attacks against the Bolivarian revolution. US airstrikes on vessels along Venezuelan waters have killed at least 76 individuals since September 2025.<sup>50</sup> It has also assigned Maduro—who foiled two consecutive US-backed opposition candidates in recent years—with a USD 50 million bounty for being the alleged "global terrorist leader" of the drug-trafficking group, Cartel de los Soles. Maduro was later abducted by the US military in January 2026. Hundreds of thousands—from housewives, youth, and retirees—volunteered to serve and defend Venezuela's sovereignty.<sup>52</sup>

Across Brazil, people demanded justice. Amid US tariffs and sanctions on Brazil to force its judiciary to override the conviction of former president Jair Bolsonaro, a Trump ally,<sup>53</sup> tens of thousands filled the country's major cities in September 2025 to reject his amnesty.<sup>54</sup> In Rio de Janeiro, thousands marched to decry a "narco-terrorism" operation that massacred at least 121 people.<sup>55</sup> Indigenous Peoples stormed the COP30 in Belem to protest the encroachment of private capital interests on ancestral lands.<sup>56</sup>

In Ecuador, demonstrations and roadblocks mounted by Indigenous Peoples, youth, and workers erupted as dissent against the Noboa government's austerity measures prescribed by the IMF. Led by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), the national strike lasted for 20 days, demanding the reinstatement of fuel subsidy.<sup>57</sup> Indigenous Peoples and social movements have consolidated their ranks and vowed not to yield amid Noboa's continued extraction of indigenous lands.<sup>58</sup>

Across Panama, thousands of people protested in mid-2025 against president Mulino's more privatised pension reforms. The government banned public gatherings, while a multinational company fired banana plantation workers who joined the national strike, in fear of the intensifying demonstrations.<sup>59</sup> Panamanians also decried the presence of US troops particularly in the Panama Canal, and the reactivation of the Cobre Panama copper mine.<sup>60</sup>

In Cuba, where US sanctions have strangled the economy for decades, tens of thousands mobilised in front of the US embassy in the country to assert their sovereignty and demand justice from the violence embedded in the embargo.<sup>61</sup> The United Nations General Assembly called for the end of the US embargo against Cuba in October 2025.<sup>62</sup>

## *Europe and the United States*

Various farmers' protests erupted in 2024 across the European Union countries to decry financial and administrative regulations, in the name of subsidy and environmental regulation, as well as unfair trade competition against cheap imports, and inflation.<sup>63</sup> In turn, the EU has backtracked the halving of pesticide use by 2030, a provision in its 'Green Deal' that sparked some of the farmers' ire.<sup>64</sup>

Cities of Lisbon and Porto saw large demonstrations in November 2024, encouraged by the General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers (CGTP), to call for an increase in minimum wage and pensions.<sup>65</sup> This prompted the government to propose a wage increase, yet Portugal's would-be minimum wage in 2028 remains less than the current minimum wage of other EU member states.<sup>66</sup>

Across the region, working peoples harmed by austerity measures have launched strikes in 2025 to challenge their governments' policies. In the United Kingdom's capital, thousands slammed the Labour government's social spending cuts and anti-immigrant rhetoric.<sup>67</sup> In France, some one million people joined the strikes led by French unions to pressure the Macron administration to reverse its planned budget cuts.<sup>68</sup> Similar actions occurred in Belgium where tens of thousands of workers stopped public transport operations in protest of looming pension cuts and other austere reforms.<sup>69</sup>

People of the United States demand the end of US warmongering. Amid the US-backed Israel genocidal offensive against Palestine, the US has only escalated its attacks on the Middle East by striking Syria and Iran in the past two years. In June 2025, the '50 protests, 50 states, one movement' staged protests in various cities and states following US' strikes targeting Iran's nuclear facilities in the same month.<sup>70</sup> Similar anti-war demonstrations denouncing the attacks against Iran's

sovereignty erupted in France, Greece, and Japan.<sup>71</sup>

The same movement mounted large demonstrations across the US with the 'No Kings' protests. Some five million people joined the protests in June, and another seven million took to the streets in October.<sup>72</sup> The people denounced Trump's economic and political policies which have been especially violent against immigrants and other minority groups in the country.

Workers from various sectors also resisted the government and their corporations' attempts to erode their rights. Some 31 major strikes occurred in 2024, a year before Trump's second iteration.<sup>73</sup> Workers' solidarity continued to achieve labor wins in 2025, where strikes by dockworkers, teachers, grocery workers, healthcare workers, and Starbucks workers resulted in significant gains.<sup>74</sup> By January 2026, a general strike in Minnesota erupted against state violence by ICE officers,<sup>75</sup> whose crackdown against migrants and immigrants have escalated under Trump.

## *Palestine and national liberation*

Two years after the US-Israel's imperialist offensive on Palestine, international solidarity has only strengthened as about 48,000 demonstrations across the world condemning the genocidal siege have been recorded.<sup>76</sup> In 2024, tens of thousands rallied in major cities in the world to demand the end to the occupation;<sup>77</sup> demonstrations remained to swell in numbers in 2025.<sup>78</sup> The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement also saw significant impacts on Israel's economy and allied corporations and institutions. Israeli economists feared that the movement had "changed Israel's global trade landscape" in 2024, while companies like McDonald's and Chevron suffered major losses in global sales and halted expansion plans.<sup>79</sup> Such decisive wins were achieved through peoples' solidarity.

Academic institutions in Europe and Canada have severed financial ties with Israel and complicit companies after months of student encampments and protests.<sup>80-81</sup> In 2024, dockworkers in Athens blocked the transport of arms bound for Israel;<sup>82</sup> they prevented another ammunition cargo shipment in 2025.<sup>83</sup> As Israel escalated to weaponise famine against Palestinians, peoples launched large-scale initiatives to break the blockade. In June 2025, the Sumud convoy from Tunisia, with some 1,500 participants, marched towards Egypt where another thousands of delegates from across the world gathered for the Global March to Gaza.<sup>84-85</sup> The Freedom Flotilla Coalition also sailed three vessels carrying aid bound for Palestine—the Conscience, Madleen, and Handala; all of which were illegally intercepted by Israel.<sup>86</sup> An International People’s Tribunal for Palestine convened by social movements in November

2025, where Israel, the US, the UK, Germany, and France, are found guilty of genocide, ecocide, and starvation.<sup>87</sup>

The Palestine resistance movement remained in ferment. In the West Bank, operations have targeted Israeli settlers, indicating the resistance fighters’ resolve for national liberation. Hamas, frontline of the armed resistance since late 2023, has also rejected Trump’s sham peace proposal to surrender their arms.<sup>89</sup> Iran,<sup>90</sup> Lebanon,<sup>91</sup> and Yemen have launched successful missile offensives against Israel as retaliation.<sup>92</sup> Armed resistance movements in other parts of the Global South, such as in the Philippines, India, West Papua, Myanmar, Turkey, Colombia, and Kurdistan, also persist to advance national liberation amid crises and rising militarist competition among global powers.

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