CIVIL SOCIETY
EQUITY
REVIEW

MILITARISM IN THE TIME OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY

November 2026



Russian guided rocket attacks on an oil refinery and adjacent oil storage facility in Odessa, Ukraine, 3 April 2022

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- Akhuwat Kissan, Pakistan
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- All Arunachal Street Vendors Association, India
- All Nepal Peasants' Federation (ANPFa)
- All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA)
- All-India Women Hawkers Federation (AIWHF)
- Amra Kalaparabashi, Bangladesh
- An Organization for Socio-Economic Development (AOSED), Bangladesh
- Anchalic Suraksha Committee, India
- Angat-GenC - Generation Climate, Philippines
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- Bangladesh Bacolight Shramik Federation
- Bangladesh Bhasaman Nari Shramik
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- Bangladesh Bhumiheen Samity
- Bangladesh Chattra Sabha
- Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
- Bangladesh Jatyo Shramik Federation
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- Bangladesh Krishok Federation
- Bangladesh Krishok Sabha
- Bangladesh Rural Intellectuals' Front
- Bangladesh Sangjukto Shramik Federation
- Bangladesh Shramik Federation
- Batangas for Renewal Energy, Philippines
- Break Free Pilipinas, Break Free from Fossil Gas
- Brighters Youth Network, Bangladesh
- Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP-Workers Solidarity), Philippines
- Camarines Norte Movement for Climate Justice, Philippines
- CarbonCare InnoLab, Hong Kong SAR
- Center for Development and Diplomacy Nepal (CDDN)
- Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD), Bangladesh
- Centre for Financial Accountability, India
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- Cholistan Development Council, Pakistan
- Citizens Welfare Association, India
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- Climate Watch Thailand
- COAST Foundation, Bangladesh
- Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN), Bangladesh
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- Community Developers Association (CDA), Pakistan
- Community Initiatives for Development Pakistan (CIDP)
- Concerned Citizens of Sta. Cruz, Zambales, Philippines
- Crofter Foundation, Pakistan
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- Democratic Budget Movement (DBM), Bangladesh
- Dhoritri Rokhhay Amra (DHORA), Bangladesh
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- Energy and Climate Policy Institute for Just Transition, South Korea
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- Focus on the Global South - Philippines
- Footpath Dukandar Redipatri Union, Ranchi, India
- Forests and Farmers Foundation (FFF), Thailand
- Forum for Gramsabha, India
- Freedom from Debt Coalition, Philippines
- Ganochhaya Sanskritic Kendra, Bangladesh
- General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT), Nepal
- Gilgit-Baltistan Social Welfare Organization, Pakistan
- Gitib, Inc., Philippines
- Haqooq e Khalq Movement, Pakistan
- Hari Jeddojehad Committee, Pakistan
- HaritaDhara Research Development and Education Foundation, India
- Hawkers Sangram Samiti, India
- Heritage City Thadi Thela Union Jaipur, India
- Himalaya Niti Abhiyan, India
- Home Net Pakistan
- Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)
- Indus Consortium, Pakistan
- Jagaran Nepal
- Jago Bangladesh Garment Workers' Federation
- Jaipur Pink City Street Vendors Association, Jaipur, India
- Jan Chetnna Manch, India
- Kamgar Ekata Union, Maharashtra, India
- Kanlungan, Philippines
- Khowai River Waterkeeper, Bangladesh
- Kissan Ikkat, Pakistan
- Kissan Karkeela, Pakistan
- Kissan Ravi Club, Pakistan
- Koalisi Rakyat untuk Hak atas Air (KRuHA), Indonesia
- Koalisyon Isalbar ti Pintas ti La Union (Coalition to Save the Beauty of La Union), Philippines
- Kohelia Matshojibi Samity, Bangladesh
- Kolkata Men Hawkers Union, India
- Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralita ng Lungsod (KPML), Philippines
- KOTHOWAIN (Vulnerable Peoples Development Organization), Bangladesh
- La Verita Onlus Bangladesh (V.O.I.D.)
- Labour Education Foundation, Pakistan
- Labour Qasim Movement Pakistan
- Labour Qomi Movement, Pakistan

- Limpyong Hanging para sa Kaugmanon sa Tanan (Clean Air for ALL) - Toledo, Cebu, Philippines
- Lohiya Vichar Munch Hawkers Union, Mumbai, India
- Lok Sujag, Pakistan
- Maharashtra kantri Hawkers mahasangh, Pune, India
- MAUSAM Movement for Advancing Understanding of Sustainability And Mutuality, India
- Mayon Integrated Development and Alternative Service (MIDAS), Philippines
- Micronesia Climate Change Alliance, Mariana Islands
- mines, minerals & People (mmP), India
- Mirzapur Street Vendors Union, India
- Motherland Garment Workers' Federation
- Nadi Ghati Morcha, India
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- Narayan Singh Uikey Adivasi Vikash Samiti, India
- National Alliance for Human Rights and Social Justice – Nepal (Human Rights Alliance)
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- Nepal Integrated Development Initiatives (NIDI)
- NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN)
- OAB Youth Foundation, Bangladesh
- Oriang Women's Movement, Philippines
- Oyu Tolgoi Watch, Mongolia
- PakAid, Pakistan
- Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF)
- Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER)
- Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (PKRC)
- Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM), Philippines
- Paryavaran Sanrakshan Samiti, India
- Pasur River Waterkeeper, Bangladesh
- Philippine Advocates for the Care of Our Planet
- Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ)
- Piglas - Batangas, Philippines
- Pittacchara Forest and Biodiversity Initiatives, Bangladesh
- PMCJ - Cebu, Philippines
- PMCJ - Davao, Philippines
- PMCJ - Eastern Visayas, Philippines
- PMCJ - Western Mindanao, Philippines
- Policy Research Institute for Equitable Development (PRIED), Pakistan
- Prasar, India
- Progressive Peasants' Council, Bangladesh
- Progressive Students' Collective, Pakistan
- Quezon for Environment (QUEEN), Philippines
- Rainbow Warriors, Rajasthan, India
- Reach Law, India
- Ready Made Garment Workers' Federation, Bangladesh
- Redi Pateri Hakwers Union, Allahabad, India
- Religious of the Good Shepherd Philippines-Japan Province
- Revanchal Dalit Adivasi Sewa Samiti, India
- River Basin Friends, India
- Rivers without Boundaries, Mongolia
- Roadside Vendors Association - Imphal, India
- Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)
- S.A.V.E Luna, Philippines
- Sahid Bhagatsingh Hakwers Union, Aurangabad, India
- Samata, India
- Sanga, Pakistan
- SANLAKAS, Philippines
- Satat Sampada Climate Foundation, India
- Save Nature Save Life, Bangladesh
- Sawera Foundation, Pakistan
- Serikat Nelayan Indonesia
- SETU, Bangladesh
- SETU: Centre for Social Knowledge and Action, India
- Shahpura Holi Mandi Fair, Mukherjee Chauk, Udaipur, India
- Sindh Hari Porchat Council, Pakistan
- Small Earth Nepal (SEN)
- Society for Women Rights & Development (SWoRD), Pakistan
- South Asia Partnership Pakistan
- Street Vendors Union - Dungarpur, India
- Sukaar Welfare Organization, Pakistan
- Sundarban Rakhhay Amra, Bangladesh
- Surma River Waterkeeper, Bangladesh
- Swadesh Gramotthan Samiti, India
- Tadbeer Research and Development, Afghanistan
- Tagapagtanggol ng Kalikasan sa Pagbilao (TKP), Philippines
- Tameer e Nau Women's Worker Organization, Pakistan
- Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP)
- Textile Powerloom Garments Workers Federation, Pakistan
- TFINS, India
- The Future We Need, India
- Thela Vyavsayi Ekta Union,, India
- Trade Union Policy Institute (TUPI), Nepal
- Trend Asia, Indonesia
- Ulgulan Manch, India
- Venella Rural Development, India
- Vision Building Future, Pakistan
- Visionary Forum, Pakistan
- Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE), Bangladesh
- Waterkeepers Bangladesh
- Women Leader Foundation, Mongolia
- Women's Alliance for Climate Justice, Thailand
- Young Reformers, Pakistan
- Youth for Climate Justice – Mindanao, Philippines
- Youth for Climate Justice – Tacloban, Philippines
- YouthNet for Climate Justice, Bangladesh
- ZALIKA (Zambales Lingap Kalikasan), Philippines
- Zambales Movement for Climate Justice, Philippines
- Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), Philippines

Europe

- Amigos de la Tierra (Friends of the Earth Spain)
- Århus mod Krig og Terror (The City of Aarhus against War and Terrorism), Denmark
- Association for Farmers Rights Defense, AFRD, Georgia
- Austrian Alliance for Climate Justice
- Ban Nuclear Weapons - ICAN in Denmark
- Co-ordination Office of the Austrian Bishops' Conference for International Cooperation and Global Church (KOO)
- Fastenaktion, Switzerland
- Fossilfri Fremtid, Denmark
- Friends of the Earth Cyprus
- Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Global Justice Now, United Kingdom
- IPPNW Germany
- Klimakultur, Norway
- Maan ystävät ry / Friends of the Earth Finland
- Movement for the Abolition of War, United Kingdom
- NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark
- Observatori del Deute en la Globalització, Spain
- Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR), United Kingdom
- Tipping Point North South, United Kingdom
- WILPF Norway
- Women for Peace - Finland

Latin America

- Centro de Estudios y apoyo Al desarrollo Local, Bolivia
- CESTA, El Salvador
- Clima de Política, Brazil
- ClimaInfo, Brazil
- ECPAT Guatemala
- Observatório do Clima, Brazil
- Otros Mundos Chiapas/Amigos de la Tierra México
- Projeto Saude e Alegria, Brazil
- Viração Educomunicação, Brazil

North America

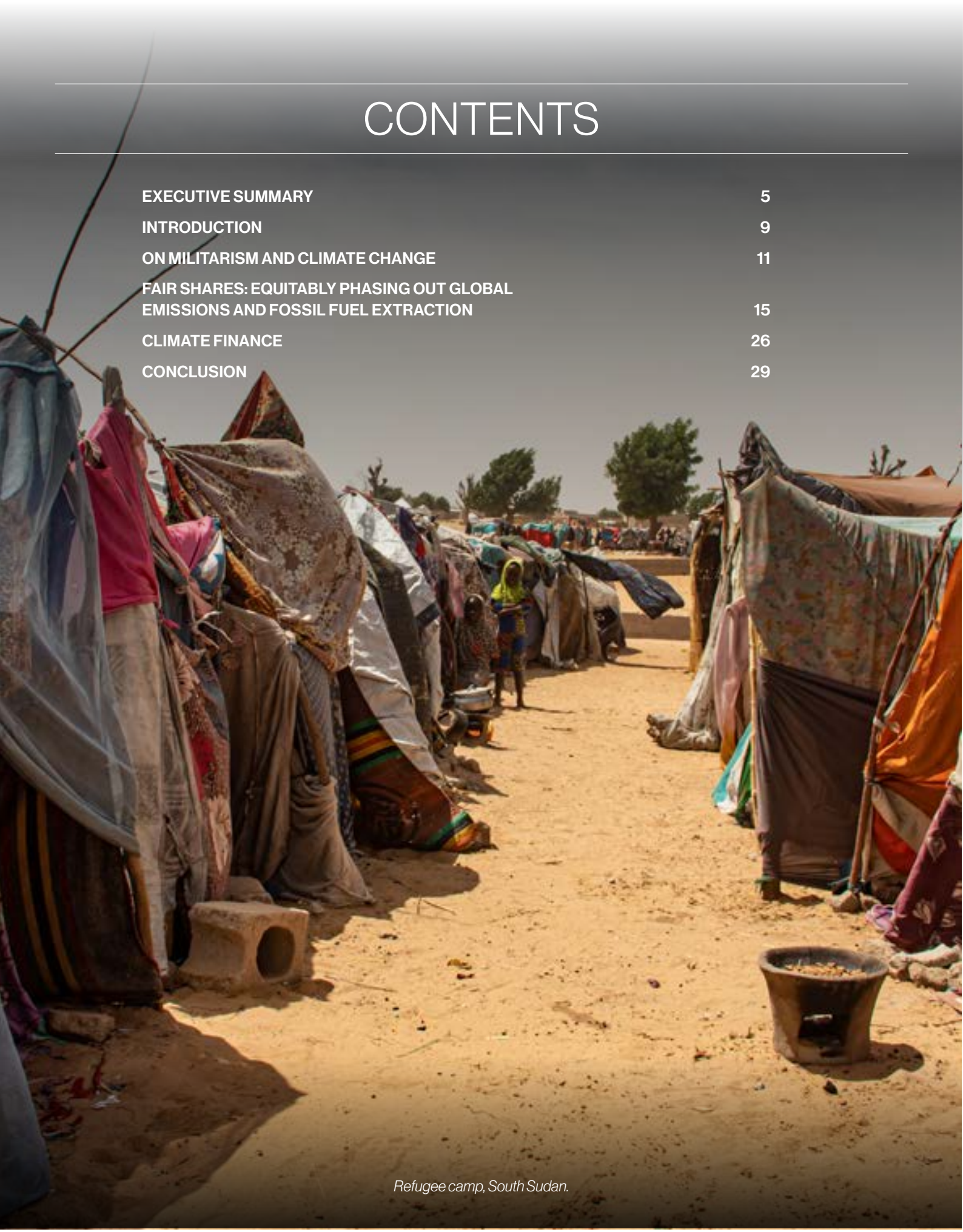
- Calgary Climate Hub, Canada
- Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development
- Canadian Engaged Buddhism Association
- Canadian Interfaith Fast For the Climate
- Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
- Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), Canada
- Climate Action for Lifelong Learners (CALL), Canada
- Climate Action Network Canada - Réseau action climat Canada
- Climate Justice Saskatoon, Canada
- EcoEquity, United States
- Edmund Rice International, United States
- Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate & Health Organization (EEECHO), United States
- Environmentalists Against Waar, United States
- For Our Kids, Canada
- Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet (GASP), Canada
- Grandmothers Advocacy Network, Canada
- Green 13, Canada
- Heinrich Böll Foundation Washington, DC, United States
- Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program, United States
- Institute for Policy Studies National Priorities Project, United States
- International Solidarity for Climate Action, United States
- Kairos Canada
- Les Amies de la Terre Canada / Friends of the Earth Canada
- North Carolina Council of Churches, United States
- Northern Confluence Initiative, Canada
- Nukewatch, United States
- Occupy Bergen County, United States
- Ontario Climate Emergency Campaign, Canada
- Padma Centre for Climate Justice, Canada
- Seniors for Climate Action Now!, Canada
- SolidarityINFOService, United States
- SunshineIsFree, United States
- The Global Sunrise Project, Canada
- Toronto350, Canada
- Turtle Island Restoration Network, United States
- UNU-RCE Hawai'i Moananuiakea, United States
- Veterans For Peace Phil Berrigan Memorial Chapter #105, United States
- West Coast Environmental Law, Canada
- Windfall Ecology Centre, Canada

Oceania

- Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Military Spending
- ARRCC (Australian Religious Response to Climate Change)
- Medical Association for Prevention of War, Australia
- Pax Christi Victoria, Australia
- Peace Movement Aotearoa, New Zealand
- Unfolding Futures, Australia

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Refugee camp, South Sudan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world now faces a dangerous convergence of crises: escalating climate disruption and a global shift toward militarized aggression, and they are not unrelated. Militarism is propelling the world into a truly dire place, amplifying the impacts of climate change even as it deepens human vulnerability and weakens our collective ability to work together to face the unfolding realities of the global political and environmental crisis.

The climate emergency is unfolding within a period of intensifying armed conflict. Wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Iran, Sudan and elsewhere have not only caused immense human suffering, but also exposed the fragility of the global multilateral regime put in place after World War II, and of the world system that evolved within it. That system, of course, was erected atop a fossil fuel-based energy system that, as we now know, is also extremely fragile. In particular, Russia's war in Ukraine, combined with wars in the Middle East have disrupted global energy supplies and amplified price shocks in electricity, transport, food, and other essentials, while imposing disproportionate burdens on poorer countries and vulnerable communities well outside the immediate combat zones. At the same time, they have highlighted how deeply the fossil fuel economy is intertwined with systems of military power, geopolitical domination, and resource competition.

Against this backdrop, this report focuses on four principal ways in which militarism amplifies the climate crisis while undermining climate action. First, the devastation wrought by violent conflict creates and deepens vulnerability at all levels and in countless ways. War destroys homes and wrecks infrastructure. It weakens institutions and rends the social fabric. It poisons the land and uproots families. War undermines all the ingredients of climate resilience, and leaves individuals and communities exposed to, if not defenceless against, the shocks of climate impacts . If war is hell, war within a disrupted climate is a yet deeper, unimagined circle of hell.

Second, military spending is a stunning waste of resources that crowds out desperately needed investments in climate action and resilience building. Global military expenditures now exceed USD 2.9 trillion annually and continue to rise rapidly, even while climate finance remains far below the level required to support mitigation, adaptation, and loss-and-damage in the Global South. Rising military budgets, particularly in high-income countries, are contributing to cuts in development assistance and exacerbating financing gaps for both climate and development goals.

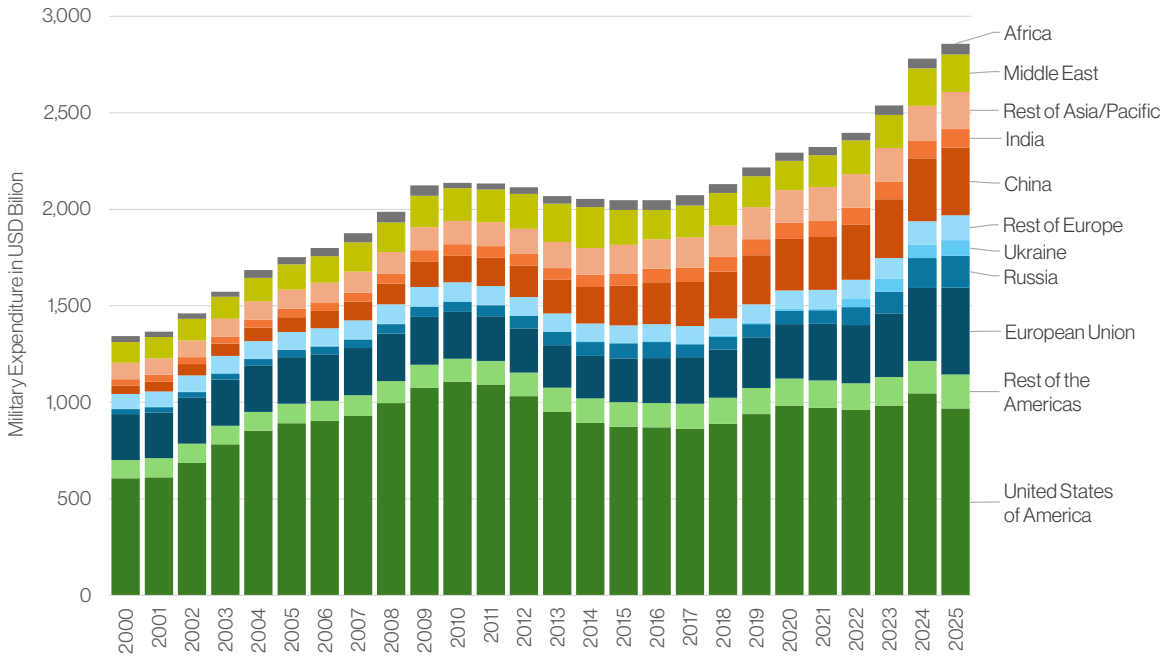


Figure ES-1: Expenditures on militaries have more than doubled since 2000. Data from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Military Expenditure Database, 2026, https://doi.org/10.55163/CQGC9685

Third, militarism contributes directly and indirectly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Even though military emissions are a substantial share of global emissions, they are poorly measured and obscured in international GHG accounting frameworks. Even more importantly, wars destroy homes, infrastructure, and ecosystems whose reconstruction demands enormous amounts of energy and materials and generates emissions far greater than those released during combat itself.

Fourth, militarism undermines the multilateral institutions and cooperative norms that are essential for addressing a global collective-action challenge such as climate change. The erosion of international law, the weakening of human rights protections, and growing disregard for international institutions diminish prospects for coordinated climate action. This report warns that a world increasingly organized around military competition and spheres of



Wind farm in Italy.

influence is fundamentally incompatible with the levels of cooperation required to stabilize the climate system.

Despite this bleak context, we maintain that the future remains open, and that the worst outcomes can still be avoided. At this point, however, transitioning to a better pathway than the dire one we are now on requires a dramatic increase in climate ambition grounded in deep commitments to justice and equity. This report therefore reaffirms the long commitment of the Civil Society Equity Review (CSER) to a "fair shares" approach anchored in the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. The simple truth is that wealthy countries bear the bulk of historical responsibility for climate change and not coincidentally also possess the bulk of the world's financial and technological capacity to enable a global transition. Consequently, their obligations extend beyond domestic emissions reductions to include large-scale financial and technological support for Global South countries.

Our updated assessment of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) finds that current pledges are both grossly inadequate compared to what is needed to limit warming and deeply inconsistent with any defensible model of equitable burden sharing. Most Global North countries continue to fall dramatically short of their fair shares, even in cases where their domestic mitigation targets have been strengthened. By contrast, many Global South countries have submitted commitments that approach or even exceed their national fair-share obligations, despite having contributed far less to historical emissions and possessing more limited resources. The report insists that closing the ambition gap will require wealthy countries to both increase domestic efforts and provide significantly more climate finance to support climate action in Global South countries.

It is equally important to insist that mitigation action – and climate action more broadly – be carried out fairly with respect to income and wealth inequalities within a given country. Without such intranational justice, national climate policies risk being undermined by the kind of bitterness, division, and backlash that have increasingly confronted efforts to roll out renewables. Wealthier individuals carry much larger carbon footprints (and thus greater responsibility) as well as much larger financial resources (and thus greater capacity) than poorer individuals, and must therefore bear the great majority of their countries' obligations.

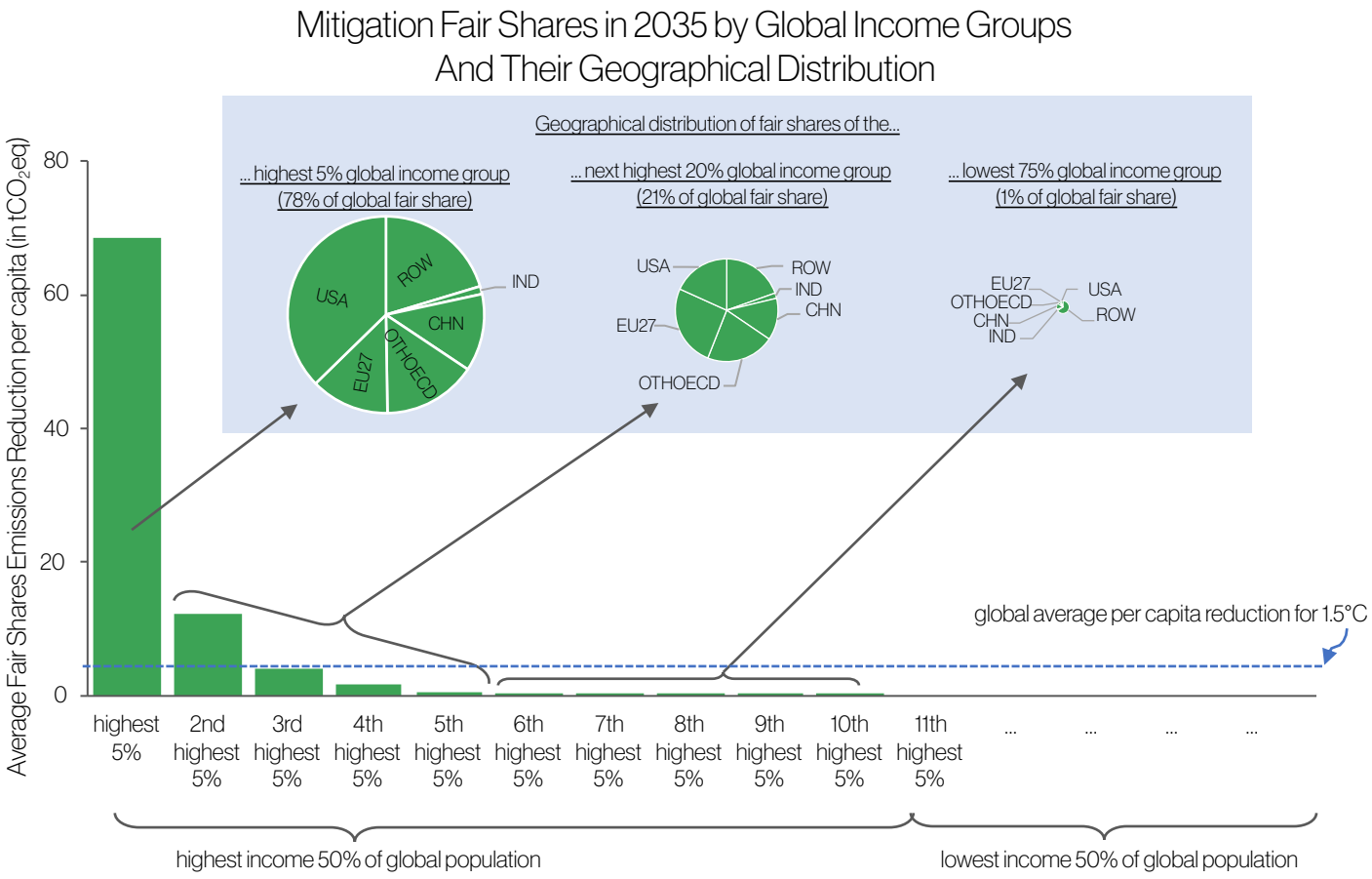


Figure ES-2: Average per capita fair shares of global income groups in 2035 and their geographical distribution. The average per capita fair shares are shown for each global income ventile (5 % fraction of the global population). The pie charts show how fair shares are distributed globally across countries or groups of countries, with charts showing the distribution for the "top 5 %" of highest incomes globally, the next 20 % and the 75 % lowest incomes. The pie charts are scaled to represent the total fair share of each group (top 5 %, next 20 %, bottom 75 %) (USA=USA; EU27=European Union; OTHOECD=Other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) members in 1990 except EU27 and USA; CHN=China; IND=India; ROW=Rest of World)

This report also advances a framework for a globally equitable phaseout of fossil fuel extraction, one that insists that climate action must address not only fossil fuel consumption but also its production (extraction). Current extraction plans remain profoundly inconsistent with 1.5 °C pathways. Our proposed framework is built upon five principles: immediately ending all extraction that violates human rights, aligning extraction decline with climate science, ensuring a just transition for workers and communities, phasing out extraction most

rapidly in countries where social disruption would be lowest, and sharing transition costs according to countries' ability to bear them.

Applying these principles yields differentiated national phaseout pathways. Wealthy and economically diversified producer countries are expected to phase out extraction most rapidly – within the next few years – while countries with high dependence on fossil fuel revenues are granted somewhat longer timelines, along with the significant international support needed to make their transitions possible. Even countries with the longest fossil phaseout pathways face extremely challenging transitions, given the small remaining carbon budget and the limited amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) removal that is likely to be achievable and socially and environmentally acceptable. This report also argues that wealthier countries, including those that are not themselves fossil fuel producers, hold obligations to finance and support the global transition away from fossil fuels, because they benefited disproportionately from fossil fuel-based development.

The broader message of this report is that climate stabilization requires a transformation that extends far beyond energy systems. It demands reforms to international finance, technology sharing, debt cancellation, domestic inequality, and systems of political power. Military spending, fossil fuel expansion, and increasing concentration of wealth and influence are mutually reinforcing obstacles to effective climate action. Our conclusion is clear: a framework dominated by militarism, oligarchic power, and extractive international competition cannot solve the climate crisis.

Ultimately, this report argues that humanity is at a crossroads. One path leads towards deeper militarization, escalating inequality, climate destabilization, and geopolitical fragmentation. The other demands a renewed commitment to a reinvigorated multilateralism, equitable effort-sharing including strong domestic action and robust climate finance, and a globally coordinated transition away from fossil fuels. Climate science demands urgency; justice demands equity. Success requires both.



Aerial Vista of Oil and Gas Infrastructure in the Permian Basin, Texas.

INTRODUCTION

To fully understand and address the climate crisis we must reckon with the current geopolitical context of increasing military tension and aggression, primarily from the United States (US), Israel and Russia. The genocide in Gaza, the war on Iran, and the war on Ukraine have resulted in thousands of deaths, the displacement of millions, and the targeted destruction of essential civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals.[1]

Regional and global conflicts invariably centre around the control of resources, with fossil fuels playing a key role in the fabric of militarism, domination and might-is-right geopolitics. The US targeting of Venezuela and Iran – two of the largest oil producers in the world – reminds us that fossil fuels themselves are a perennial driver of military aggression. Indeed, the fossil fuel economy could never have been built without militarism and it remains profoundly militarized – the colonial violence that accompanied its birth, the militarization that accompanies oil and gas extraction, its intertwinement with the arms trade and with the networks of military bases (many of them US bases) which dot fossil fuel regions, the endless oil wars, all testify to the darkness of the military shadow that has always accompanied the fossil fuel economy.[2]

Since the US coup in Venezuela, oil production has increased dramatically and the burgeoning revenues have unsurprisingly flowed into US coffers, while democracy – the nominal rationale for the invasion – has made no visible progress.[3] The wars in Ukraine and Iran have disrupted global oil and gas supplies, exposing the hazards of fossil fuel dependence, especially in the Global South.[4] The resulting fuel price spikes have driven up the cost of electricity, transport, food, feedstock, fertilizers, and other basic necessities.[5] These harms most severely affect those countries and communities without sufficient resources to cope with sudden shortages and price volatility, exacerbating existing crises around debt, foreign exchange availability, and fiscal and geopolitical vulnerability.[6] Within those countries, the impacts fall most sharply on those with the lowest incomes – the same communities contending most desperately with fossil-fuelled climate change: deadly heat waves, water scarcity, massive storm destruction, and hunger, which are all set to worsen as a strengthening El Niño takes hold. From the Philippines to Bangladesh to Guatemala and beyond, the energy crisis is causing desperation. Angry citizens are taking to the streets, workers are being shut out of factories and priced out of their livelihoods, and government finances are stretched to the breaking point.[7]

This report stresses that the double onslaught of conflict-driven crises and climate devastation is more than just a confluence of unhappy events. Rather, we argue that the increased military violence and aggression substantially worsens the consequences of climate change and dangerously weakens our ability to effectively address the climate crisis. We put forward four reasons.

- **First,** the devastation wrought by violent conflict creates and deepens national and community vulnerabilities, and undermines resilience and capacities to deal with climate impacts.
- **Second**, dramatically increased military spending across the Global North comes at the direct cost of climate action.
- **Third**, military investment, military action, and the wreckage caused by military action all contribute materially to GHG pollution.
- **Fourth**, and perhaps most consequentially, the shift towards militarism and domination is lethally undermining the framework of multilateralism and the spirit of solidarity needed to survive the climate crisis.

Yet in the darkness there is always a light, however dim it may appear. The developments of the past year have led countries across the Global South to fundamentally rethink their energy strategies. There is now a broader and deeper acknowledgement that the transition away from fossil fuel dependence is not only a climate imperative but also an economic and security necessity. The current period offers a historic opportunity to encourage, compel, and enable governments and other actors to accelerate and broaden the energy transition.

Even as the self-interested nationalist geopolitics of the fossil fuel era gows more entrenched and violent, it is increasingly obvious that genuinely tackling the civilization crisis that is climate change is ultimately in everyone's interest – North and South, rich and poor. To that end, we need multilateralism and deep cross-border cooperation, and to support them we need an unprecedented degree of equity and solidarity.

The need for justice is more urgent now than ever. This is not only because the injustices of today's violent energy geopolitics are egregious, but also because only an equity based climate response offers the possibility of an adequately scaled and effective global transition. We wish to be extremely clear on this point: any high ambition climate transition will inevitably raise a host of equity challenges, most particularly distributive justice challenges that must not be minimized. The demands of science and the demands of justice cannot be set against each other but must be met together if we are to succeed. For more on this, see the "On Ambition and Equity" box, just below.

In this report, we explore the militaristic drivers of our climate dysfunction, as well as looking carefully at the need and opportunities for an equitable, global fossil fuel phaseout, notwithstanding the current geopolitical crises. We also update our fair shares analysis of NDCs and our analysis of fair fossil fuel phaseout. We reiterate the need for rich countries to step up action and finance to allow even a minuscule chance of limiting or returning warming to 1.5 °C, while countries of the Global South will also have to set out visionary plans for their post-fossil fuel transitions. We illustrate how international cooperation is essential and stress that reversing the trend towards wars of aggression and violent conflicts is a prerequisite of such cooperation.

BOX 1: ON AMBITION AND EQUITY

With more than three decades of inadequate climate efforts behind us, the agreed 1.5 °C goal has become increasingly challenging, with substantial overshoot now inevitable and the possibility of returning to below 1.5 °C in any humanly meaningful timeframe at great risk. Indeed, it is now clear that absent an extremely ambitious mobilization – one inconceivable without a fundamental transformation of the existing political, economic, and institutional regime – there is virtually no chance that efforts to achieve a low-overshoot pathway, one that returns the Earth system to 1.5 °C of warming within the coming decades, will succeed.[8]

We do not make this statement lightly. It is obvious that the years since 2015's Paris Agreement have frustrated hopes for a robust new age of multilateral cooperation. Indeed, in this report, we've given ourselves the grim task of showing that a very different international regime is emerging, one defined more by brutality and war than by democracy and cooperation. In this context, honesty compels us to admit that the task now is simply and urgently to stabilize the climate system as quickly as humanly possible.

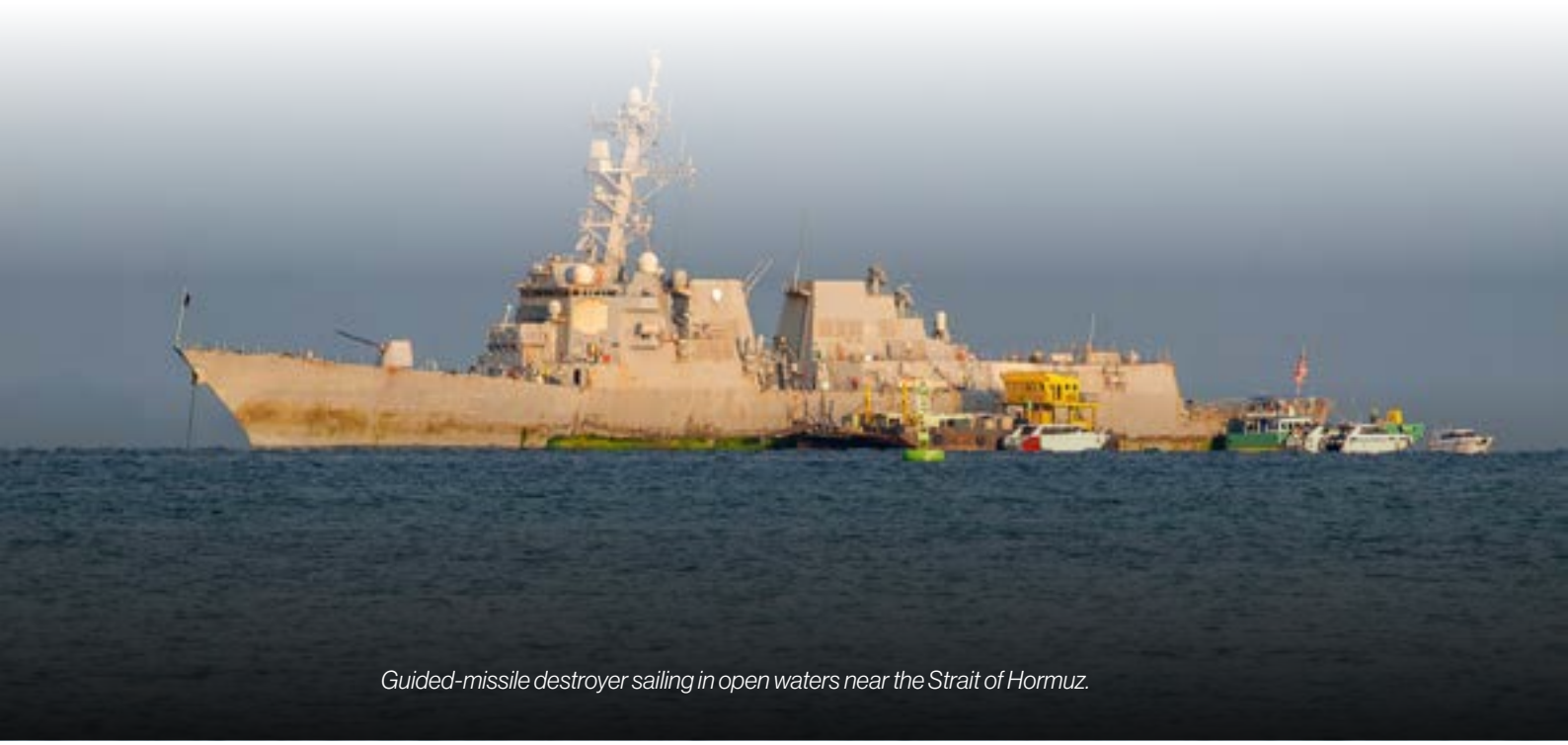
To be very clear, a managed, low overshoot, global 1.5 °C future that avoids a true existential catastrophe is still imaginable, though we are beyond any easy optimism. Our only realistic hope is one in which a thoroughgoing technological transition unfolds alongside a high cooperation world order; one in which emission reductions are enabled by an unprecedented degree of earnest cooperation among blocs and countries.

None of this will be easy. The emerging world order, characterized by both overt militarism and the weaponization of economic relations, could never – even given the renewable technological revolution – deliver the necessary climate ambition and build climate resilience. We would need a focused and extremely robust international effort designed to safeguard the rights of workers and communities while helping to realize the developmental aspirations of Global South countries.

A fair shares approach that reconciles the twin imperatives of climate protection and developmental equity is essential to this. It demands every country take urgent and earnest action, while recognizing that action will necessarily demand more from the rich than from the poor, and take different forms in different countries. Some countries must transition more quickly, so that others can transition at all. Some must provide financial and technological support, so that others have the resources to go faster and farther than they could ever hope to on their own. In other words, it is possible to realize an encompassing global climate transition alongside broad-based socio-economic development, as long as the world›s rich and its largest polluters provide the needed financial and technological resources.

In short, the fair share approach soundly rejects the false choice between ambition and equity that has animated the recent contentious United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. By showing how we can fairly share the effort of a global transition among countries, it belies the claim that climate protection must come at the expense of development, cynically put forward by some governments seeking to keep shirking their legal and ethical obligations. Conversely, it also debunks the contention that developmental equity justifies a greater global carbon budget, and a weaker temperature goal.

Ultimately, a fair shares approach allows for a global just transition that lets us save what can still be saved, while offering developmental justice and a climate transition that no worker, community, or country is forced to bear alone.



Guided-missile destroyer sailing in open waters near the Strait of Hormuz.

ON MILITARISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE

All around us, the international system is fraying. Faith in the system of international governance that rose after WWII is weakening, as it repeatedly proves itself inadequate to the global challenges we face. States are moving towards aggressive competition rather than cooperation. This is most glaringly evidenced in the rise of militarism.

Many countries are dramatically increasing their military budgets. War is increasing everywhere – the number of conflicts worldwide has nearly doubled over the last 15 years, even as they have become bloodier.[9] The annual death toll is more than twice as high in the 2020s as it was in the 2010s, and nearly five times as high as in the 2000s, and increasingly the dead are civilians.[10]

This last point bears repeating. It has been widely noted that the US war in Iran has strengthened the desire of countries everywhere to break their dependence on imported fossil energy. What is less commonly noted is that the Iran war, like those in Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan, marks a decisive break from international norms that to some extent protected civilians from direct attack. Not long ago, attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure — the destruction of power plants, apartments, hospitals and water treatment plants – were considered war crimes; now they are normalized. This represents not just a breakdown of multilateralism, but also the emergence of a modernized barbarism.

At some level, we all know this. Every day the news feeds remind us of this turn towards barbarism, and the militarism that is its core. Even as the impacts of the climate crisis become impossible to ignore, so too does the larger militarism crisis. Decades of 'neoliberal stability', if not quite peace, are giving way to something worse, in which the post-WWII commitments to social safety nets and democratic multilateralism are being cast aside. Would anyone found the United Nations (UN) today?

The CSER has for years argued that dealing with the climate crisis demands international cooperation on an unprecedented scale, including a massive scaling up of international finance and technology sharing. No one imagined that the 21st century would be a time of easy peace – national defence is and will remain a real imperative. But we are increasingly rushing headlong towards a violently fragmenting world. Beyond the tragedy of lives lost, bodies broken, rights violated, and homes destroyed, the rise of militarism empowers nationalists and kleptocrats, fuels the unspeakably vile and destabilizing global arms trade, and diverts tremendous resources from raising people out of poverty and ending inequality.

In this report, we interpret these consequences through the lens of climate change, and, more specifically, humanity's prospects for dealing with the climate crisis. How, after all, can we be expected to imagine a breakthrough in international climate cooperation as we slide into a more violent, lawless world? As the world's wealth and power concentrate in ever fewer hands, held by elites more intent on consolidating and extending their gains than on joining forces against a common threat? As untold trillions that should fund a just transition, reparations and resilience pour instead into unimaginably large military budgets?

Here, briefly, are four ways in which militarism undermines climate action, each of which bodes badly for humanity's prospects for coming through the climate crisis alive:

EXACERBATING VULNERABILITY AND UNDERMINING RESILIENCE

The devastation wrought by violent conflict creates and deepens vulnerability at all levels and in countless ways. War destroys homes and workplaces, and wrecks transport and water infrastructure. It weakens institutions and rends the social fabric. It degrades and poisons the land on which livelihoods depend, uproots families, and strains social safety nets to the point of rupture. It elevates immediate physical security above all other needs. War undermines all the ingredients of climate resilience, and leaves individuals and communities exposed, if not defenceless, to the shocks of climate impacts. If war is hell, war within a disrupted climate is a yet deeper, unimagined circle of hell.

This phenomenon is unsurprising and widely acknowledged, including by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II.[11] As the IPCC's assessment of impacts and vulnerability makes clear, how climate impacts unfold – whom they hit hardest, and for how long – depends first and foremost on the health of governance and social systems and the extent of poverty. Militarization bears directly on these factors, with spiralling conflict making everything worse.

DIVERTING FINANCE FROM CLIMATE TRANSITION TO MILITARISM

It is impossible to quantify the degree to which rising global military expenditures are responsible for today's inadequate levels of climate finance, or indeed for recent cuts in international development aid. That said, there is ample evidence that military spending increases are "crowding out" social spending. Even while social progress stalls, global military expenditures reach new heights each year.

The decisive number is USD 2.9 trillion: the amount the world's governments, North and South, spent on their militaries in 2025. In 2026 that figure will surely top USD 3 trillion, with US military spending alone rising from about USD 954 billion to more than USD 1 trillion for the first time in history.[12] Even that figure understates the reality, as official accounting omits much spending that is attributable to militaries, which would push the US total alone to USD 1.5 trillion or more.[13] For 2027, President Trump has proposed a staggering further 50 % increase.[14]

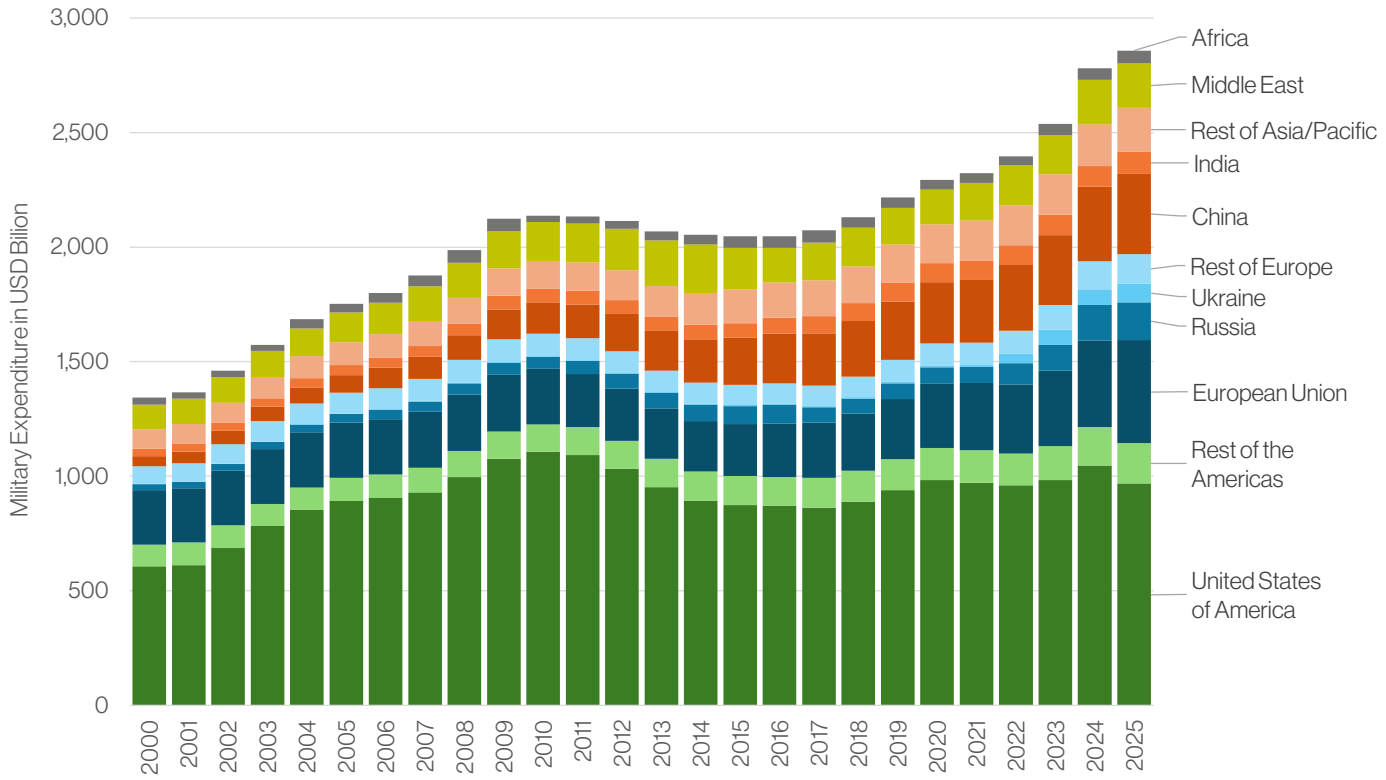


Figure 1: Expenditures on militaries have more than doubled since 2000. Data from SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, 2026, https://doi.org/10.55163/CQGC9685

As alarming as these numbers are, the vast sums spent on military budgets are only a small portion of the incalculable costs of militarism. War is horrifically wasteful in countless ways, including through the enormous destruction of homes, businesses, schools, hospitals, factories, and infrastructure that will need, eventually, to be rebuilt. The costs of rebuilding, once rebuilding is even possible, are enormous. The sprawling global war industry, with its exorbitant sinking of resources into preparing for, defending against, and waging war, begets an even larger sinking of resources into recovering – in some form or another – from war's devastation.

Given this situation, and that the annual financing gap for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now stands at USD 4 trillion, it is not hard to see why progress on the Goals is faltering.[15] Nor is it difficult to point the initial finger of blame. Wealthy governments have made the largest cuts to foreign aid since aid records began in 1960. G7 countries alone, which account for around three-quarters of all official aid, are cutting 2026 aid by 28 % compared to 2024.[16] While some countries have explicitly cut aid to increase military spending, most leave this obvious connection unstated.[17] With only 16 % of the SDG targets for 2030 on track, the UN Secretary General has charged that "rising military expenditure undermines development, heightens insecurity and diverts critical resources away from investments to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals."[18]

Nor is it difficult to link military spending to the miasma that has overtaken the climate negotiations. Consider, for example, the G77's finance negotiating target – the amount of annual climate finance that their negotiators still hope to see flowing to the Global South by 2030 to support mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage. This figure is USD 1.3 trillion, and nothing close to it has been agreed. Indeed, anything on this scale is very heavily resisted by the Global North's negotiators, even though much of this finance would inevitably come as private finance. This figure is less than half of today's military expenditures.

All told, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the entire global social and climate budget is being starved to pay for a military buildup that will be costly in money, in resources, and – ultimately – in lives.

MILITARISM AND EMISSIONS

In 2025, total military expenditure exceeded 2.5 % of gross world product, and given that this share is increasing, global military emissions are no doubt doing the same.[19] Military emissions are not known with much precision, but they have been estimated at about 5.5 % of total emissions, which would place the world's militaries fourth if they were ranked alongside countries.[20] This figure (which does not include emissions associated with the impacts of fighting wars) is a sizable chunk of emissions – more than ten times the emissions currently attributable to artificial intelligence (AI) data centres, for example[21] – but it is hidden within, or altogether excluded from, national emissions reports submitted to the UNFCCC. This is a longstanding flaw in our official global GHG accounting – under

pressure from the US, military emissions reporting was restricted within the Kyoto Protocol, and then, in the Paris Agreement, was made entirely voluntary.[22]

Remarkably, the 5.5 % estimate noted above includes only a fraction of the emissions associated with war. Just as direct military expenditures neglect the immense damages and reconstruction of war-torn societies, estimates of military emissions do not include emissions from the impacts of war and its aftermath.[23] That is, these estimates do not include "GHG emissions arising from the impacts of warfighting, such as fires, other damage to infrastructure and ecosystems, post-conflict reconstruction, and health-care for survivors."[24] A recent study on Gaza provides a comprehensive account of the war's full carbon cycle. It found that direct combat emissions — jets, rockets, artillery, military vehicles — account for just 1.3 million tonnes of CO_2, while more than 31 million tonnes of CO_2 are projected to be emitted in order to reconstruct destroyed infrastructure: nearly 450,000 apartments, over 3,000 kilometres of roads, as well as schools, hospitals and water systems.[25]

A similar tale can be told about Russia's invasion of Ukraine,[26] the US war in Iran,[27] or Israel's war in Lebanon. Rebuilding requires tremendous resources including energy, and leads to emissions that dwarf those involved in the acts of destruction.

UNDERMINING MULTILATERALISM

Any useful discussion of multilateral global governance must begin with the jarring reality that the systems we rely on are being systematically dismantled. They are not completely gone, but neither can they play an effective role in solving global problems. To assert otherwise seems little more than high-minded idealism.

The most striking case is the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling in early 2024 ordering provisional measures to safeguard Palestinians' rights to protection from genocide. This seemed at the time a straightforward, urgent, and desperately necessary requirement, as well as a stark rebuke for an unfolding genocide. However, it was roundly ignored – or given merely lip-service – by the nations in a position to act on it.

This same flouting of international norms has fully infected the climate realm. An ICJ Advisory Opinion found that a 1.5 °C temperature goal is "primary" and that "parties to the Paris Agreement have an obligation to prepare, communicate and maintain successive and progressive nationally determined contributions which, inter alia, when taken together, are capable of achieving the temperature goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels," and concluded that states have obligations based on the "cardinal principle" of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities capable of making an adequate contribution to maintaining this limit."[28]

The ICJ opinion was as legally unambiguous as can be. But in an era when the US can simply withdraw from the Paris Agreement without repercussion, it is only a ruling in need of enforcement. It is hard to escape the conclusion that multilateral global governance, which is absolutely fundamental to dealing effectively with climate change, is being systematically undermined. This is occurring with renewed vigour alongside the increasingly aggressive militarism that has accompanied the right's growing political power.

Militarism undermines any system of governance erected on respect for human rights and rule of law, flouts existing norms, violates agreed regimes, and revives the reckless great-power politics of the years before World War I. It gives us new genocides and dramatically reduces any hope of cooperating globally to stave off truly catastrophic levels of climate change.

The dynamics of militarism are playing out not only internationally, but domestically as well. The lines between militaries, border and immigration enforcement, and domestic law enforcement are increasingly blurred in many countries. This is happening in many ways, from the expansion of the apparatus of state coercion, to the use of surveillance technology, to growing use of military grade weapons by immigration agents and police, and the direct deployment of the military for domestic law enforcement aims. The blurring of lines extends to the financial incentives involved, with the same arms corporations whose products destabilize countries winning contracts militarizing domestic borders to keep out refugees. The money spent on these measures, and their associated emissions, is significant too. The US, for example, ballooned its budget for "immigration enforcement" – hunting down, jailing, and deporting people solely because of the papers they do or don't possess – from USD 30 billion to USD 200 billion in 2025 alone.

From a climate standpoint, the most significant impact of this domestic militarization may well be its undermining of democratic participation, squeezing civil society space and decreasing democratic health. The growing criminalization of environmental defenders in both the Global North and the Global South is a direct assault on the role of civil society across the board, impacting their role in setting the course for climate action. The violence of both the Canadian and the US state against Indigenous pipeline protesters, the passage of state laws criminalizing environmental protest in the US, and the routine murders of environmental defenders in countries including Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador, are just a few examples of how this is already playing out.[29]

In the words of the UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders, the stifling of democratic engagement and persecution of environmental activists is rampant.[30] In his investigation focused on Northern and Western Europe alone, he documented an environment in which

> "Parliaments create new criminal offenses to prohibit the forms of protest used by environmental movements; peaceful environmental activists are compared to "terrorists" by government ministers; counter-terrorism laws are used against environmental activists to place them under heavy surveillance; the police use water cannons, pepper spray, teargas, flash balls or methods that are deliberately painful, such as "pain grips", to disperse peaceful environmental protests; protesters are arrested, subjected to strip searches and held in police custody for several days without charge solely to "check their identity"; journalists are arrested while covering environmental protests; and courts have imposed a three-year prison

sentence on an environmental activist who blocked a bridge, States create a climate of fear and intimidation for environmental defenders, in violation of their international obligations, including the Aarhus Convention and international human rights law. These crackdowns on environmental defenders have a concrete and dangerous chilling effect on the exercise of fundamental rights, on civil society and democracy, and ultimately on society's capacity to address the environmental crisis with the required urgency."

UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders

This is undermining climate action. Amid broader democratic backsliding, the domestic popular demand for climate action in leading polluting countries is being stifled, giving polluting corporations and their government allies free rein to pursue short term profits and resource extraction without the countervailing constraint of domestic public opinion.

Given all this, climate action over the past years has been worse than muted. It has not kept pace with the rapid passage of time and the rapid depletion of the remaining carbon space. The following section reviews nations' actions over recent years, and contrasts them with their fair shares of the required action, including what will be needed in the very near future.



Yemeni women live in the open after being displaced from their homes due to the war in Taiz, Yemen.

FAIR SHARES: EQUITABLY PHASING OUT GLOBAL EMISSIONS AND FOSSIL FUEL EXTRACTION

The CSER has long advocated a fair-shares approach to rapidly cutting global emissions and phasing out fossil fuel extraction. This chapter presents our fair-share assessment of both challenges together. First, based on clear principles for a fair and equitable sharing of the global mitigation challenge, we quantitatively assess countries' updated NDCs and climate finance commitments. Second, we present our complementary approach to an equitable global phaseout of fossil fuel extraction, and its implications for both national fossil fuel phaseout timelines and climate finance.

Since extraction and emissions are two sides of the same problem – the supply side and the demand side – these two frameworks are consistent with and complementary to each other, both technically and ethically. In this chapter, we examine scenarios for a rapid decline in GHG emissions – mostly associated with fossil fuel *consumption* – and the climate finance and international support needed to build out the renewables needed to replace fossil fuel-based energy and expand services in energy-poor areas. Likewise, in the next chapter, we examine scenarios for the rapid phase out of fossil fuel *extraction*, and the international support needed to undertake the economic diversification and just transition activities needed as fossil fuel extraction rapidly winds down. These two complementary global frameworks are needed to ensure a balance for both exporters and importers, for both energy resource-poor and energy resource-rich countries, for both providers and receivers of climate finance.

Some caveats are in order. Unavoidably, we rely on official national accounting of GHG emissions and fossil fuel extraction for our assessments of fair shares. However, we also know that national emissions accounts conceal military-related emissions. Even more egregiously, national accounts attribute the enormous emissions arising from the painful rebuilding in the aftermath of war to the victims of destructive military violence, rather than to the aggressor nation. A more accurate and ethically defensible accounting system would account for these misrepresentations, but until one is available, we must use current national emissions accounts for this analysis.

BOX 2: THE CIVIL SOCIETY EQUITY REVIEW'S NDC FAIR SHARES METHODOLOGY

From the outset, the CSER has measured the equity and fairness of countries' mitigation ambition against fair shares benchmarks grounded in the UNFCCC's core equity principles: "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities," the right to sustainable development, and the precautionary principle. The ethical basis of these principles is well established, and their legal foundation further buttressed by the ICJ ruling. Our fair shares methodology draws on the Climate Equity Reference Framework, which serves as a guide to discussion and a path towards greater consensus by allowing a broad range of capacity and responsibility benchmarks to be quantified – extending even to those that are not defensibly fair.

Within that framework, capacity – a nation's financial ability to help solve the climate problem – can be defined through a quantitative benchmark that is more or less progressive, so that a country's capacity depends on how national income is distributed. In practice, capacity can be calculated to weigh the incomes of the wealthy far more heavily than those of the poor, and can exclude the incomes of the poorest entirely.

Responsibility – a nation's contribution to the global GHG burden – works similarly. It can be based on cumulative emissions counted from various historical start years, and can weight emissions from luxury consumption more heavily than those from meeting basic needs, up to excluding the survival emissions of the poorest altogether. The "right" degree of progressivity, like the "right" start year, remains open to debate.

This approach lets our analysis treat the incomes and emissions of the poor and the rich differently: the poorest are exempted when their incomes are counted as capacity or their emissions as responsibility, so that climate action does not undermine anyone's right to a dignified life free from poverty. As in our previous reports, we apply two equity benchmarks reflecting two distinct views of what a fair approach to capacity and responsibility should look like: "1850|High Progressivity" and "1950|Medium Progressivity." Both are explained more fully in earlier reports, including how we derive them and why their specific parameters reflect relevant universal equity principles.[31]

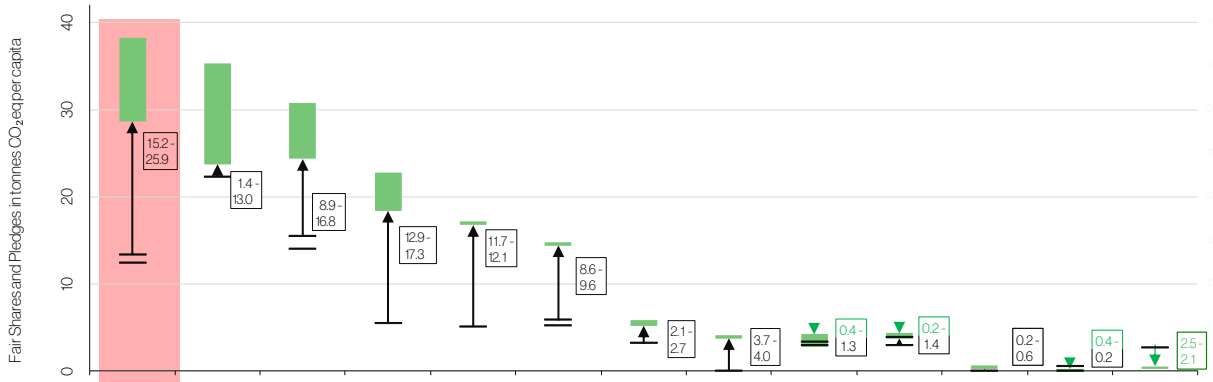
FAIR SHARE ANALYSIS OF NDCS

Although parties agreed to submit new NDCs well in advance of COP30, only 64 parties covering only about 30 % of global emissions had done so by September 30, 2025. Since then, additional NDCs have been submitted by 95 parties.[32] Collectively these NDCs now cover 87 % of current global emissions; although the US (11 % of current emissions) has since withdrawn its NDC. The additional NDCs provide a solid basis for updating our annual equity review of the NDCs, by contrasting the mitigation ambition expressed in them with each country's fair share of the total global mitigation effort

needed to keep limiting warming to 1.5 °C within reach, even though it is now clear that temporarily exceeding that limit is unavoidable.

The new NDCs represent a modest increase of promised mitigation action, but our overarching finding remains that their grossly insufficient ambition is in direct contradiction with the Paris Agreement and – if not strengthened – puts the goal of limiting warming to 1.5 °C or even of holding it to well below 2 °C out of reach. Worse, many countries have no credible plans in place to achieve even their previous NDCs' mitigation targets, making even the modest increase in ambition sound like an empty promise. As our reviews have consistently shown, the responsibility for this shortfall of ambition does not fall equally on all countries. All Global North countries are falling woefully short of their fair shares of mitigation ambition, both individually and collectively. Among Global South countries, the situation is more nuanced: some NDC targets match or exceed national fair shares of mitigation requirements, while others do not, but in the latter cases the shortfalls tend to be far smaller than those in Global North countries.

Figure 2 presents the results of our fair shares analysis of mitigation pledges for a selection of countries. Results are expressed in per-capita terms so that countries of very different population sizes can be compared directly. The figure sets the 2035 mitigation impact of each country's NDC target (black horizontal lines) against its fair shares range (green band), which reflects a spread of defensible interpretations of the ethical principles of capability and responsibility – that is, different but equally reasonable readings of what fairness requires.[33] An NDC target that falls within the green band is consistent with the fair shares range; one that sits above the band exceeds its fair share, while one below falls short. The vertical green and black arrows and their labels show, in tonnes of mitigation per capita, how far each pledge exceeds or falls short of a fair share.



2035 Per Capita Fair Shares and NDC pledges (tonnes of CO_2eq per capita below baseline in 2035)														
Fair Share Range		38.2	35.3	30.7	22.7	16.7	14.4	5.2	4.0	2.8	3.7	0.25	0.06	0.18
		28.6	23.7	24.3	18.4	17.2	14.7	5.8	3.7	4.2	4.3	0.6	0.2	0.5
NDC		13.4	22.3	15.4	5.4	5.1	5.8	3.1	0.0	3.2	3.8	0.0	0.5	2.7
(range, if applicable)		12.3		14.0			5.1		0.0	2.9	2.9		0.0	
Pledge Shortfall	at least	15.2	1.4	8.9	12.9	11.7	8.6	2.1	3.7			0.2		
	up to	25.9	13.0	16.8	17.3	12.1	9.6	2.7	4.0	1.3	1.4	0.6	0.2	
Pledge Exceeds	at least													2.1
	up to									0.4	0.2		0.4	2.5

Figure 2: Comparison of mitigation fair shares and pledges of example countries (in tonnes of CO_2 equivalent (tCO_2eq) of mitigation below baseline in 2035 per capita per year). For each country or region, the horizontal black line(s) show the NDC pledges for 2035; the green band shows the fair share range, delineated by 1850-High and 1950-Medium progressivity fair share benchmarks for 2035; vertical black arrows: minimum shortfall between NDC pledge and fair share benchmark; black number labels: range of shortfall between NDC pledge and fair share; vertical green arrows: maximum exceedance of NDC pledge over fair share; green number labels: range of exceedance of NDC pledge over fair share. The NDC of the US (red background) has been withdrawn; it is shown here for reference.

The charts and accompanying data table show plainly that the US, European Union (EU), Japan, and Australia would each need to more than double, or even triple, the mitigation ambition of their stated NDC targets just to reach the lower end of their fair share range. Take the US: we assess its NDC – submitted under the previous administration but since withdrawn – as delivering 12.3 to 13.4 tCO_2eq of mitigation per capita in 2035, whereas its fair share of global mitigation is far larger, at 28.6 to 38.2 tCO_2eq per capita. That leaves a shortfall of 15.2 to 25.9 tCO_2eq per capita; a gap made only worse by the current administration's repudiation of even that inadequate pledge.

By contrast, the mitigation pledges of Global South countries are generally close to, or at least much nearer, their fair share, and in a handful of cases even surpass it. Figure 3 zooms in on the countries whose fair shares fall below 6 tCO_2eq per capita. China's 2035 NDC meets its fair share range: the more ambitious end of its NDC range exceeds the less stringent end of the fair share range by 0.4 tCO_2eq per capita, while even the less ambitious end of its NDC range falls just within the fair share range. The same pattern holds for the Kenyan NDCs, whereas for South Africa only the more stringent target matches the fair share range and the less stringent one falls at least 1.4 tCO_2eq per capita short. Among the countries examined here, only the Marshall Islands' target exceeds what both ends of its fair share range would require. It is worth repeating, though, that Global South countries – beyond meeting their own fair share with their own resources – should also be planning for deeper cuts still, conditional on financial and other support from the Global North. Without that additional effort, the arithmetic of global mitigation simply does not

add up. This is a shared responsibility, with the Global North providing climate finance and support and the Global South delivering the additional mitigation, yet the Global North's continued reluctance to offer support anywhere near the required scale remains the principal obstacle to unlocking it.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a notable case. Its mitigation pledge falls short of both fair shares benchmarks, and while that shortfall is fairly modest under the less demanding of the two, it is substantial under the high progressivity benchmark (1850-High) – larger, in fact, than the shortfalls of the United Kingdom (UK) or EU. This owes to the relative wealth of a large share of the UAE's population: the more progressive capacity benchmark assigns it a correspondingly larger fair share, one that is second only to the US's among the countries assessed here. Türkiye, India, and Brazil, like the UAE, have all submitted NDC targets that fall short of both fair shares benchmarks, though in each case the shortfall is far smaller than those of the Global North countries examined – maintaining a pattern we have highlighted since our first CSER report in 2015.

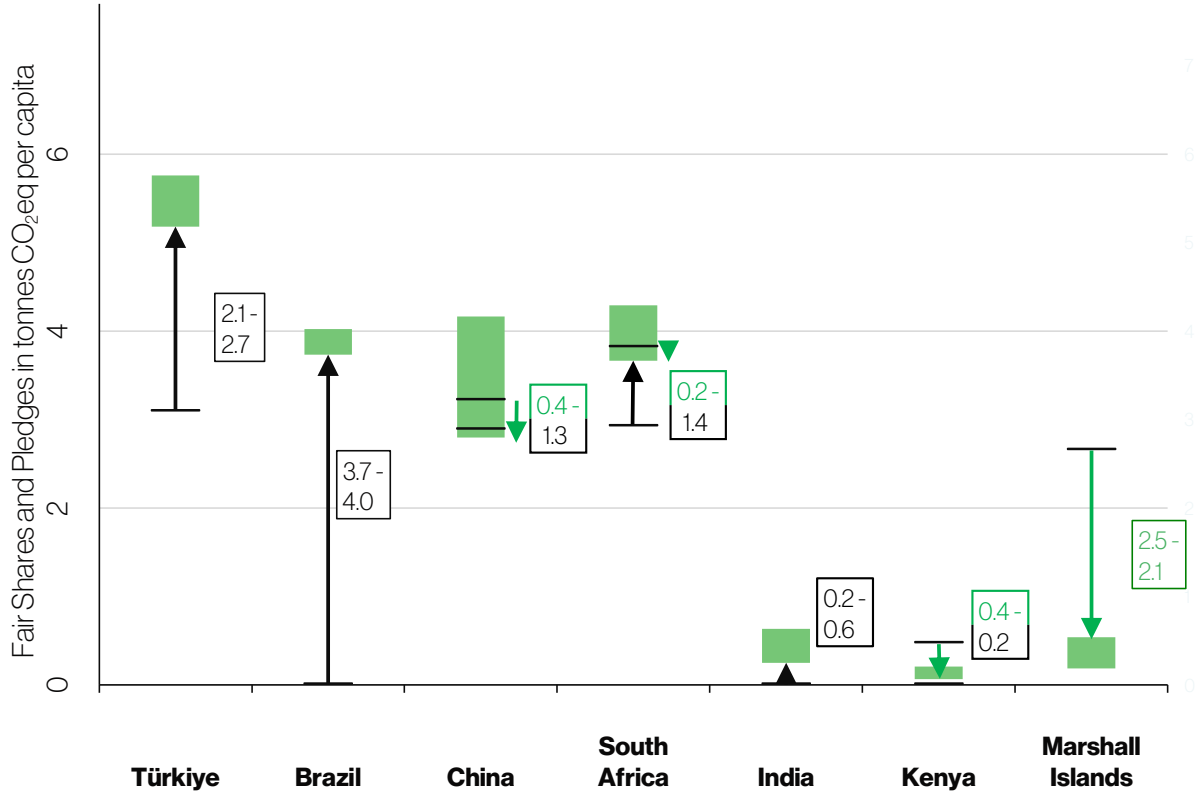


Figure 3: Comparison of mitigation fair shares and pledges of a subset of example countries. This chart shows a subset of countries from Figure 2 above, that have shares below 6 tCO2eq per capita of mitigation, with a different vertical scale to better show details of this subset. For other notes, see caption of Figure 2.

Shifting from current NDC pledges to a globally fair distribution of the mitigation effort requires many countries, above all in the Global North, to raise their ambition substantially. Global North countries must, in general, both supply considerable international climate finance and push their domestic mitigation to the most ambitious level conceivable, potentially requiring annual reduction rates of 10 % or more. This dual obligation is now unavoidable: decades of inaction and obstruction mean that even maximally ambitious domestic action alone could no longer satisfy wealthier countries' fair share. EU per capita emissions, for instance, presently stand at 6.7 tCO_2eq, so even eliminating them entirely would still fall short of the EU fair share of 14-15 tCO_2eq of mitigation per capita – making additional, EU-funded mitigation elsewhere unavoidable.

Global South countries whose NDCs currently fall short of their fair share must raise their ambition to at least that level, and all Global South countries must remain willing to go beyond their fair share where the Global North provides additional mitigation funding to do so. Admittedly, there is something fundamentally unjust about asking Global South countries to take on further measures, but the reality of the climate emergency is that the arithmetic of ambitious mitigation works no other way. It is therefore essential that the Global North supply the additional resources the Global South needs to accelerate its climate action, without falling back on distractions like market-based false solutions or greenwashing. The encouraging news is that climate mitigation actions often carry other benefits – supporting employment and reducing air pollution among them – so real opportunities exist to advance towards post-fossil prosperity for everyone.

MITIGATION FAIR SHARES BY INCOME

The analysis above demonstrates that Global North countries are responsible for most of the current mitigation shortfall in the NDCs, and shows just how much their ambition must rise to close that gap. But it is equally important to insist that mitigation action – and all climate action more broadly – be carried out fairly with respect to income and wealth inequality among individuals within a given country. Without that, national climate policies risk being undermined by the kind of division and backlash that has increasingly confronted efforts to roll out renewables.

Our fair shares analysis takes these domestic disparities into account, recognizing that wealthier individuals carry larger carbon footprints (and thus greater responsibility) as well as greater financial resources (and thus greater capacity) than poorer individuals. A country's fair share, which is the sum of the individual fair shares of all its residents, recognizes these vast disparities among those residents.

The same logic can be applied to an entire global income group: summing the individual fair share of everyone in that group, wherever they reside. Figure 4 below shows the results for one of our two equity benchmarks.

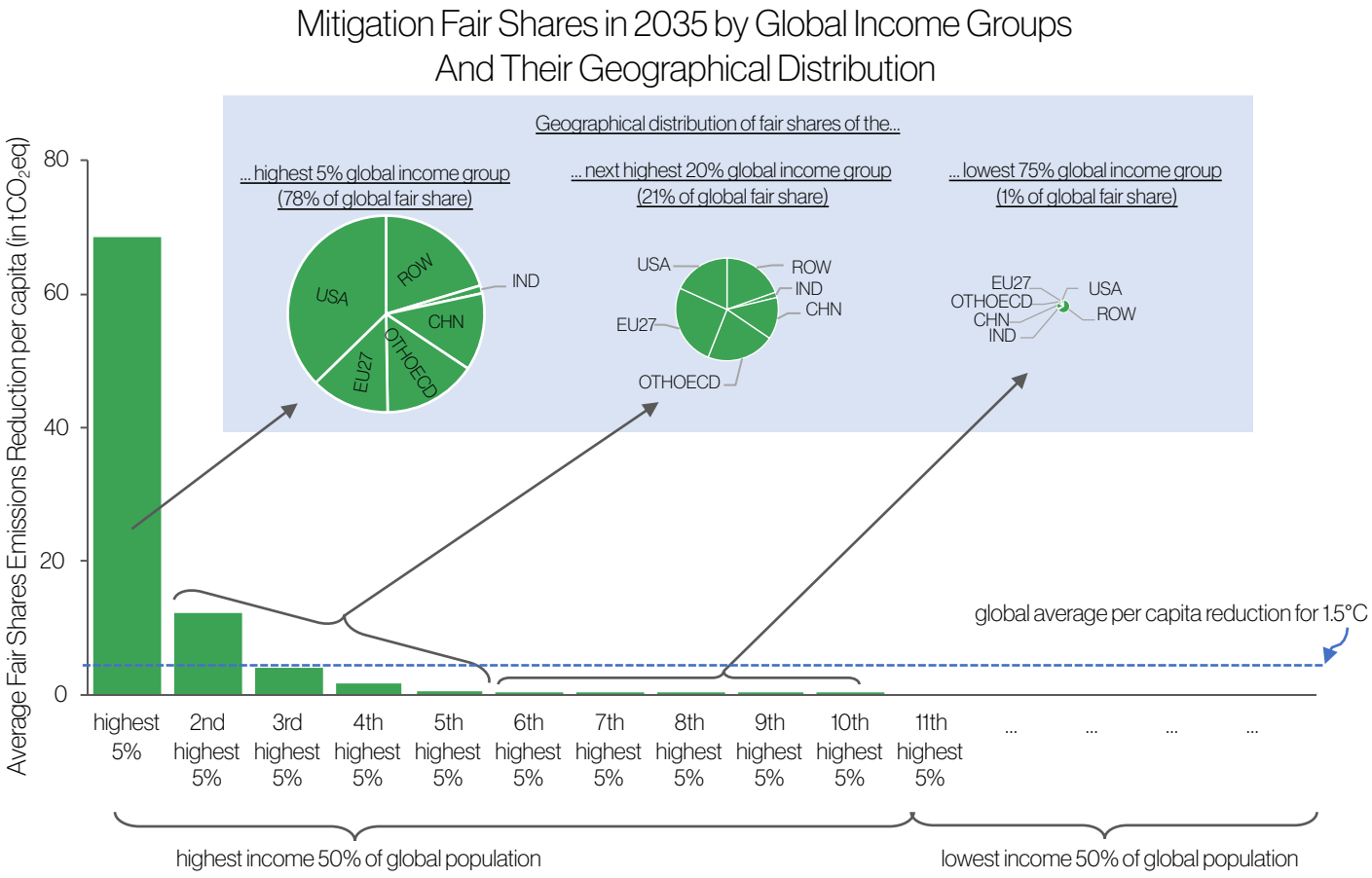


Figure 4: Average per capita fair shares of global income groups in 2035 and their geographical distribution. For our fair shares benchmark "1850-High Progressivity," the average per capita fair shares (in tCO_2eq of mitigation per capita below baseline) are shown for each global income ventile (5 % fraction of the global population). The blue dashed line running across the bars shows the global average per capita reduction. The pie charts show how fair shares are distributed globally across countries or groups of countries, with charts showing the distribution for the "top 5 %" of highest incomes globally, the next 20 % and the 75 % lowest incomes. The pie charts are scaled to represent the total fair share of each group (top 5 %, next 20 %, bottom 75 %) (USA=USA; EU27=European Union; OTHOECD=Other OECD members in 1990 except EU27 and USA; CHN=China; IND=India; ROW=Rest of World)

Figure 4 presents the fair shares results in 2035 by global income group for one of our equity benchmarks ("1850 | High Progressivity"). Each bar represents an income group comprising 5 % of the global population, arranged in descending order from the highest-income 5 % on the left. These groups are very large – since they are drawn from the global population, each contains more than 400 million people. At that scale, there is considerable, especially within the top 5 %, which spans not only ultra-wealthy figures like Elon Musk, whose fortunes carry a grotesque concentration of economic and political power, but also people who belong to the middle classes of their own countries and would not be considered wealthy elites at home. Fair shares are expressed as the per capita reduction below baseline corresponding to the average fair share of each group's members.

Because the incomes of 60 % of the global population (the bottom 12 ventiles) fall below our "development threshold" income of roughly USD 20 per person per day, the level below which we judge people to lack sufficient income to contribute to the climate response (and to bear meaningful responsibility for the emissions driving it), their per capita fair shares come out to zero.

At the other extreme, the per capita fair shares of the highest-income 5 % of the global population (the left-most ventile) are by far the largest. At 71 tCO_2eq per capita, the richest 5 % owe many times the global average per capita reduction of 4.4 tCO_2eq per capita from a fair shares perspective – and this holds true wherever they live.

Crucially, the pie charts show that the largest concentrations of high-income individuals – particularly those within the global top 5 % – live in Global North countries (USA, EU27, OTHOECD), which explains why those countries carry comparatively large fair shares.

Figure 5 below makes this point even more clearly, showing how different global income groups contribute to the fair shares (obligations) of each country or group of countries. For readability, global income is divided into three bands: the highest-earning 5 %, the next 20 %, and the remaining 75 % of the global population.[34] Again, note that these ventiles are defined relative to the *global* population: few countries will have exactly 5 % of their own population in the global top 5 % – rich countries will typically have far more, poor countries far less.

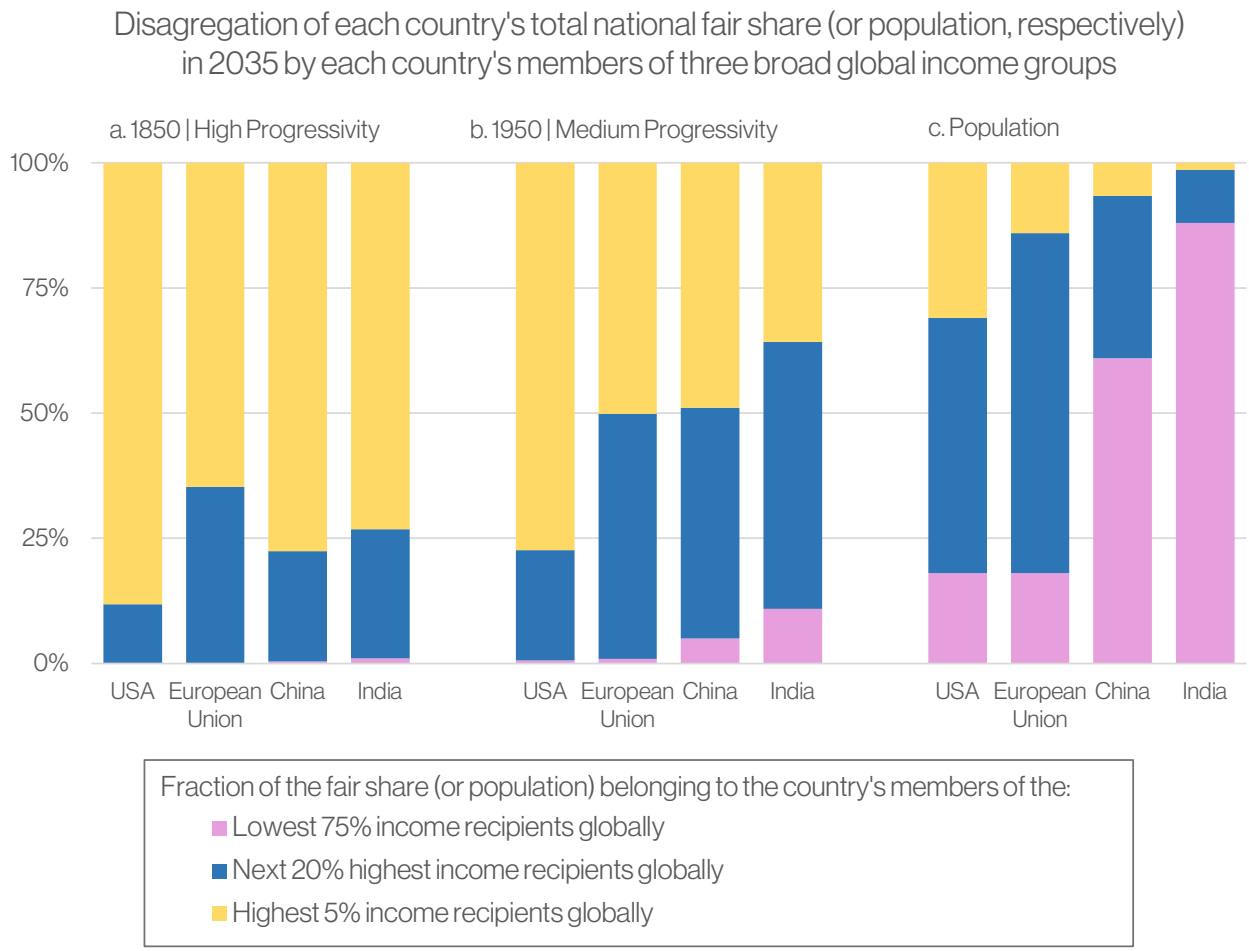


Figure 5: Disaggregation of total national fair shares, and population, in 2035 by countries' members of global income groups**.** This shows how much of the total fair share, or population, respectively, of each country are attributable to the members of global income groups living in those countries. Results are shown for both of our fair shares benchmarks – "1850-High Progressivity" (panel a), and "1950-Medium Progressivity" (panel b) – as well as for countries' population (panel c)

To illustrate, our projections of economic growth and inequality imply that by 2035 fully 31 % of the US population will have incomes placing them in the global top 5 % (the "highest 5 %" segment of the bar chart), compared with just 14 % in the EU, 7 % in China, and 1.4 % in India (see panel c of Figure 5). This striking finding demonstrates that Global North individuals who count as "middle class," and would not necessarily see themselves as "rich" at home, nonetheless rank among the most economically privileged people in the world. In the same vein, only 11 % of the EU population and 12 % of the US population fall within the globally poorest 75 %, a share projected to remain far higher in China (52 %) and higher still in India (84 %).[35]

Figure 5 underscores just how each country's fair share is disproportionately the obligation of their wealthiest. It follows that each country's domestic policies must, to be fair, assign the bulk of the national obligation to its own richest residents, since it is those individuals' fair shares that result in their countries having large national fair shares.

A GLOBALLY FAIR PHASEOUT OF FOSSIL FUEL EXTRACTION

The climate emergency is a systemic crisis with fossil fuels at its core. Fossil fuels account for the overwhelming majority of CO_2 emissions and a substantial share of other GHGs. Yet for decades climate policy largely treated production as a blind spot, focusing only on consumption while allowing continued expansion of extraction. The result is a widening production gap.

The *Production Gap Report* (PGR) demonstrates the scale of this contradiction.[36] National production plans and industry investment trajectories are still dramatically misaligned with pathways capable of limiting warming to 1.5 °C. As the PGR makes bracingly clear (see Figure 6), governments and corporations continue to create new fossil fuel infrastructure and long-lived assets even though the remaining carbon budget is nearly exhausted. By 2030, planned extraction levels exceed 1.5 °C-consistent pathways by roughly a factor of two. In fact, national projections and corporate plans for fossil fuel extraction are even farther of course from a 1.5 °C, or even 2 °C, pathway than the notoriously weak NDCs. The implication is unavoidable: a credible climate strategy must address fossil fuel extraction directly.

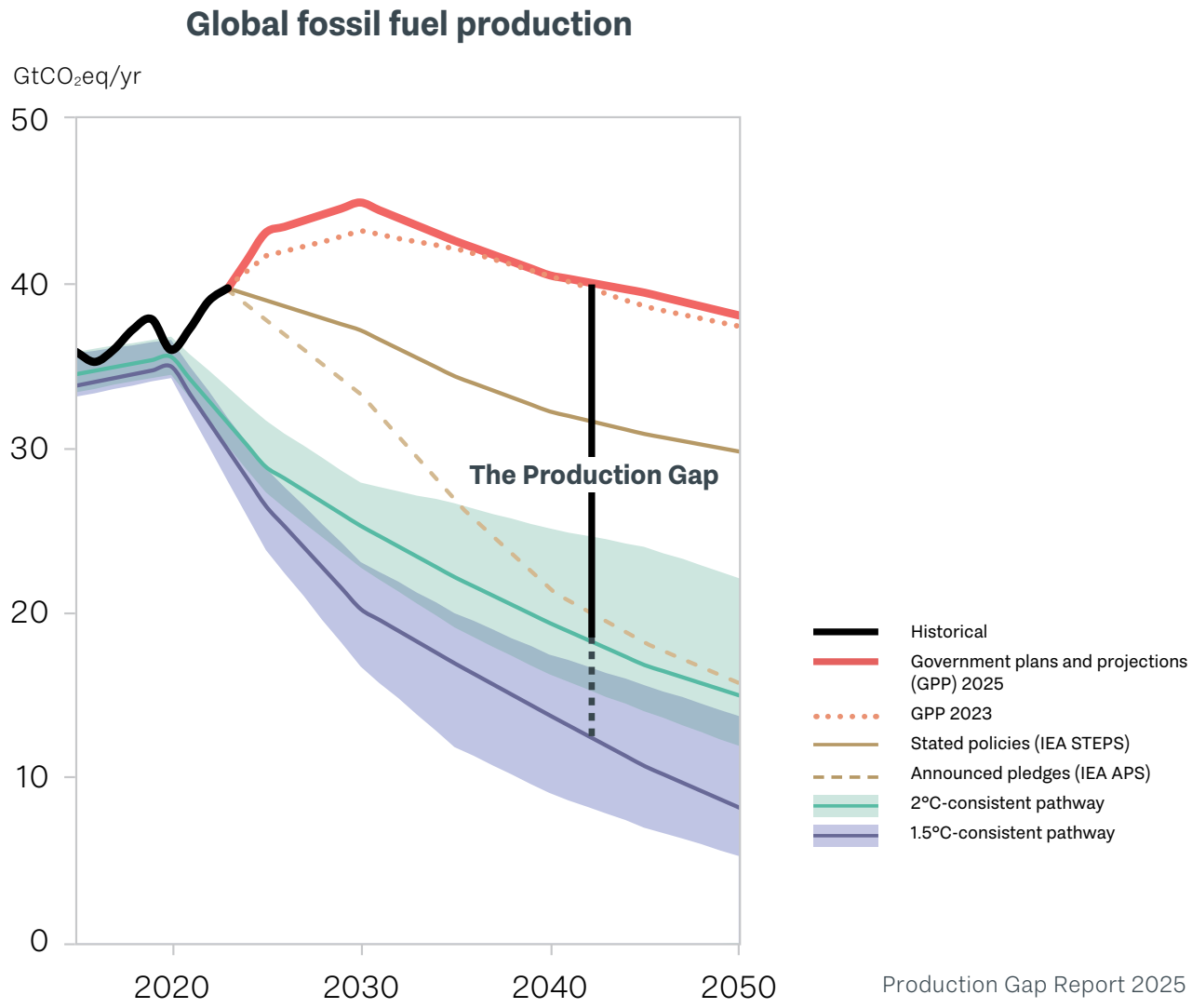


Figure 6: National projections and corporate plans for fossil fuel extraction are even farther off course from a 1.5 °C, or even 2 °C, pathway than even their notoriously weak NDCs.

While we need to phase out the extraction and use of fossil fuels and replace them with clean energy sources, climate change is much more than a technical challenge. Rather, it is inseparable from longstanding structural injustices, patterns of unequal development, radical disparities between and within countries in both wealth and environmental footprint, and – most problematically – the concentration of economic and political power in institutions that have benefited from fossil fuel-based growth.

So while a rapid phaseout is necessary, speed alone is not enough. The challenge is not only how fast extraction must decline, but how the burdens and opportunities of transition are distributed. Countries differ profoundly in their dependence on fossil fuels for jobs, revenues,

and energy services, and in their economic capacity to navigate and manage the challenges of transition. Only a transition that recognizes these differences can build a widely supported and ultimately successful pathway out of fossil fuels. Ignoring these differences risks deepening inequality, political resistance, backlash, and a collapse of the cooperation needed to survive this climate crisis.

A FRAMEWORK FOR A GLOBALLY FAIR PHASEOUT

The CSER framework for a just global phaseout of fossil fuels – first published in 2021 and elaborated in 2023 – rests on five mutually reinforcing principles.[37] - See box

The equitable phaseout framework translates these principles into differentiated national phaseout pathways and support obligations. For each fuel, countries with lower than average dependence are given correspondingly faster phase-out rates, and thus earlier phase-out dates that consume smaller shares of the available carbon budget. Similarly, countries with higher-than-average dependence are allowed correspondingly slower rates to ease their greater transitional challenges, which imply phaseout dates that are somewhat later and carbon budgets that are somewhat greater.

BOX 3: EXTRACTION EQUITY PRINCIPLES

First, halt extraction that violates human rights. By this we mean extraction – and there are many such cases – where pollution despoils the environment, harms communities, and undermines livelihoods. Such harms create an urgent moral claim for reform, remediation, and reparation. In egregious cases where extraction takes particularly brutal forms that violate basic human rights, it should be remedied or stopped immediately. The rights of frontline communities must take precedence over continued extraction.

Second, phase out extraction globally at a pace consistent with limiting warming to 1.5 °C. Climate impacts already fall disproportionately on poorer populations and countries and are rapidly accelerating. As evidence mounts that a destabilized climate is an existential threat to human civilization, further delaying a fossil fuel phaseout essentially prioritizes the short-term interests of fossil fuel producers not only over those who are immediately vulnerable to droughts, floods, heatwaves, food insecurity, and other climate harms, but over civilization itself.

Third, enable a just transition for workers and communities. Workers cannot be mere collateral damage in the climate transition, and communities built around extraction need tangible pathways towards new positive futures. A genuine just transition therefore requires social dialogue, democratic participation, strong labour protections, retraining opportunities, income support and other elements of a social safety net, and investment in alternative sectors and regional economic development.

Fourth, phase out fastest where doing so imposes the lowest social costs Countries differ dramatically in their degree of socio-economic dependence on fossil fuel extraction, and the potential disruption that a rapid phase out could pose. While some countries derive only marginal revenues and employment from fossil fuels, others rely on extraction to provide an overwhelming share of public budgets, export earnings, and domestic energy services. If needed, more dependent countries should therefore be granted longer transition periods. Wealthier and more diversified economies, on the other hand, have the necessary financial, institutional, and technological capacity to meet these needs through alternative means. They have more available resources and greater flexibility, and should move first and fastest.

Fifth, share transition costs according to the ability to bear them. After decades of delay, the remaining carbon budget is so small that even countries granted relatively more time to phase out fossil fuels must still move with unprecedented speed. Many poorer countries will be unable to make such abrupt transitions without external support. Wealthier countries therefore must not only phase out their own extraction but also provide the financial and technological support that will make timely phaseouts possible in poorer and more dependent countries.

All told, the framework illustrates an extremely challenging – but still solvable – set of interlocking transition problems:

The carbon budget: The starting point is a global extraction budget consistent with the Paris Agreement temperature objective of limiting warming to 1.5 °C, as the climate emergency demands. This budget is extraordinarily small, placing extremely stringent constraints on future extraction. The pathway used for this analysis emphasizes immediate action, with fossil fuel production flattening briefly then falling rapidly through 2030 and continuing to decline steeply thereafter.

It also requires extremely ambitious mitigation of non-CO_2 GHG emissions, rapid elimination of deforestation emissions, and the availability of approximately 200 gigatonnes of CO_2 ($GtCO_2$) worth of land-based CO_2 sequestration. These requirements imply additional demands on land, which must be met without compromising food security, biodiversity, freshwater resources, or the livelihoods and rights of Indigenous Peoples, all of which raise further constraints and challenges. To assume the availability of even more negative emissions (as many mitigation scenarios do) would escalate the associated challenges and impose even greater risks on vulnerable populations and ecosystems.

In total, accounting for non-fossil fuel carbon (in steel production, for example), we're left with a carbon budget of about 290 $GtCO_2$ from 2027 forward. The severity of this budget is a consequence of the climate emergency itself, and of decades of inaction by the world's elites despite clear scientific warnings. Governments continued approving new fossil fuel projects. Corporations continued investing in expansion. Fossil fuel interests exercised enormous influence over public debate and policymaking. As a result, the remaining carbon budget is now dangerously depleted. Today's stringent timelines reflect yesterday's failures.

Dependence on fossil fuel extraction: Suffice it to say, countries exhibit radically different patterns of dependence on fossil fuel

extraction, and thus radically different levels of vulnerability to potential social disruption from a rapid transition.

To illustrate the different extent of economic dependence and social impacts of change, consider a tale of two countries. When oil prices fell from above USD 100/barrel to about USD 50/barrel during the second half of 2014, oil-dependent Angola's government had to cut its budget by 25 %. Public sector employees and suppliers went unpaid for months, causing massive hardship.[38] Meanwhile, healthcare services collapsed, leading to outbreaks of malaria, yellow fever, dengue, and chikungunya.[39] Economic growth stalled in 2015, and the economy contracted every year from 2016 to 2021.[40] Inflation ballooned to 30 %,[41] and external debt rose from 36 % to 115 % of gross domestic product (GDP).[42]

By contrast, in Norway the same price crash only mildly affected the overall economy: GDP growth fell from 2.1 % in 2014 to 2.0 % in 2015 and 1.3 % in 2016, but bounced back to 2.7 % by 2017.[43] Following shrinking investment in the oil sector, Norway's unemployment increased from 3.5 % in 2014 to 4.7 % in 2016 – a difficult time for the workers affected, but made more manageable by an extensive welfare state – and fell back again thereafter.[44] There was no fiscal or health crisis. In the words of one Norwegian banker, "Oil prices more than halved, but the Norwegian economy still managed fairly well."[45]

The 2014 price crash was temporary, but these contrasting experiences give insight into the challenges countries will face as they phase out their fossil fuel extraction, and as their export markets contract through the global energy transition.

Thus, timelines differentiated on the basis of dependence are a practical approach for managing social disruption. Wealthy and diversified economies such as Norway, the UK, and the US are expected to phase out quickly because they can: they possess the resources to invest in alternatives, adapt to different revenue sources, and provide a social safety net. Highly dependent countries such as Angola, Iraq, South Sudan, or the Republic of Congo receive somewhat longer transition periods because they need it: public revenues, employment structures, and economic stability remain closely tied to extraction, and additional time is needed to transition with minimal disruption.

It is no coincidence that each of these highly dependent countries is either currently embroiled in – or still recovering from – a devastating war. All four are struggling with a version of the same political and economic trap. With institutions weakened by wars and economic alternatives severely compromised or destroyed, oil extraction became more entrenched as the state's primary revenue source. This dependence on a revenue stream that is notoriously volatile and vulnerable to global energy market gyrations (and, especially in the case of Iraq and South Sudan, exposed to direct military attack), has had predictable consequences. Wealth and power remain tightly held, concentrated in narrow political networks, and tensions – if not active conflict – persist.

We adopt a straightforward composite dependence indicator that reflects three primary ways that societies and economies rely on fossil fuel. The first dimension is energy dependence. In some countries domestically extracted coal, oil, or gas supplies a large share of national energy demand. Rapid extraction decline therefore requires simultaneous investment in renewable energy, grids, storage, efficiency, and new infrastructure. This challenge is compounded for countries that already suffer from significant energy poverty, or where energy availability constrains economic activity.

The second dimension is revenue dependence. Many producer countries rely heavily on fossil fuel revenues to finance basic government functions, public services, infrastructure, and social programmes. In extreme cases, extraction provides the overwhelming majority of government revenue. Transition therefore requires economic diversification and new fiscal foundations.

The third dimension is employment dependence. Extraction directly and indirectly supports workers, families, and regional economies. The challenge is not simply changing jobs. It is creating decent alternatives, preserving livelihoods, and revitalizing communities whose identities and economies have long been connected to fossil fuels.

The three dimensions are combined into an overall dependence measure. The resulting indicator is adjusted for levels of national capacity, reflecting the reality that similar levels of dependence place heavier burdens on poorer societies than on wealthier ones. A country's dependence is assessed separately for oil, gas, and coal because countries often exhibit different relationships to each fuel.[46]

This "dependence indicator" is meant to quantitatively reflect the magnitude of a country's dependence, but we don't claim it is definitive. We offer it to an evolving and maturing discussion about the practicalities of transitions, expecting that such indicators will continue to be refined with advances in an ethically grounded understanding of fossil fuel dependence as well as improvements in the available data.



Atmeh Refugee Camp, Idlib, Syria.

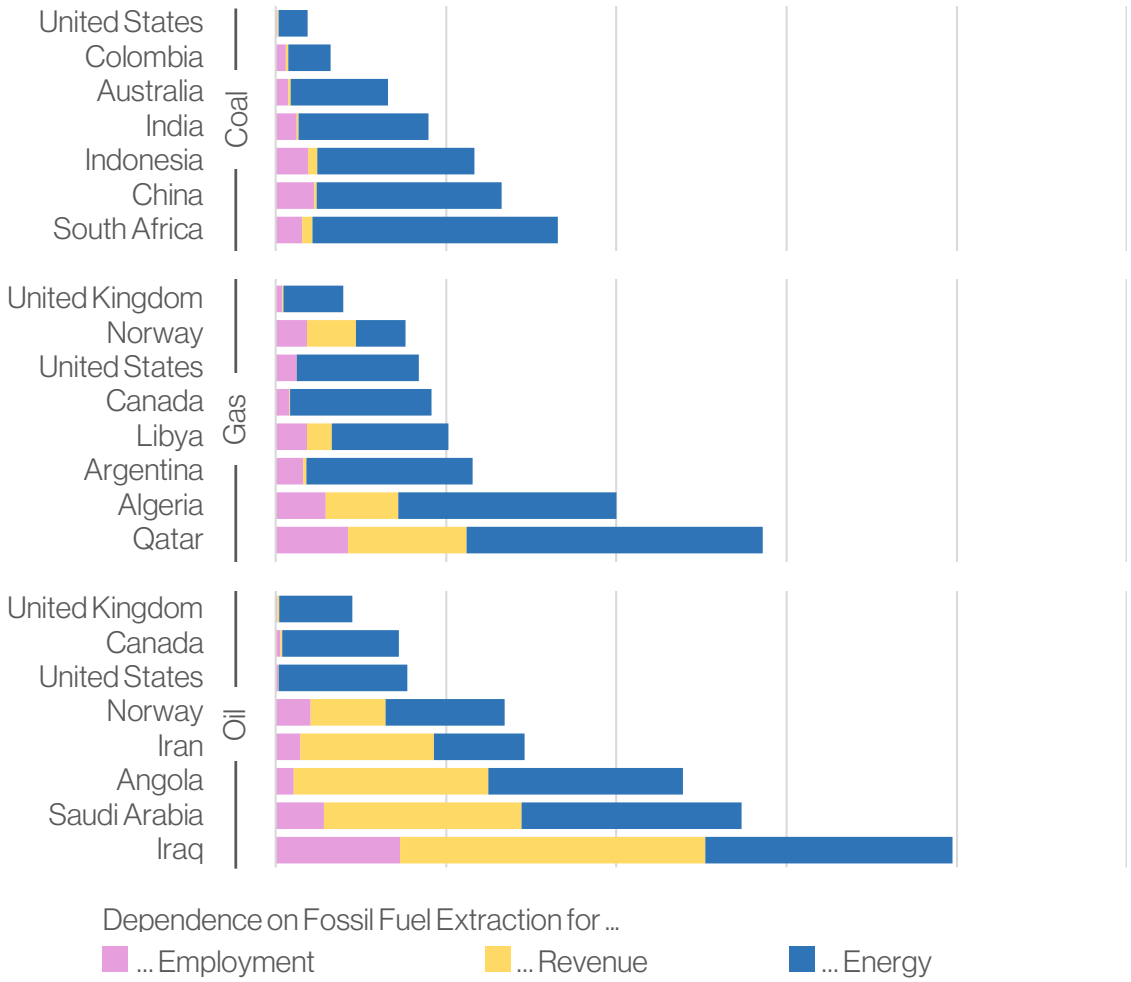


Figure 7: Dependence indicator for coal, gas, and oil producers:[47] the bar graph shows the dependence indicator for all countries (identified by their 3-digit International Organization for Standardization (ISO) code), grouped by fuel, and divided into dependence for employment, for energy, and for public revenue. Within each fuel, there is a wide range in dependence, and on average, coal producing countries are less dependent on extraction than gas producers, which are in turn less dependent than oil producers.

RESULTS OF A FAIR FOSSIL FUEL PHASEOUT

Applying the equitable phaseout framework yields a striking picture of the global extraction transition. First, phaseout timelines are exceptionally rapid, with global production declining 90 % by 2040. Countries with low dependence on extraction (in terms of jobs, public revenue, and domestic energy use) and high capacity to manage a rapid transition should generally phase out extraction during the early 2030s. Countries with the highest dependence and lowest capacity have longer periods, but even the slowest should phase out extraction within 25 years (by 2050). Even though more dependent countries are allowed more time to transition, the remaining carbon budget is so limited even these somewhat longer timelines imply an extremely quick transition. For countries that are as socioeconomically dependent as Angola, Iraq and Algeria, for example, this still requires an extremely rapid retooling of the entire economy.

The second major set of results concerns international support. Applying the principle that costs must be borne fairly implies that lower capacity countries must be supported in their transitions. We implement this using a capacity threshold equal to the global average per capita capacity (approximately USD 12 per person per day). Countries below this threshold are considered to need international financial and technological support to enable a rapid transition, and the farther below this threshold a country falls, the more support it will require. Countries above this threshold are expected to provide the support.

Importantly, the principle that costs must be borne fairly also means that support obligations should extend beyond fossil fuel producers. High-capacity countries that do not extract fossil fuels still benefited from fossil fuel-based development and therefore must share responsibility for enabling the global transition.

Taken together, the results underscore a central message. Phasing out extraction is a shared global challenge that will protect the climate for all of us. The effort this shared objective requires must be distributed justly, without unfairly burdening any country or community. A uniform timeline for all countries would be neither just nor practical. Likewise, forcing each country to forge its own path alone would be unfair, impractical, and doomed to failure. Differentiated timelines linked to international solidarity provide a realistic route to achieving climate goals while protecting workers, communities, and vulnerable populations.

COAL			
2032 - 2035	**2035 - 2040**	**2040 - 2045**	**2045 - 2050**
Australia	China	Indonesia	India
Brazil	Kazakhstan		Mongolia
Canada	Serbia		Pakistan
Colombia	South Africa		Ukraine
European Union	Uzbekistan		Vietnam
Japan			Zimbabwe
Mexico			
New Zealand			
Russian Federation			
South Korea			
Thailand			
Türkiye			
United Kingdom			
United States			
Venezuela			

GAS			
2032 - 2035	**2035 - 2040**	**2040 - 2045**	**2045 - 2050**
Australia	Argentina	Azerbaijan	Algeria
Bahrain	Bangladesh	Iran	Bolivia
Brazil	India		Egypt
Brunei	Indonesia		Myanmar
Canada	Iraq		Nigeria
China	Kazakhstan		Pakistan
Colombia	Libya		Syria
European Union	Oman		Ukraine
Israel	Peru		Uzbekistan
Kuwait	Russian Federation		Venezuela
Malaysia	Thailand		
Mexico	Trinidad & Tobago		
Norway	Turkmenistan		
Qatar	Vietnam		
Saudi Arabia			
United Arab Emirates			
United Kingdom			
United States			

OIL			
2032 - 2035	**2035 - 2040**	**2040 - 2045**	**2045 - 2050**
Australia	Argentina	Azerbaijan	Algeria
Brunei	Brazil	Ecuador	Angola
Canada	Colombia	Equatorial Guinea	Chad
China	Gabon	Iran	Egypt
European Union	India	Libya	Iraq
Guyana	Indonesia	Vietnam	Nigeria
Kuwait	Kazakhstan		Republic of Congo
Malaysia	Mexico		South Sudan
Norway	Oman		Sudan
Qatar	Peru		Syria
Saudi Arabia	Russian Federation		Tunisia
Trinidad & Tobago	Thailand		Venezuela
United Arab Emirates	Turkmenistan		Yemen
United Kingdom	Uzbekistan		
United States			

Table 1: From top to bottom, the tables show coal-, gas-, and oil-extracting countries, respectively, grouped according to their fair phaseout date. Countries with lower dependence on extraction (as defined in the text) and higher capacity to manage the potential disruption of a rapid transition have earlier phaseout dates, and those with higher dependence and lower capacity have later phaseout dates. The colour reflects international climate finance, distinguishing countries eligible to receive some amount of support for their extraction phaseout (orange) from those that are expected to contribute to this support (green). (Countries that neither receive nor provide significant international support are in black.)

IMPLICATIONS OF A FAIR FOSSIL FUEL PHASEOUT

The implications of this analysis are profound. First, extraction throughout the world needs to start declining imminently. One immediate implication is that governments and companies must end development of all new fossil fuel projects worldwide. There is simply no remaining space within a 1.5 °C-consistent carbon budget for expansion. New oil and gas fields, coal mines, and associated infrastructure would deepen the production gap, further entrench the fossil economy, and lock in future emissions.

Second, as a core part of building the consensus and momentum needed to launch national just transitions, governments must foster extensive social dialogue with workers, unions, Indigenous peoples, frontline communities, and other affected stakeholders. Working together, they must design and undertake transitions that are truly just, including employment protections, and reskilling, a robust social safety net, and economic development that can provide the basis for quality employment and a new source of public revenue to fund robust social services.

Democratically inclusive processes must be the foundation on which the transition away from fossil fuels is built. That transition must engender broader transformations beyond simply phasing out extraction. Fossil fuel dependence can only be overcome through universal access to sustainable, renewable energy, economic diversification and industrial development that creates robust economies freed from poverty traps, and alternative development strategies oriented towards social well-being rather than continued resource dependence.

Third, wealthy countries must dramatically scale up climate finance and international cooperation. This support is not charity. It is a fair-share contribution based on capacity, responsibility, and the realities of an interconnected global transition that is absolutely crucial to managing a common global crisis. The scale of the necessary support is substantial. Conservative assessments suggest annual support requirements ranging from hundreds of billions to several trillions of dollars for phasing out fossil fuel extraction. This, to be clear, is in addition to the climate finance required for broader mitigation efforts, adaptation, and loss-and-damage.

The finance that governments and corporations owe includes reparations where fossil fuel extraction – a notoriously polluting and violence-prone industry – has violated human rights or caused irreparable social and ecological damage. Polluter-pays, beneficiary-pays, and ability-to-pay principles all support obligations for remediation and restitution. Frontline communities should not be left to bear the costs of harms imposed upon them.

Fourth, all of the above is obviously a radical departure from our current self-destructive course, and if it has any chance of coming to pass, political power will have to be reclaimed from fossil fuel interests, the pillars of the military-industrial complex, and other oligarchs that have obstructed climate action for decades. The persistence of extraction is not primarily a technological or economic problem, but a political one. Fossil fuel corporations have invested extensively in delaying regulation, shaping public discourse, and protecting their interests. Successful phaseout therefore requires institutional reforms capable of reducing the influence of entrenched fossil fuel power. With finance flowing generously into fossil investments, corporate influencers comfortably ensconced in the halls of power, and governments recklessly and illegally deploying their militaries to acquire and exploit fossil resources, such a sharp redirection might seem preposterously idealistic.

But perhaps it isn't. Right now, we are peering through a previously shut window of opportunity. With the financial and human costs of our addiction to fossil fuels glaringly evident to the entire world, we have a chance to take truly transformative action.

The next section provides more detail on financial support and fair shares. Given that the carbon budget is now all but depleted, it makes no sense to talk of fairly distributing the budget, all the less so as we careen into overshoot. But while fair *budget*-sharing may make no sense, fair *effort*-sharing makes more sense than ever. The fair share of effort for countries of the Global North includes not only urgent economy-wide transitions in their own economies, but also a scaling up of international cooperation to a level that will enable poorer countries to undertake similarly urgent transitions, even while escaping poverty and finding prosperity. It is the only plausible pathway towards achieving climate stability, protecting vulnerable populations, and enabling sustainable development.



Green sedum rooftop garden with solar panels for solar energy, climate adaptation and stimulating biodiversity

CLIMATE FINANCE

International cooperation and urgent domestic transition are two sides of the fair share coin. Thus, the provision of climate finance from the Global North to the Global South is a cornerstone of the fair shares approach. And as the ICJ has emphasized, states have a "duty to cooperate", which includes finance and technology, "which must be performed in good faith."

Unfortunately, longer term climate finance pledges have not been forthcoming. Where countries have made climate finance pledges, they have tended to be short-term, with targets that look ahead only one or two years, even though the Paris Agreement stresses the "urgent" need for "adequate and predictable" climate finance. Wealthy nations' steadfast refusal to include climate finance pledges in their NDCs points to a core problem: they treat climate finance as "charity" rather than as a legal and ethical obligation. Even worse, they use climate finance as a political bargaining chip or a conduit for private investment and profit-making. Consequently, climate finance has been, and remains, profoundly inadequate.

The lack of ambitious pledges is unsurprising in light of the lamentable outcome on the new climate finance goal at COP29 negotiations in Baku, but it is deeply disturbing in the context of the climate emergency. In over a decade since the Paris Agreement, the Global North's climate finance pledges simply do not add up to a meaningful contribution to their fair share.

Yet, as has been shown time and again, the resources to enable a global transition are, in fact, available. Our world is awash with money that is not even remotely absorbed in attaining vital developmental objectives. Table 2 below is a partial list adapted from Oil Change International (OCI) (2025)[48] of several possible sources of finance available to countries of the Global North. Climate finance is one legitimate use of the resulting revenues, while others might include funding the notoriously underfunded SDGs; reducing both domestic and international inequality; reparations and environmental restoration of legacy damage from colonial and neo-colonial extractive enterprises funding global pandemic management; and disaster response.

Revenue measure	Global North only (USD billions)	Global (USD billions)
Progressive wealth tax on multi-millionaires and billionaires	3,530	5,970
Redirect public military spending	1,744	2,741
End fossil fuel subsidies	331	1,030
Climate Damages Tax on fossil fuel extraction.	343	802
Savings from avoidable highway and road expansion.	243	367
Frequent flyer levy on aviation.	81	121
Levy on international maritime shipping.	89	127
Minimum corporate tax rate of 25 %	412	479
Crackdown on tax evasion.	343	492
Financial transaction tax of 0.5 % on sales of investments	312	426
Issue and redistribute additional Special Drawing Rights	500	500
Cancel debt payments owed by low and lower middle income governments.	108	142

Table 2: Possible sources of climate finance.

The first two items warrant some comment. Not surprisingly, the first item and largest item is a reflection of the fact that this is a phenomenally unequal world, and a wealth tax on the relatively small minority of multi-millionaires and billionaires, (at a rate modest enough to still leave them multi-millionaires and billionaires) would still be sufficient to raise several trillion dollars per year. The second item reflects the enormous sum being invested in militaries. Figure 8 below shows the total cumulative military expenditures of OECD countries since the Paris Agreement was signed (2016-2025), alongside total cumulative climate finance over the same 10 years.[49] We show both the official OECD government figures for climate finance and the results of an Oxfam re-analysis of the OECD accounts that provides a clearer picture of what the OECD's so-called climate finance actually entails.[50]

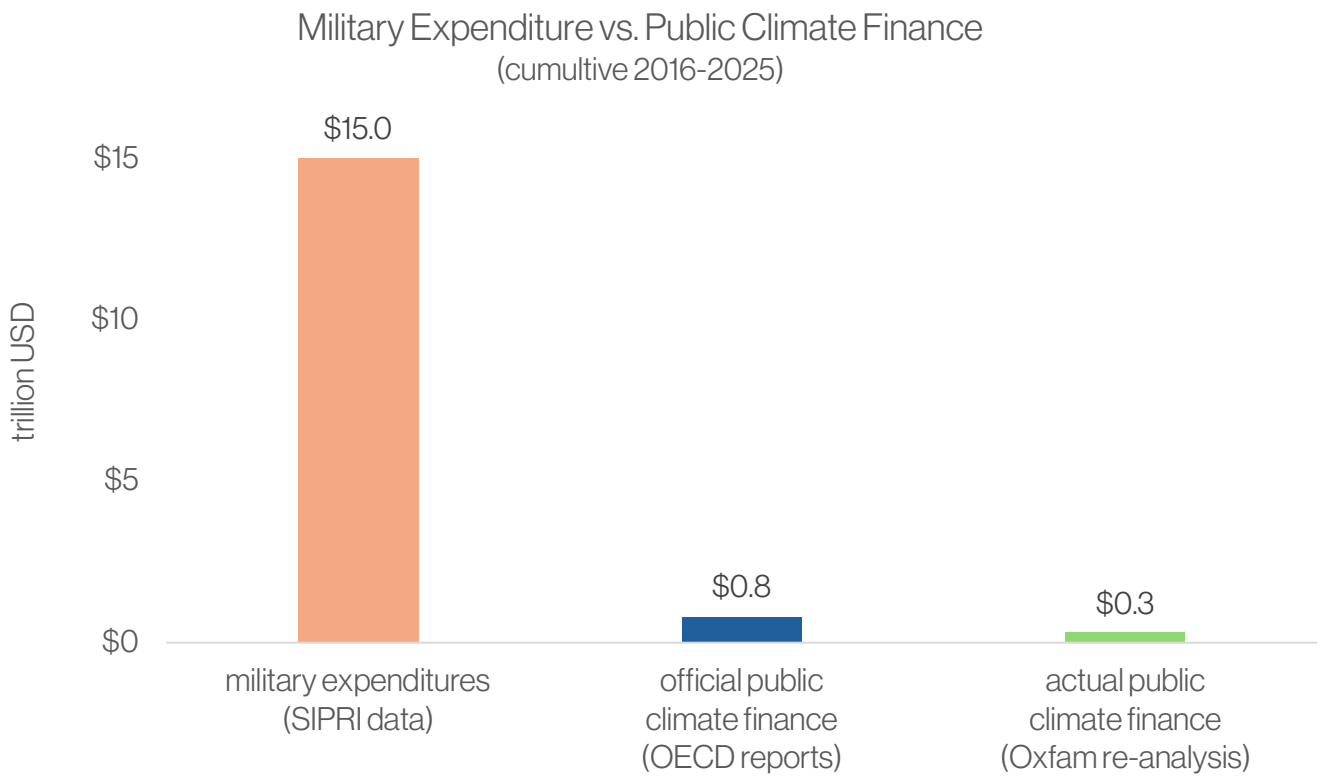


Figure 8: Military expenditure vs Public Climate Finance.[51] The cumulative military expenditure of OECD countries (USD 15,016 billion) is nearly 20 times greater than their cumulative climate finance (USD 799 billion) according to official OECD climate finance reports. It is roughly 50 times greater than Oxfam's estimate (USD 302 billion), which provides a more realistic assessment of actual climate finance. Note, we show here the higher end of the Oxfam range. If actual climate finance is closer to the lower end of Oxfam's estimated range (USD 236 billion), military expenditures exceed climate finance by more than a factor of 63.

The difference between the official and actual figures follows from two specific deficiencies. First, the official figures fail to discount the considerable proportion of officially reported climate finance that actually consists of debt-producing loans, which ultimately provide a net positive financial return to the donor country. Second, the official figures include finance that is classified as climate finance but is only climate-related to a limited extent. The Oxfam analysis considers both these deficiencies, calculating grant-equivalent Climate-Specific Net Assistance of USD 235–302 billion, or approximately 60–70 % lower than the officially reported climate finance.[52]

For example, the US's climate finance record clearly demonstrates both the scarcity and the quality problems. The most recent pledge of USD 11 billion in climate finance dates from 2021, and while the Biden Administration claimed to have met this goal before leaving office, their contribution seems to have been overwhelmingly made up of loans, while grant-based finance was never more than a couple of billion per year. Moreover, the Trump Administration subsequently cut all climate funding, and there is no chance that it will make a new pledge, not least as it has dismantled the agency (US Agency of International Development) that oversaw bilateral climate assistance. Meanwhile, six months of war in Iran are estimated to have cost the Pentagon USD 42 billion, without counting the costs of the economic disruptions due to the conflict.[53]

Exorbitant and wasteful military expenditures are not limited to wealthy countries. Non-OECD countries, which account for about one-third of global military expenditures, are also deeply entrenched in militarism. Militarism is a global system that engages all nations to a greater or lesser degree. Some covet their neighbours' resources, and wage wars of aggression to acquire them. All nations feel compelled to arm themselves in self-defence, but as Einstein noted, "You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war."

Even more insidiously, militarism is a system from which national elites and corporations profit handsomely and which they actively manoeuvre to maintain. Each country's military-industrial complex exerts powerful influence to maintain the sustainability, power, and profits of its key actors. In the US, these channels of influence are deep and wide: the arms industry is a goliath of financing political campaigns and lobbying those it has placed in power, and a master at navigating the revolving doors between military technology companies, financial institutions, and the government. The payoff is clear: in the 5 years since 2020, private corporations in the US bagged a truly astounding USD 2.4 trillion in Pentagon contracts.[54]

Financial support is obviously a key element of international cooperation. Importantly, however, cooperation must extend beyond finance to encompass technology transfer, debt relief, institutional and democratic reform, and mechanisms to expand policy space for Global South countries. This is of course a massive, transformational, and radical agenda. We do not go into further detail here, but refer the reader to the 2022 CSER report, *The Imperative of Cooperation: Steps Toward An Equitable Response To The Climate Crisis*.[55]



Gaza's smoke-filled sky.

CONCLUSION

This report attempts to meet an extremely challenging moment, in which it is difficult to summon even the relative optimism of 2015, when the Paris Agreement was won and we shared genuine hope that warming could be held to manageable levels. The past decade has seen a disgraceful failure to bend the curve on climate change and launch the necessary transition. Instead of meaningful action to reduce emissions, curb extraction, and provide adequate climate finance and technology to those who need it, we have seen a huge increase in global military spending. Even worse, this spending is only part of a rising tide of militarism, which has gone hand in hand with our increasingly derailed climate response.

To be sure, militarism and war are ancient scourges. But never before have we confronted a global surge in violent conflict while also facing the pressures of the certain knowledge that we are now heading towards 1.5 °C overshoot, and the dawning realization that the climate devastation we have already witnessed is merely a prologue. Worsening climate impacts around the world are already beginning to define the life and livelihoods of billions of people, and will force adaptation and loss and damage to the centre of societal consciousness, whether or not we choose. All this would be challenging enough without a global turn towards militarism and war. It will be far worse with them. The devastation of violent conflict invariably creates and amplifies vulnerabilities even as it undermines the resilience needed to manage escalating climate impacts. Cruelly, war weaponizes vulnerability.

The fundamental problem is that we are starting from an extremely unjust baseline characterized by crushing inequality, with 1 % of the world's population owning more than the remaining 95 %.[56] Such disparities never remain confined to the financial and material realm, but inevitably corrupt the political realm as well, manifesting as equally extreme disparities in power.

The simultaneous rise of inequality and militarism is no coincidence. As history shows all too well, militaristic demagoguery readily fills political vacuums, and self-interested elites have turned to it – and to a broader politics of hate – whenever their societies began to demand change. We are seeing this again today. Political vacuums are everywhere, and rather than accept the systemic changes needed to tackle inequality and precarity, elites are once again trying to rally their weary populations around the flag. Such a response solves nothing, least of all when military and corporate interests wield ever more self-serving power and populations, alienated by disenfranchisement and precarity, grow ever more volatile. Ultimately, extreme concentrations of wealth and power are a social poison that corrode democratic institutions and make robust cooperation impossible. The result is a grim harmony between global inequality and global militarism, which together are making the climate crisis as desperate as can be imagined.

The obvious questions scream out. Why have the wealthy countries – and the elites who control most countries – spent trillions of dollars a year on their militaries, yet failed even to fund the institutions created piecemeal to help us manage the climate crisis? Why are there still no wealth taxes on the super-rich, and why do fossil fuel companies only grow more powerful? Why is the global economy so fragile that China's push into clean technology – which should be a boon to us all – is seen as a threat to the livelihoods of workers in Germany and the United States, even as both countries flirt with fascism? And why, as the climate system drifts towards irreversible tipping points, are the world's elites both willing and able to block any meaningful action?

The answers all point in the same direction. Time and again, elites have blocked efforts to align science-based ambition with developmental justice, without which the climate cannot be stabilized in time to avoid catastrophe.

ANOTHER FUTURE

What can be done in the face of such prospects? This report has stressed the equal importance of urgent domestic climate action and international financial and technological support, both of which are crucial to a comprehensive post-fossil fuel transition. Yet all this presumes a world in which robust international and cross-class cooperation is possible – a condition that is achievable, but not in a world increasingly defined by militarism and wars of aggression.

The counterforce to militarism and inequality is a new kind of solidarity that bridges the North–South divide and drastically narrows the gap between rich and poor. Reaching beyond nation states to the world's peoples, it must be rooted not in idealism but in a climate realism that confronts militaristic zero-sum games as well as barriers to climate action, and that embraces "human security" founded on principles of sustainability and justice.[57] Climate change is surely the greatest threat to human security, and stabilizing the climate will prove impossible in a world turning backwards, towards national expansionism and "spheres of influence," rather than forward to a new multilateralism.

How can such solidarity be found, and made real? There are many paths. Oxfam, for example, has looked to a revival of the New International Economic Order, an initiative of the more hopeful 1970s that sought to reorient the international trade and monetary systems towards closing the "widening gap between the developed and the developing countries." Although the rise of neoliberal market fundamentalism derailed this initiative, the subsequent discrediting of the post-Cold War geoeconomy has opened space for Global South governments and civil society organizations to revive and extend similar efforts, with a push for "a pandemic treaty with strong provisions on technology transfer and benefit sharing, a UN tax convention with ambitious standards on taxing corporations and the rich, and a new international debt architecture that facilitates comprehensive debt restructuring."[58]

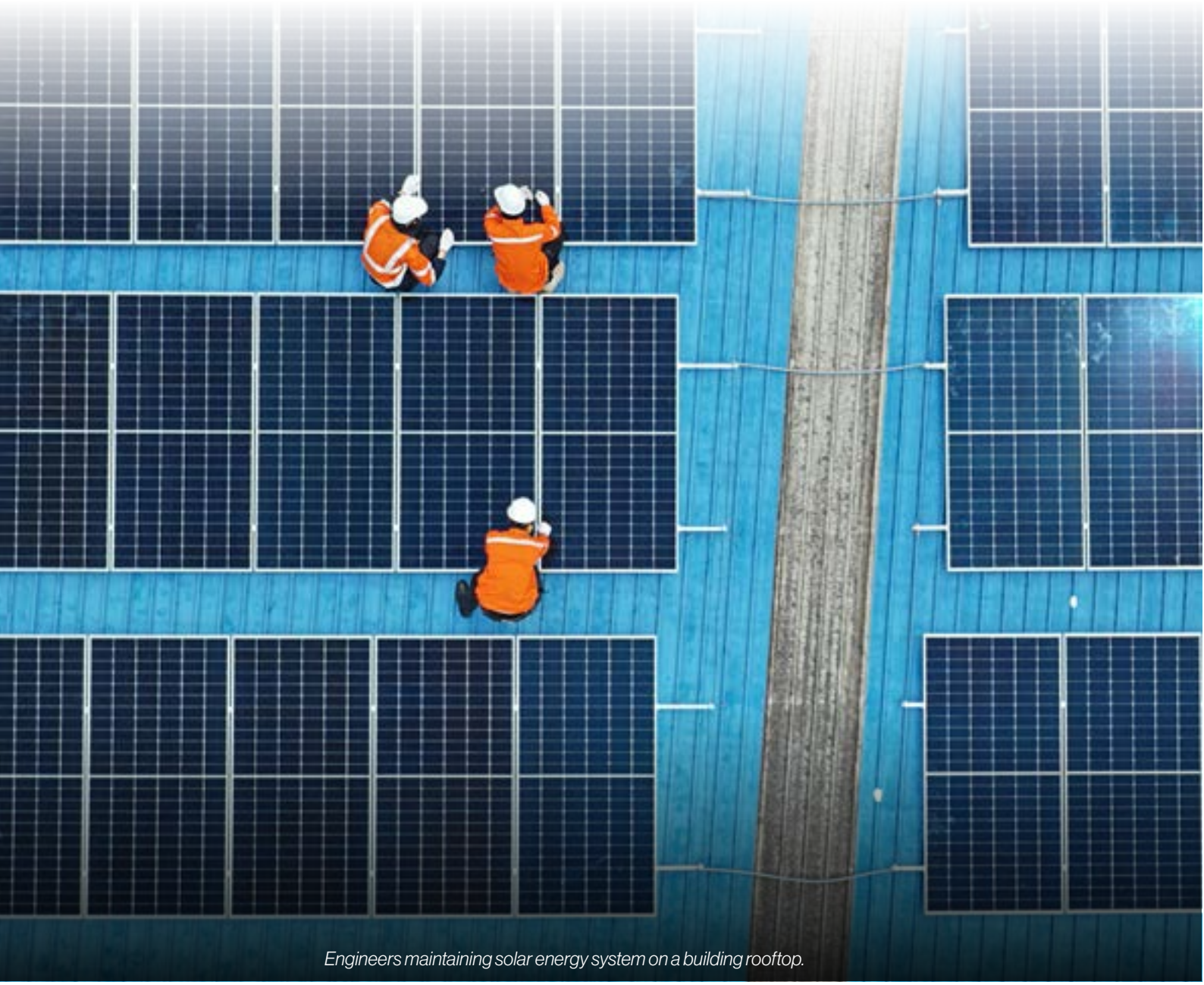
In last year's CSER report, we sought to indicate a direction of travel.[59] Its focus was on the possibility of systemic change of a kind and scope sufficient to make a global just transition both real and palatable. It speaks of multilateral cooperation, of finance and technology sharing on a global scale, and of reinvigorating international cooperation through a transformed and effective UN system that is no longer captive to corporate interests. It tips its hat to the dream of "environmental governance designed to effectively

manage global commons problems" and notes the need for a "global transition from a fossil-fuelled and fundamentally unjust system of development to one in which all can prosper sustainably." It calls for "economic, financial, trade, investment, labour, technology and intellectual property regimes that promote equitable and mutually beneficial relations among countries" and argues, in particular, that the "financial system, trade and investment must be re-engineered to stop the haemorrhaging of resources and wealth from the Global South to the Global North."

These are, of course, big asks. But even on the seemingly intractable challenge of militarism, there are useful short-term steps to take. One is simply to make military emissions visible by exposing the "military emissions gap" within our climate regime, which would pressure countries to track, report and ultimately reduce their military emissions.[60] Beyond this, significant cuts in military emissions will only come from significant cuts in military activity – with corresponding reductions in military expenditures.[61]

Ultimately, the topic here is the polycrisis – in which climate, inequality, geopolitics and militarism are bound together – and the opportunities it presents. Even as our world rushes towards existential crisis, it is bursting with better possibilities. Realizing them, however, means overcoming both heavy legacies, from colonialism to the Cold War and its proxy wars, and the self-interested blocs of power and capital – concentrated wealth, expansionist nations, giant corporations, cabals of billionaires – that are straining to forestall such possibilities indefinitely.

Our own focus remains on the climate reckoning, and on finding a transition strategy that is equitable enough to succeed. Here, we will simply repeat that the elites – the wealthy countries and the wealthy within every country – have had every chance to respond to the climate crisis. Instead, they have chosen a future of fossil fuel investment, unsustainable luxury consumption and hyper-militarization. That is a failure that can never be forgiven.



Engineers maintaining solar energy system on a building rooftop.

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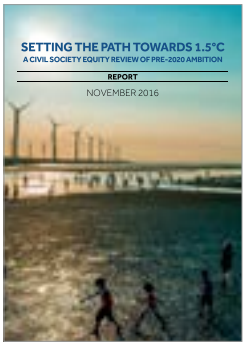
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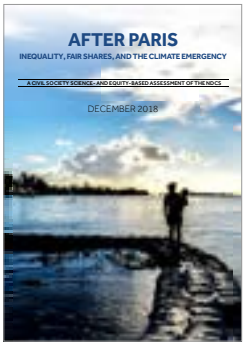
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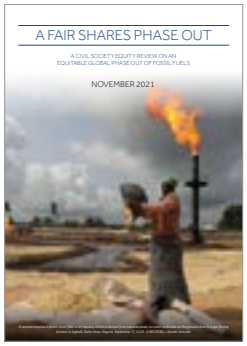
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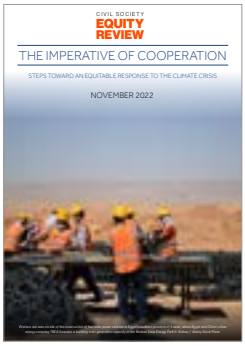
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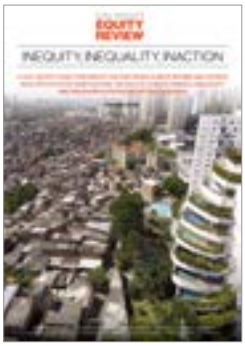
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CLIMATE EQUITY REFERENCE PROJECT

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